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HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS ARE EVERYWHERE AND NOWHERE: A QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE UNITED STATES ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING CAMPAIGN 2000-2012

BY

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the oppositional framing techniques used by actors in the United States anti-human trafficking (AHT) campaign. Theoretically based in symbolic interactionism, I conduct a frame analysis of 12 years of newspaper articles (2000-2012), which comprises the official discourse of the AHT campaign in the United States. I unpack three frame disputes, where claims are challenged and the challenges are rebutted in three primary disputes: 1) the characteristics and experiences of human trafficking victims, 2) the credibility of quantitative estimates of the prevalence of human trafficking, and 3) the justification for the development of new AHT policy tools. Using inductive data analysis methods, I analyze the frames, counterframes, and reframes as they are embedded in the official anti-human trafficking discourse.

I reveal a campaign where dominant actors use reframing strategies in concert to accomplish three larger discursive goals: 1) to veil inconsistencies and contradictions in their claims; 2) to insulate their claims from further scrutiny; and 3) to justify the continued interventions on the campaign's behalf. By identifying how reframing strategies are used in concert with each other to serve as damage control functions, I contribute to a greater understanding of oppositional framing strategies.

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For over 10 years, Dr. Susan Tiano has been my mentor, collaborator, and friend. In 2003, while sitting in her Gender and International Development seminar, Dr. Tiano invited me to the discipline; she let me that there is indeed a place for ideas and a role for scholars in the larger pursuit of social justice.

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With this manuscript, I conclude my graduate training at UNM. The faculty of the UNM Department of Sociology has invested in me years of training and expertise and has created a foundation on which I will stand for the rest of my career. I will always be proud to be a UNM alum.

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Finally, I would like to acknowledge the primary motivating factor for engaging in this work. Human trafficking is indeed a heinous violation of human rights and dignity. All the deconstruction and analysis in the world can never change deny that absolute truth. To those who struggle under exploitation, toil under tyranny, and resist oppression; I dedicate this dissertation.

Table of Contents

vi

Chapter 1 Introduction

Since the 1990s, a collective effort in the United States has been working toward the eradication of human trafficking, often described as a modern form of slavery. Federal officials describe human trafficking as the "scourge of the 21ˢᵗ century" and consider its eradication to be "this generation's greatest moral imperative." Through epic training efforts and large-scale public awareness projects, the U.S. anti-human trafficking (AHT) campaign has used mass media outlets to educate the public about what human trafficking is and how it destroys the lives of its victims. In doing so, the campaign has described what human trafficking "looks like" by popularizing a familiar narrative of sexual exploitation -- the victimization narrative.

Technically, human trafficking refers to the exploitation of a person's labor in any industry, including agriculture, food-service, domestic service, or elsewhere. However, any cursory survey of media coverage in the United States shows that images of sex trafficking and "sexual slavery" have dominated national media coverage and have been the focus for the intervention efforts of the U.S. AHT campaign. The campaign's emphasis on sexual exploitation exists in contradiction to numerous empirical investigations that show sex trafficking to be only a small part of the global phenomenon of forced labor. Bearing unreliable statistics, graphic stories of sexual victimization, and tales of dramatic escape and rescue, the campaign has capitalized on sensationalized images of sex-trafficked women and young girls who have been forcefully taken from their homes to be sexually abused in a foreign land. Ultimately, sex trafficking has become a "stand-in" for human trafficking as a whole, and little is said by AHT campaign

leaders in recognition of the much broader range of victims and victim experiences involved in human trafficking. As it is presented to the U.S. public, human trafficking is a problem characterized by sexually exploited women and children rather than a problem of unfree, exploitative working conditions more generally, where workers from multiple industries are forced and coerced servitude.

However, a sizable constituency within the AHT campaign perceives the sex trafficking-bias as a distortion of reality of human trafficking. These challengers, while generally in agreement with the campaign's objectives of combatting the practice, make public critiques of these portrayals. They argue that not only are they inaccurate, but more importantly, that the distorted portrayals can have negative consequences for trafficked individuals, especially those who do not resemble the "sex slaves" that characterize the campaign's public image. Yet in spite of an increasing number of challenges, the AHT campaign's stereotypical interpretations of human trafficking persist in the public discourse. Since 2000, newspaper coverage of human trafficking demonstrates a sustained and almost exclusive focus on sex trafficking and sex trafficking victims.

I conceptualize the AHT campaign as an ongoing competition over the public perception of human trafficking, particularly the way audiences understand the definition of human trafficking, and more importantly, its causal factors and its solutions. Bourdieu (1977) suggests that control of the public discourse is control of the "mind of the public" and hence indirectly, influences of what the public wants or does (see van Dijk, 1988). I suggest that campaign leaders use oppositional framing strategies as a way of influencing trafficking discourse in a way that maintains the campaign's almost exclusive focus on

sex trafficking. In doing so, they simultaneously conduct damage control in response to challenges to their credibility.

Campaign leaders use reframing strategies to negate challenges to their claims and discredit the collective character of the challengers. Specifically, they use reframing to veil contradictions in their own claims and to discourage further scrutiny of these claims. In so doing, they respond to and further reinforce a well-funded campaign to promote an ideologically driven mission to eradicate commercial sex. The AHT campaign's concern with the plight of non-sexually exploited laborers, who greatly outnumber so-called sex slaves, is minimal. Instead, its exclusive focus is on sex trafficking and sex slaves, and their attempts to rescue them by eliminating the commercial sex industry have become the primary discursive project of the AHT campaign in contemporary America.

This dissertation asks: how do AHT campaign actors employ oppositional framing strategies to reframe the challenges and counterframes launched against them? How does the campaign respond to direct and continuous challenges to its enduring focus on a small part of human trafficking (sex trafficking) and a narrow range of victims (victims of sex trafficking) when these interpretations have been so consistently challenged – and many would say, discredited -- on empirical grounds? I answer these questions by exploring the nuanced uses of oppositional framing in the campaign's attempt to remediate or control any damage to its credibility resulting from challenges.

Existing social movement research suggests that movement actors use framing strategies to focus public attention on specific aspects of a social problem, to highlight

the degree to which the problem is socially injurious, and to mobilize collective action to combat it. While oppositional framing concepts such as counterframing and reframing have a role in ongoing discursive projects, much remains to be understood concerning the specific ways these strategies are used. This study puts the evolution of framing and meaning construction front and center, following Robert Benford's suggestion that future research on collective action should not "think about frames like they are things, rather than the dynamic social processes that highlight their construction, negotiation, transformation" (Benford, 1993: 415).

The purpose of this study is to describes how campaign actors use oppositional framing, specifically reframing, to accomplish three important damage control functions: veil contradictions and inconsistencies in their claims, insulate their claims from further scrutiny, and justify the continued and ongoing campaign activities. Each of these functions is comprised of a combination of specific reframing strategies used in concert to rebut ongoing challenges. This dissertation also tracks changes in the content of discourse over time as the claims are correlated with political and legal actions at the national and local levels.

Background

From the corridors of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, to the cramped conference rooms in rural municipalities across the United States, policymakers, activists, scholars, faith leaders, and many others are collaborating to combat human trafficking. Since the mid-1990s, human trafficking has been at the top of the policy agenda for international entities such as the United Nations and national governments around the world. Human trafficking is generally considered to be among the most heinous of

4

human rights abuses because it involves profiting from the exploitation and forced labor of some of the world's most vulnerable people. Formally, human trafficking is defined as:

> [T]he recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs (United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime).

In the early 2000s, the U.S. government reported that at least 700,000 people were being trafficked around the world each year, with at least 50,000, mostly women and children, being trafficked into the United States from countries in Latin America, Asia, and Eastern Europe for purposes of sexual exploitation through forced prostitution. In 2001, the International Labor Organization (ILO) published "Stopping Forced Labor," a report in which they concluded that forced labor and slavery were increasing globally, with women and children most at risk. An article printed in *The New York Times* published the following description of the global human trafficking problem:

> Although the report, 'Stopping Forced Labor,' did not quantify the problem, it said compelled work -- slavery, debt bondage or bonded labor -- was found worldwide. 'The emerging picture is one where slavery, oppression and exploitation of society's most vulnerable members, especially women and children, have by no means been consigned to the past,' said Juan Somavia, [ILO's] director general (Olson, 2001: A6).

In 2000, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Trafficking Victims and Protection Act (TVPA), the flagship legislation that was positioned to serve as a model for other countries to follow. It was touted as being among the most important advances

in the protection of international human rights and a key to combatting violence against women. The TVPA represented a formal recognition and response to claims about the increasing prevalence of human trafficking. The quote below is indicative of statements made by many of those who pushed for the TVPA's passing, in that it prioritizes sex trafficking and forced prostitution and leaves "other forms of slave labor" unarticulated and secondary.

> The House, responding to a dramatic increase in sex trafficking in the past decade, on Friday passed a measure designed to protect women and children smuggled into the United States and forced into prostitution and other forms of slave labor (Lambert & Meyer, 2000).

Christopher Smith, a Republican member of the U.S. Congress from New Jersey and senior architect of the TVPA, justified its passage as a way to combat sex trafficking:

> Each year, 50,000 innocent women and young children are forced, coerced, or fraudulently thrust into the international sex trade industry with no way out. This brutal, demeaning, and disgusting abuse of women and children is predicated on their involuntary participation in sexual acts … The image of a young, innocent child being forcibly sold into the sex trade for the fiscal gain one of sick individual and the physical gain of another is tragic. The idea that we would allow it to go unpunished is even more so (Smith, 2000 [cited in Chapkis, 2005: 53]).

The passage of the TVPA marked the beginning of a surge in AHT activity in the United States. Since 2000, there has been an increase in public service announcements, conferences, speeches, policy proposals, and trainings with the objectives of creating awareness about human trafficking and advocating for policy initiatives to combat it. To be sure, there was substantial AHT activity before 2000 in which the U.S. government and U.S. advocacy organizations played key roles, though these activities were largely hidden from the public and were not covered by the major media outlets. With the TVPA, however, the U.S. public and its media became the focus of a collective AHT

campaign led primarily by the federal government and its newly formed Office to

Monitor and Combat Trafficking (Sipress, 2001), which invited public engagement. At

this time, the federal government and several high profile advocacy organizations,

including the National Organization for Women (NOW) and Planned Parenthood, were

the most visible agents of the AHT campaign, although they were supported by faith-

based organizations and state level government. Other organizations advocating for the

rights of migrants and refugees were initially part of the campaign, though over time their

voices were drowned out by those seeking to protect women and girls from sex

traffickers (Stolz, 2005).

After passage of the TVPA, millions of dollars in federal funds were distributed to

organizations around the globe to aid in ramping up prosecutions and developing victim

protection protocols. In 2003, U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft allocated $91 million

in appropriations for anti-trafficking initiatives around the world, including the

evangelical Christian organizations Shared Hope International and International Justice

Mission, among others (Soderlund, 2005: 76). That same year, the United States

Department of Justice (USDOJ) announced a $9.5 million nationwide federal program to

focus on identifying "[t]he estimated 50,000 women and children trafficked each year

into the United States, many of whom are forced into the sex trade" (Seper, 2003: A3).

Later, in 2007, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales created a unit within the Justice

Department whose sole task was to prosecute federal cases of human trafficking (Seper,

2007: A6). By 2007, President Bush created over 42 Justice Department task forces with

grants awarded to police departments, each with the assigned tasks of cracking down on

trafficking in local jurisdictions and prosecuting traffickers. He also distributed more

than $150 million in grants and awards to service organizations with the specific task of identifying and providing services to the estimated hundreds of thousands of victims of forced prostitution in the United States (Markon, 2007).

Outside of government institutions, efforts against human trafficking have united sectors of advocacy and activism that have often been on opposing sides, such as conservative religious organizations (Focus on the Family, The Heritage Foundation) and feminist organizations (Equality Now, Planned Parenthood). In 2000, a coalition of these organizations estimated that "[E]ach year, hundreds of thousands, and perhaps millions of women and children are forced into lives of sexual exploitation" (Shenon, 2000: A5). While these groups oppose each other on issues of abortion and same-sex marriage, their shared interpretations of how pornography and prostitution contribute to the ongoing sexual exploitation of women have made them appropriate allies. Their similar views about the sex industry trumped other ideological issues and facilitated their willingness to work with each other (Weitzer, 2007: 449; Doezema, 2005). The solid foundation of support across political and "odd-fellow" interest groups suggests a relatively unopposed effort to protect victims of human trafficking and prosecute traffickers.

These statements comprise the primary components of the campaign's primary message: human trafficking is increasing around the globe and is characterized primarily by the sexual exploitation of women and girls. Statements from national figures like the ones above provide the public a general image of what human trafficking "is" and "who is hurt." Trafficking is described as a modern form of slavery, facilitated by criminal organizations that "traffic" people like other illicit cargo such weapons and drugs. Depictions of trafficking victims usually include women and/or children, who are

forcibly abducted from or deceived into leaving their homes, and are transported to

Western Europe or North America and forced into prostitution (Demleitner, 2001). This

image is evoked in public service announcements, billboards, speeches, and testimonies,

and perhaps has become the symbolic representation of the campaign itself.

Yet the voices within the campaign that view sex trafficking as only a small part

of the human trafficking picture have not been completely overridden by the sex

trafficking emphasis. Indeed, this sex-focused image and several other claims made by

the AHT campaign have been challenged, directly and publically, by other actors within

the campaign. Individual and organizational actors that are otherwise on board with the

campaign's objectives have consistently made counter-claims to the campaign's

statements. They suggesting that depictions of trafficking that focus mainly or

exclusively on sexual exploitation are inaccurate and present incorrect diagnoses of the

trafficking situation, which they consider to be an issue of forced labor more broadly. In

addition to this definitional challenge, critics have also launched empirical challenges to

the oft-cited quantitative estimates of trafficking and scrutinized the methods by which

these estimates were created. To be sure, it is tremendously difficult to "count" how

many people are trafficked or to produce reliable estimates of their numbers, but as more

comparative-quantitative data become available, what is emerging is a nuanced and

complex picture of human trafficking that suggests that sexual exploitation is only one

aspect of a larger process of labor exploitation (Aronowitz, 2004; Belser & Cock, 2005;

ILO, 2012; Tiano, 2012b).

The contemporary understanding of human trafficking became dominant in the

1990s, driven in significant part by the advocacy of women's rights groups that sought to

redefine it specifically and principally as the sexual exploitation of women and children (Soderlund, 2005; McDonald, 2004; Grant, 2012), while minimizing consideration of non-sexual forms of trafficking, such as forced labor in sweatshops, fields, and restaurants. When we take a closer look at the AHT campaign in the United States, paying close attention to the discourse of campaign actors, we see the fault lines among advocacy groups active in human trafficking reform, which derive from differences and debate over defining the problem (Tichenor, 2007: 40). In 2012, a reporter from *The Guardian* wrote,

> Look beyond the surface of the fight against trafficking, and you will find misleading statistics and decades of debate over laws and protocols. As for the issue itself, the lack of agreement on how to define trafficking hasn't slowed campaigners' fight. Rather, defining trafficking has become their fight (Grant, 2012).

Several scholars have investigated the role of advocacy organizations and other actors in pushing the AHT agenda forward. Tichenor (2007) observed that one of the significant features of the organized interests pushing AHT policy reform since the 1990s is that very few, if any, can be characterized as being trade associations, corporations, or other concentrated economic interests focused on advancing the material interests of particular constituencies. Instead, the interest groups that have been most engaged are women's, human rights, religious, immigration, social welfare, and other organizations dedicated to social and international justice, with a much smaller number of professional criminal justice and labor groups (37). Stolz (2005, 2007b) studied how "non-professional criminal justice" groups dominated the congressional hearings leading up to the TVPA's passage, focusing their testimonies on the plights of foreign women whose vulnerability was exploited by criminals and sex abusers. By focusing the campaign's

message about sex trafficking and sex trafficking victims, these organizations limited any discussion of other forms of trafficking, a situation that has internally divided the campaign.

Within the campaign, there are two basic ideological camps that generally agree on the scope and seriousness of human trafficking and agree that governments have a responsibility to act. However, they have differing interpretations of the role of commercial sex and the sex industry more generally in the perpetuation of human trafficking and exploitation. These two camps are described in greater detail in later chapters, but I briefly introduce them here. The abolitionists or "feminist abolitionists" (Weitzer, 2007) are the most visible and influential camp in the campaign and are primarily responsible for limiting much of the trafficking discourse in the United States to sex trafficking. They prioritize sex trafficking over other forms of trafficking and make claims that conflate sex trafficking with human trafficking. They argue that the existence of the sex industry and the demand for commercial sex in the form of prostitution are the primary causes of human trafficking. For abolitionists, the anti-human trafficking campaign is a campaign against prostitution, and thus their efforts focus solely on eradicating the sex industry and abolishing commercial sex. In general, they argue that prostitution reduces women to commercial objects and that prostitution is always and necessarily degrading and damaging to women. Further, they perceive all prostitution to be a form of sexual slavery and all commercial sex (including lap dancing and pornography) to be sexual exploitation. The abolitionist solution to trafficking targets the market for commercial sex by condemning clients who purchase or create "market demand" for commercial sex (Anderson & Andrijasevic, 2008: 159). Key leaders of the

11

abolitionist camp, Janice Raymond and Donna Hughes, were co-authors of the 2004

United States Department of State report, *"The Link Between Prostitution and Sex*

Trafficking," which serves as an official position statement in which the U.S. government

describes the "empirical" relationship between prostitution and human trafficking.

The other ideological constituency, the "labor exploitation" camp (Doezema,

2005; Saunders & Soderlund, 2003)[1] conceptualizes human trafficking as exploitation of

any form of labor, of which sexual labor is only one type. For proponents of this

perspective, trafficking is characterized by the use of force or fraud during the

recruitment process and/ or the subsequent labor or services (Aronowitz, 2004; Doezema,

2005; Guinn, 2008). They see coercion as a function of the conditions under which the

labor was being performed, not the type of labor per se. From this standpoint, it is the

lack of protection for workers in the sex industry, rather than the existence of the market

for commercial sex in and of itself, that leaves room for the extremes of exploitation,

including trafficking. This conceptualization makes attitudes toward prostitution largely

irrelevant, because exploitation is about poor working conditions and lack of control over

one's own labor, which can occur in the sex industry or in other types of forced labor. For

this camp, human trafficking can be resolved by giving greater attention to labor issues,

such as fair pay, honest recruitment, and safe working conditions. Within the anti-labor

exploitation camp is a smaller, less visible contingency that sees the solution as bringing

the sex industry above ground, and regulating it in the same way that other employment

sectors are regulated (Tichenor, 2007; Anderson & Andrijasevic, 2008).

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[1] Several authors referred to this group as the "anti-human trafficking" constituency. To
keep this group distinct from the larger "anti-human trafficking campaign," I am using
the label "labor-exploitation" constituency in reference to their concern with labor
exploitation more broadly.

In short, while the abolitionist camp has a firm grip on the common definitions of human trafficking and the discourse regarding human trafficking's causes, their claims have not gone unchallenged by other voices within the AHT campaign. However, unlike social movements where there are counter-movements or some organized opposition external to the movement, the AHT campaign does not have visible or politically significant challengers to their claims. The campaign can be compared to a consensus movement (Lofland, 1989), which is a social movement without politically important challengers. The anti-drunk driving movement, for example, does not have an opposing "pro-drunk driving" movement that is working against their efforts. The AHT campaign is similar in that respect; there is no "pro-human trafficking" constituency. Instead, challenges are coming from within the campaign by actors trying to correct a perceived bias toward sex trafficking and from investigative journalists who are looking to hold accountable the organizations that received federal anti-human trafficking funds.

One set of challenges to the abolitionist camp points to the inconsistency of its claims in the face of empirical data. For example, of the nearly 21 million people the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates are forced laborers, only 4.5 million are estimated to be victims of forced sexual exploitation. Thus, over three-quarters of the people around the globe estimated to be in forced labor are not involved in sex trafficking, but are in industries such as agriculture, construction, domestic work or manufacturing (ILO, 2012).[2] In addition to the growing body of relatively reliable data, investigative journalists are also challenging the AHT campaign by calling into question

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[2] Further, the ILO estimates that 2.2 million people worldwide are forced laborers in prisons or in the military, an observation that is wholly absent from the abolitionist discourse (ILO, 2012).

its "sensationalized and unfounded" depictions of human trafficking. In 2007, a three-part investigative series in *The Atlanta Constitution-Journal* scathingly criticized the campaign:

> More than a decade of federal and local initiatives have been implemented and millions of dollars have been spent against human trafficking in metro Atlanta. However, officials still don't have a clear sense of who is being exploited and how. Information suggests they either don't understand the problem or are failing the victims (Mariano, 2007).

Yet despite the growing challenges by immigration and labor experts in the "anti-labor exploitation camp," my analysis of newspaper articles on human trafficking suggests that not only do the abolitionist claims continue to dominate the discourse 12 years after the TVPA, but their claims have undergone qualitative shifts that reinforce the inaccurate stereotypes perpetuated by the abolitionist camp. As the data in this study will show, the image of the typical victim has shifted over time from primarily being foreign-born women and children transported into the United States, to U.S.-born women and children who are being exploited in their home country at a frequency so high, it is "happening everywhere and all the time." I argue that the shifts in depictions are not the result of discoveries regarding the empirical trends of trafficking, but are instead the result of campaign leaders responding to counter-claims in ways that veil contradictions in their claims and insulate their claims from further scrutiny. The following chapters will describe how the AHT campaign advances the ideologically driven interests of the abolitionists by using oppositional framing strategies to discredit their challengers and to limit any possible damage to their reputation. Abolitionists make claims about human trafficking and human trafficking victims that appeal to a victimization ideology that makes particular assumptions about the identity and experiences of victims. While the

rest of this dissertation unpacks this in greater detail, it is enough now to say that the victimization ideology employed by abolitionists is based on victims that are completely blameless because they have no control over their circumstances and thus, no control over or responsibility for their victimization.

To understand how campaign leaders have been able to deflect challenges and maintain their emphasis on sex trafficking, it is important to consider the discursive interactions occurring between the abolitionists and the anti-labor exploitation camps. Human trafficking discourse is an interplay of claims about trafficking that has both material and symbolic dimensions. On the one hand, trafficking is a sociological reality that exists "out there" in the empirical world. On the other hand, our understandings of trafficking are always mediated though language and institutional discourses.

> We only know trafficking second hand, through representations of the phenomenon created by a number of key institutions. These institutions include the mass media, NGOs, human rights groups, feminist anti-trafficking organizations, and the United Nations, which together shape the public perception of the global sex trade (Saunders & Soderlund, 2003: 16-17).

This study systematically observes instances in trafficking discourse where challenges are made to the campaign's primary claims and the campaign responds to those claims in an emergent competition with both sides vying to shape the public's perception of human trafficking.

Theoretical Significance

This study is situated within the larger research agenda of trying to understand how the campaign's focus on sex trafficking has endured over time despite evidence that the emphasis is misplaced. A simple explanation could be that the ideologies of powerful

claimsmakers have "won," and thus their interpretation of trafficking is dominant because of consistent, credible, and resonating claimsmaking; not because their interpretation corresponds with empirical facts. However, Herbert Blumer knowingly warns sociologists to be leery of relying on "sociological platitudes." One such platitude would be to assume that the perception of social problems depends solely on dominant ideologies or widely-held traditional beliefs. This type of explanation tells us "practically nothing about what a society picks out as its social problems and how it comes to pick them out" (Blumer, 1971: 301). Similarly, gender theorist Jo Doezema suggests that it is a sociological platitude to say that social problems are social constructions and leave the explanation at that (Doezema, 2005).

Another possible explanation, supported by resource mobilization theorists, would focus on the financial resources, political capital, and communication structures and their impact on the campaign's messaging. This study takes a more interpretive approach and looks to framing as a piece of the larger puzzle. Symbolic interactionism assumes that meaning-making is an ongoing and dynamic process, and everything is under construction, even our most firmly held beliefs, values, and personal commitments (Blumer, 1971). What is missing from these explanations is a more nuanced investigation of the power involved in producing knowledge about human trafficking and the ways in which these dominant constructions emerge and are sustained *over time,* eventually being incorporated into policy (Doezema, 2005: 64, emphasis added).

A sufficient analysis of meaning making and social problems should also account for how "[The problem] is bent in response to awakened sentiment, how it is depicted to protect vested interests, and how it reflects the play of strategic position and power"

(Blumer, 1971). Benford (1993b) reminds us that in social movements, the social construction of meaning is contested terrain, and that claims are rarely if ever simply proffered and easily accepted. Rather, claimsmakers engage in a back and forth interaction, what Hunt et al. (1994) refer to as an "emergent drama," where claimsmakers respond to claims made by other actors. When considering claimsmaking in the public discourse Gamson (1988) suggests that it is useful to think of themes as emerging dialectically: "There is no theme without a counter theme. The theme is conventional and normative; the counter theme is adversarial and contentious" (167). Proper consideration of the claimsmaking processes entails attention both to how claims are established or legitimated and how they are displaced or discredited (Ibarra & Kitsuse, 1993: 30). Benford and Hunt (2003) suggest that framing and claiming scholars have failed to analyze systematically the processes associated with these dramas, particularly the interchange between dominant movement actors and their antagonists. The AHT campaign in the U.S. offers an interesting case study because it provides an opportunity to observe, analyze, and track over time the oppositional claimsmaking activities between campaign protagonists and antagonists.

Substantive Significance

This study is a narrative of the emergent drama among campaign actors, who are competing over the popular understanding of the social problem of human trafficking. I understand the AHT campaign in the United States to be a campaign against prostitution under the guise of ending "modern slavery." The abolitionists are the most visible and influential of the campaign actors, and have control of the anti-trafficking discourse.

17

I argue that the human trafficking discourse in the United States is based on an ideology of victimization, which is a collection of propositions about the nature of harmful and injurious social interactions, such as violence and exploitation (Best, 1997; Holstein & Miller, 1997). The victimization ideology is also a collection of beliefs and attitudes about what actions and characteristics are indicative of victimhood, and how we should respond to or think about the people who are victimized. Tenets of this ideology are invoked by campaigners to veil contradictions in their claims and to dissuade further scrutiny of them. A reform campaign, such as the AHT campaign, can effectively repel scrutiny and critical assessment of its claims by relying on narratives with horror stories and estimates of "epic proportions," which are presented as being sufficient justification for any intervention (McDonald, 2004; Weitzer, 2007; Feingold, 2010; Andreas & Greenhill, 2010). This dissertation argues that the campaign, with its constituent claimsmakers, use oppositional framing strategies to do this work.

These interventions, as this study suggests, are primarily concerned with cracking down on commercial sex, leaving millions of non-sexually exploited laborers outside the public's perception of human trafficking. The campaign takes great pains to re-formulate prostitutes from criminals to victims who are deserving of assistance and protection in their own right, even though they do not take this effort on behalf of victims of forced labor, particularly the undocumented migrant workers, who are more likely to be exploited than native or documented workers. By excluding other types of trafficked individuals, the campaign implicitly and simultaneously perpetuates perceptions of these individuals as "illegal aliens," threats to national security, competitors for U.S. jobs, and drains on taxpayer coffers (Ruwanpura & Rai, 2004; Aronowitz, 2004; Chapkis, 2005).

18

Their exclusion from the public discourse on human trafficking essentially means that they will continue to be exploited by traffickers and punished by restrictive and punitive immigration policy (Aronowitz, 2004; Chapkis, 2005), because the force, fraud and coercion that led to their circumstances will not be seen for what it is. As a result, we will spend resources looking for victims in the wrong places and turn up empty-handed. Eventually, the public is likely to feel manipulated or conclude that their tax dollars were wasted and take back their support of the campaign, perhaps wondering if human trafficking is actually happening at all. I fear that as the discrepancy between the campaign's dominant "interpretations" of trafficking and the observed reality of trafficking grows, it will only be a matter of time before "trafficking fatigue" (Feingold, 2010: 74) sets in, and "people ask why we have spent so much to achieve so little."

Contributing to the Human Trafficking Research Agenda

This dissertation is a complement to the ongoing human trafficking research agenda. Some of the most important research on human trafficking, which is currently being conducted by international research organizations such as the ILO and the IOM, is concerned with quantifying trafficking activity, establishing who is being trafficked, who is doing the trafficking, how it is happening, why it is happening, and what can be done about it (see Andres & Belser, 2009). This research is incredibly important; it is essential for successfully correcting assumptions and misunderstandings about human trafficking and can serve as a basis for creating policy that will better protect the human rights of migrants, laborers, and sex workers (Doezema, 2005). However, this cannot be the only line of research.

Blumer (1971) suggests that avenues of "objective research" are meaningful only to the extent that the resulting knowledge enters into the process of collective definition, which determines the fate of social problems. "In this process, the knowledge may be ignored, distorted, or smothered by other considerations. For me, it is self-evident that sociologists who wish their studies of social problems to bring about improved conditions had better study and understand the process of which changes are made" (Blumer, 1971: 305).

Interpretive research, such as this study, addresses questions that cannot be answered by more objective "fact-based" studies, such as how these facts will be interpreted and which interpretations will come to be accepted as legitimate knowledge while others will not. To answer these questions, we need to look at the effect of power on knowledge: the way in which social power is exercised in knowledge creation and the ways in which representations of people and problems are used to legitimate some forms of knowledge and to ignore or delegitimize others (Doezema, 2005: 63).

Chapter 2 reviews the theoretical literature on framing and claimsmaking activities, which has been developed in the sociological subfields of social movements and social problems. The literature review identifies the key symbolic interactionist assumptions that are the basis for this project, describes the competitive nature of framing social problems, and outlines the various techniques used by claimsmakers to keep their claims relevant to changing social environments. Chapter 2 also includes an in-depth discussion of the victimization ideology and illustrates how it serves as a guide for the campaign's primary assumptions about human trafficking and trafficking victims. While the focus of this dissertation is to explain how dominant meanings of trafficking have

20

been maintained and protected from challenges over time, it is an important exercise to understand how those meanings became dominant in the first place. Chapter 3 is a historical account of the AHT campaign as it originated in the hearing chambers of the United Nations in Switzerland. Chapter 4 describes the methodologies for data collection, qualitative coding, and constant comparative analysis that I employed to analyze three frame disputes. In the subsequent analysis, Chapters 5 through 7, I analyze and interpret three important frame disputes where the ideology of victimization is employed as the primary "framing paradigm." I show how their claims are challenged with counterframes and finally, how campaign leaders use re-framing to blur contradictions in the claims and to dissuade further scrutiny of their claims, thereby upholding an ideology of victimization. Chapter 5 demonstrates how the image of the trafficked victim, consistent with the tenets of a victimization ideology, is communicated and defended against criticism. Chapter 6 demonstrates how a victimization ideology keeps campaign claims immune to challenges to their empirical credibility. Chapter 7 shows how the ideology can be institutionalized into public policy that maintains important distinctions in the social construction of human trafficking victims. Finally, Chapter 8 concludes this research by reviewing the empirical findings, outlining the theoretical contributions of this research, and deconstructing the victim-agent dichotomy that undergirds the AHT campaign to suggest how with its continued use, can cause the AHT campaign to continue to under-serve the majority of human trafficking victims.

The objective of this dissertation is to uncover the specific oppositional framing strategies that are used by elite campaigners that veil contradictions in their own claims and insulate them from further scrutiny. The findings of this study suggest that the

ideology of victimization that undergirds the entire AHT campaign is what makes it so successful in mobilizing both financial and human resources. But this success comes at a price because it obscures labor trafficking and labor trafficked individuals from the public discourse on human trafficking and in so doing, impedes their access to the benefits and protections that are intended for the "legitimate victims" of human trafficking.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This dissertation offers an explanation of some of the strategies that campaign leaders have used to maintain control over human trafficking discourse in the United States by successfully deflecting a continuous stream of empirical challenges to their claims. I argue that oppositional framing strategies, specifically counterframing and reframing, can help explain the campaign's sustained focus on sex trafficking and sex trafficking victims, even though they are not the most common form of human trafficking. They attempt to control over the discourse by aligning their frames to be consistent with a victimization ideology, which allows them to disguise contradictions in their claims and discourage further criticism. While interactions among campaign actors have been studied extensively, the oppositional nature the discourse underlying these interactions has been largely under-explored (Benford, 1993b; Hunt et al., 1994).

The AHT campaign is the collection of actors who participate in claimsmaking activities with the shared goals of prosecuting human traffickers and providing support to trafficked individuals. Campaign actors include government actors, such government officials, policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and other entities that work within the political arena to pursue the campaign's goals. The campaign also includes non-governmental organizations that advocate on behalf of trafficked individuals, provide services, and lobby for their causes to regulatory bodies. "What is at stake here is nothing less than the popular perception of reality" (McAdam et al., 1988: 722).

The campaign is an emergent drama between protagonist and antagonist actors, "each trying to establish their claims, to rebut and discredit their opponent's claims and to motivate individuals, organizations, and government agencies either to do or not do

23

something" (Benford & Hunt, 2003: 155). This dissertation extends our understanding of oppositional framing techniques by investigating the strategic activities in which campaign actors engage both to advance their claims and to respond to challenges.

I use 12 years (2000-2012) of newspaper articles to represent the human trafficking discourse in the United States during this period as it has evolved since the inception of the TVPA. Within this discourse I identify three major frame disputes. Frame disputes are disagreements between social movement actors who have conflicting interpretations of reality and what is "real" (Benford, 1993b). In media discourse, frame disputes are comprised of back-and-forth communications between movement actors as each side tries to advance their own claims and discredit others. Mass media is one venue where it is possible to observe human trafficking discourse and study its trajectory over time.

The following sections review the literature on framing and claimsmaking as developed in the subfields of social movements and social problems. I outline major framing concepts, discuss strategies for successful and competitive framing, and discuss counterframing and reframing, two oppositional strategies. To set the theoretical context for this literature, I summarize assumptions of the foundational paradigm on which this study is based, symbolic interactionism.

Symbolic Interactionism

The symbolic interactionist tradition, as advanced by theorists George Herbert Mead (1934), Herbert Blumer (1969, 1971), and Erving Goffman (1974), suggests that we interpret the actions of other individuals on the basis of the meanings we assign to

those actions, as opposed to the actions themselves.   Thus, human interaction is mediated

by the interpretation of symbols and signification, which we use to ascertain the meaning

of one another's actions (Blumer, 1969). Blumer articulated three basic tenets of the

symbolic interactionist paradigm. First, humans act toward things on the basis of the

meanings they ascribe to those things. Second, the meaning of such things is derived

from, or arises out of, the social interactions that one has with others and the society.

Finally, these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process

used by the person in dealing with the things he/she encounters (Blumer, 1969).

The symbolic interactionist paradigm prioritizes the process of meaning

construction as the primary way in which humans interpret their social lives and

activities. A key feature of meaning construction, which often is taken for granted in

empirical research, is that meaning construction is dynamic; it is an ongoing process

characterized by multiple and sequential interactions. This interaction can take many

forms, but they are mostly situated in our discourse -- our interpersonal communication

and language. Language is the source of meaning and is also the way meaning is

negotiated.

> Through previous interaction, [we] develop and acquire common
> understandings … of how to act in this or that situation. These common
> definitions enable people to act alike. The common repetitive behavior of
> people in such situations should not mislead the student into believing that
> no process of interpretation is in play; on the contrary, even though fixed,
> the actions of participating people are constructed through a process of
> interpretation (Blumer, 1969: 145).

The objective of symbolic interactionist scholarship is to understand the processes

by which meanings are constructed, modified, and perpetuated through continuous

interaction between and among individuals. This study investigates processes through

which the meanings associated with human trafficking and human trafficking victims are constructed and challenged through oppositional interaction. The U.S. campaign against human trafficking is not a response to the objective phenomenon of trafficking per se, but instead a response to the meanings and symbols associated with human trafficking.

The social construction of meaning in collective action is a political process. Symbolic interactionists have long recognized that actors involved in any collective action, including social movements, are engaged in meaning construction work and are working under the politics of signification (Blumer 1969; Hall 1982), so their work is rarely or never unchallenged. "The process of collective definition is responsible for the emergence of social problems, for the way in which they are seen, for the way in which they are approached and considered, for the kind of remedial plan that is laid out, and for the transformation of the remedial plan in its application" (Blumer, 1971: 301). This inherently involves political processes even though those party to the interactions may not recognize them as such.

Interactionist Subfields: Social Movements and Social Problems

Two subfields of sociological scholarship have developed explanations of how movement actors participate in, and are in control of, meaning-making processes, highlighting the rhetorical and political implications of having control over the meanings and symbols associated with social problems. Both areas are grounded in the symbolic interactionist perspective and employ theoretical frameworks that explain and describe the complex processes of meaning construction. Both subfields employ similar conceptual frameworks that are useful in explaining and describing how framing strategies play an integral role in the contesting of meanings associated with social

problems. As Blumer (1971: 301) stated, "social problems lie in and are the products of collective definition."

Assumptions of Social Problems and Social Movements Literatures

The primary premise of the social problems subfield echoes the assumptions of symbolic interactionism, which is that social problems are not objectively identified conditions that are problematic to society, but rather social problems reflect "the activities of groups making assertions of grievances and claims with respect to some putative conditions" (Kitsuse & Spector, 1973: 415). A condition must be successfully argued to be inherently immoral or unjust (Spector & Kitsuse, 1987) and worthy of intervention. Social problems scholarship can help explain why human trafficking became recognized as a problem when it did, even though coercive labor practices such as indentured servitude and debt bondage had been occurring throughout history, without being seen as problematic for the societies in which they were practiced (Bales, 1999).

The objective for scholars in this subfield is to account for the emergence, maintenance, and history of claims-making and responding activities (Kitsuse & Spector, 1973: 146). Schnieder (1985) argues that sociologists should not be concerned with the validity of participants' claims about any particular condition, but instead with how such claims and definitions are created, documented, pressed, and kept alive: "The point is to account for the viability of these claims, not to judge whether they are true" (79). Analysis should be centered on how claims and grievances are formed and presented, the varieties and nature of the claims, the strategies to advance these claims to gain wider attention, and the power of claimsmakers relative to other claimsmakers.

Many social movement scholars also employ a constructionist approach to understand the negotiated and interactive processes by which movement actors identify and articulate grievances, fashion collective attributions, and seek to neutralize opponents while persuading other audiences to contribute resources to their mobilization campaigns (Benford, 1993b: 697). Social movement scholars have worked to understand how movement actors and movement organizations can be successful in mobilizing supporters into action. While the literature is awash with discussions about what constitutes a social movement and what does not (see Diani, 1992), I use a broader conceptual definition: "Social movements are networks of informal interaction between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organization engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of shared collective identity" (Diani, 1992: 13).

While I rely heavily on the extensive social movement scholarship to guide this study, I am not making the point that the collective AHT activity in the United States constitutes a social movement. As will become clear in the following chapter, much of the AHT activity in the United States is led and heavily influenced by the federal government. While non-governmental advocacy organizations such as the Coalition Against Sex Trafficking (CAST) and the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW), among several others, were very influential in moving human trafficking to the top of the international and national public policy agenda, the subsequent activities within the United States have been characterized by actions of the federal government, and of the governments of the various states.

To illustrate, very few U.S. newspaper articles on human trafficking appeared before 2000, when two major policies were enacted. The first, The United Nations

Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol) was enacted in November 2000. The second, US-based policy, whose formulation included many of the same key players as the Palermo Protocol, was the TVPA, which defined the crime of human trafficking as a federal offense and served as model legislation for subsequent public policy at the local level, and for other countries.   It was only after these achievements that trafficking discourse became a part of the public discourse within the United States. Given that most definitions of social movements emphasize collective action outside of or in opposition to government activity, I refrain from describing the collective AHT activity as a "movement," and instead refer to it as a "campaign." By campaign I mean a collection of individuals and institutions working toward some social or political goal through a series of coordinated activities, such as awareness building events, demonstrations, and other public actions.

Many scholars who have published research on human trafficking also refrain from using the term movement, although their reasons for doing so are unclear. Tichenor (2007) refers to AHT activity as "trafficking reform." Stolz (2005, 2007b) uses the terms "government response" and "interest group activity" to describe anti-trafficking efforts. Both Soderlund (2005) and Doezema (2005, 2010) use the term "discourse." In more critical terms, Weitzer (2007) and McDonald (2004) refer to AHT activity in the United States as a "moral crusade." Thus, my use of the term "campaign" has few precedents in the literature, but I use it because it captures the collective activity element of a social movement, but recognizes that this particular effort is primarily led by the federal government, which it from being a bona fide social movement.

The following sections delve further into the key constructionist concepts that I use to analyze the AHT campaign. I have been using terms claims and frames interchangeably, as they are both expressions and statements that comprise discourse. However, in the sections below, I trace the theoretical background of each term individually to demonstrate the parallel theoretical developments in both fields.

Claims, Frames, and Media Packages

Claims and claimsmaking processes are the primary transmitters of constructed meanings. Generally, claims are rhetorical devices that make assertions about a particular activity, event, or phenomenon. Claims have a standard format comprised of three rhetorical components: grounds, warrants, and conclusions (Best, 1990). Grounds are descriptions of the troubling condition, which involve creating a name to define the condition and illustrating it with typifying examples or atrocity tales (Weitzer, 2007). Typifying examples do not necessarily reflect actual typical cases, but instead are intended to shape the public's (or other audiences') perceptions of the problem and encourage specific perceptions over others. Grounds may also include quantitative claims, or empirical statements attesting to the conditions' widespread prevalence. Other types of grounds include statements that suggest that the problem is getting progressively worse, profiles of both victims and villains, and challenges to other ways of constructing the social problem.

The second element, warrants, are statements that explain why the public should be concerned with the issue. These statements appeal to commonly held values, or standards of good and bad, right and wrong. Finally, the conclusion element of claims

suggests what should be done about the problem, and poses possible solutions. The

proposed solution should be in line with the grounds and warrants that are put forth by

the claimsmakers (Silver, 1997; Best 1990, 1997).

Claimsmaking refers the activities by which groups of people (such as

organizations or agencies) attempt to persuade an audience to perceive that a putative

condition is problematic and in need of attention. The concept of claimsmaking

originates from social constructionism, where conditions are defined or redefined as

social problems via interactions between interested groups and audiences (Best, 1990).

Consequently, of analytical interest is how or why a condition is or is not constructed as a

social problem via claimsmaking, and what features of the claimsmaking processes are

likely to facilitate public support of the claimsmakers' cause.

Claimsmaking can be observed in public and political communication. Mass

media is a powerful venue for distributing claims regarding social problems. Its power

stems from the fact that members of the public get their information about issues in

which they do not have direct experience from mass media. Gamson et al. (1992) found

that for some social issues, media was the main and often exclusive resource used by

individuals to construct meanings and understandings of social problems, with

experiential knowledge playing a minimal role. Knowledge acquisition and opinion

formation about most events in the world appear to be largely based on news discourse in

the press and on television, which is shared daily by millions of people. "Probably no

other discourse type is so pervasive and so shared and read by so many people at more or

less the same time" (van Dijk, 2008: 58). It is true that individuals often their information

from sources other than news media, for instance through social media and non-

journalistic sources like blogs, but newspapers are still the primary news source for many sectors of the U.S. population.

Claimsmakers manipulate the description of the nature and causes of a social problem to invite particular types of official responses, a process known as "problem framing" (Blumer, 1971; Best, 1990, see Farrell & Fahy, 2007).   However, not all claimsmakers are equal, and some will find more success in reaching their objectives than others. Best (1990) categorizes claimsmakers as insiders and outsiders, relative to their relationship to the political body. Insiders are already near sources of power and thus find it easier to conduct claimsmaking without depending heavily on media attention. Influential insiders can be considered the "problem owners." Owning a problem involves "the ability to create and influence the public definition of a problem" (Gusfeld 1981: 10). This occurs when your construction of a problem gains acceptance and you become the authority to whom people turn. To own a problem is to have information and ideas about it that are given a high degree of attention, to the exclusion of others. Owners typically possess the authority to name that condition a problem and to suggest what should be done about it. Outsiders operate externally to sources of power in the society and thus rely on mass media to get their claims to reach audiences such as policy makers and the general public.

Frames and framing processes are effective counterparts to claims and claimsmaking. Frames are cognitive structures that help define how one sees the world and are articulated and distributed by individuals through interaction. While not the originator of the concept, Goffman (1974) advanced its use, arguing that frames lead people to notice particular aspects of an interaction, event, or phenomenon at a

subconscious level, which ultimately shapes how they interpret what is happening around them. In the context of social movements, we have collective action frames, which are "emergent action-oriented sets of belief and meanings that inspire and legitimate social movement activities and campaigns" (Gamson et al., 1992: 67-68). By examining the role of collective action frames, scholars have focused on the meanings strategically constructed by political actors. Framing refers to organized efforts to bring attention to extant social conditions and incite social change using collective action frames to "... [A]ssign meaning to and interpret relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support and to demobilize antagonists" (Snow & Bedford, 1988: 198).

Just as claims do the work of defining a problem (grounds), convincing people to take action (warrants), and suggesting possible solutions (conclusions), there are three frame types that serve the same purposes: diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames (Snow & Benford, 1988). Diagnostic frames, like grounds, describe the nature of the troubling conditions and explain how they came to be. Prognostic frames, a counterpart to conclusions, explain what needs to be done to solve the troubling situation. These two processes are effective in defining the elements and boundaries of a public problem, but do not guarantee mobilization, or any action on the part of potential supporters. Motivational frames, similar to warrants, provide compelling reasons why individuals ought to care about the condition by evoking a sense of urgency or severity. These framing tasks can be identified in texts, such as media articles, speeches, documents, and other forms of communication. A single sentence may perform more than one of these four framing functions, although many sentences in a text may perform none of them.

Further, a frame in any particular text may not necessarily perform all four functions (Entman, 1993: 52).

Mass media provide an effective venue for social construction processes to operate; they are a site on which various social groups "struggle over the definition and construction of social reality" (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989: 3; Best 1990, 1997; see Althiede, 1996). While general audience media, such as newspapers and news broadcasts, are not the only forum of public discourse, they are a primary source of information that individuals use to develop perceptions and understandings. Kielbowitz and Scherer (1986) propose that the media are instrumental for social movements in at least three ways. First, media are important means of reaching the general public, to acquire approval and to mobilize potential participants. Second, media links movements with other political and social actors. Finally, media can provide psychological support for movement actors.

Frames and claims are distributed through media platforms in "interpretive packages" (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Each package contains all the content that frames and claims have, although the language and terminology are a little different. A media package consists of a core frame, framing devices, and reasoning devices. The core frame is the implicit cultural phenomenon that defines the packages as a whole – for instance, a value or an archetype. The framing devices are mechanisms that function as indicators of the frame, such as vocabulary, catchphrases, and depictions; all of which contribute to the rhetorical structure of a message (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989).

We are already familiar with what is inside a media package, because it is the same as claims and frames. What is more important, however, is what a media package does. "A package offers a number of different condensing symbols that suggest the core frame and positions in shorthand, making it possible to display the package as a whole with a deft metaphor, catchphrase or some other symbolic device" (Gamson & Modigliani 1989:3). Packages, like claims in the marketplace, are faced with the task of constructing and re-asserting their meaning over time.

The Social Problems Marketplace

The previous sections provided definitions for key concepts such as framing and claimsmaking and described some of the ways they are used by campaign actors. However, the mere presence of frames does not guarantee their influence on or over audience thinking (Entman, 1993), just as claims do not guarantee the graduation of a social condition to a public problem. To account for the competitive nature of claimsmaking activities, Best (1990) advanced the concept of the "social problems marketplace," referring to the environment in which claimsmakers compete for resources such as the attention of media outlets, policymakers, and the general public. The marketplace can only support so many claims of so many problems, and in order to compete, claimsmakers must make their claims strategically. Insider claimsmakers and problem owners are the elites in this marketplace; their power is demonstrated by their ability to shape public debate, define issues as problematic, and suggest appropriate remedies.

The marketplace is where claimsmakers use their symbolic power to advance their claims and maintain an advantaged position over their competitors. Framing and

claimsmaking are essentially exertions of symbolic power, not just by political elites, but also by representatives of other constituencies that are working in the context of the problems marketplace. The previous section explained the role of these "symbolic elites" – those who exercise power in the ability to set the agendas of public discussion, influence topical relevance, and manage the type of information, especially who is being portrayed and in what ways (van Dijk, 2008: 32). These include activists, advocates, policymakers, etc. While they may all be working toward the same general cause, they may disagree when it comes down to specifics, such as ideas about what causes the problem, or how it should best be addressed. As a result, they may be making claims that are toward the same goal, though they vary in content and objectives.

Control of the public discourse is essentially control of public perception, and thus it indirectly influences what the public wants or does (Bourdieu, 1977). At issue here is how specific groups in society are able to control the definition of and emotions evoked by specific events and attitudes about social issues. Unequal relations between media authors, audiences and the "targets of collective activity" help to insulate media narratives from empirical challenges and the efforts of academics or other actors to insert alternative depictions in to the media discourse (Hallgrimsdottir et al., 2008).

Competitive Interactions in the Marketplace

As I suggested earlier, claims and their media counterparts, interpretive packages, must work to stay relevant in a competitive marketplace. At any given time, numerous claims about a variety of social problems are bombarding the audience. Claimsmakers compete with each other to get the audience's attention and keep refining their claimsmaking in an effort to be more successful. Especially important for our purposes

here, even if their issue has become well-established as a social problem, claimsmakers need to keep refining their claims so that the problem does not become stale and lose the attention of policymakers and the general public. Framing research has demonstrated that "salience" is what makes frames and claims resonate with their target audiences by making information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences (Snow et al., 1986).

Salience keeps claims relevant to the changing political context and helps keep the issue at the top of the public agenda (Gamson et al., 1992). An increase in salience enhances the probability that receivers will perceive the information, discern its meaning and process it, and then store it in memory (Entman, 1993: 53). The salience of a frame determines whether most people notice a problem and how they understand and remember it, as well as how they evaluate and choose to act upon it. Benford and Snow (2000) suggest that frames can be made more salient by associating them with culturally familiar symbols -- what Snow and Benford refer to as "frame resonance."

Certain characteristics of frames positively affect the frame's ability to resonate with an audience, and thus their salience. Frame consistency, the congruence between a claimsmaker's articulated beliefs, claims, and actions, is an important source of a frame's salience. If there are obvious contradictions in their claims or in their actions, this reduces a frame's resonance. A second quality is the empirical credibility of such claims. Consistent with the constructionist paradigm, empirical credibility refers to the apparent fit between framings and events or phenomena in the world. Is there something "out there" in the empirical world that can be pointed to as evidence for the claim? The issue here is not whether the diagnostic/ prognostic frames are factually or empirically valid,

but whether their empirical referents lend themselves to being read as actual indicators or expressions of the diagnostic claims (Benford & Snow, 2000:621). Also directly influencing the resonance of a particular diagnostic frame is the perceived credibility of the frame articulator or claimsmaker (Benford & Snow, 2000). The greater the status and/ or perceived expertise of the frame articulators and/ or the organization they represent, the more plausible and resonant the framings or claims (Benford & Snow, 2000: 621).

Resonance is also achieved through frame alignment strategies, which are ways that movement actors adjust their frames to influence how potential supporters or recruits to the movement think about the world (Snow et al., 1986). A primary concern in the study of social movements is to understand how movement actors, such as social movement organizations (SMOs), are able to recruit potential supporters to their cause by aligning the organization's ideology and values to those of the individuals who represent potential supporters or movement adherents. To garner support and attract movement recruits, SMOs engage in frame alignment processes. Frame alignment emphasizes the linkages or connections between individuals and SMO interpretive frameworks. Essentially, SMOs use these strategies to demonstrate to potential movement supporters that their frames are shared (Snow et al., 1986). The more activists can align frames with the hopes and thoughts of those whom they are trying to enlist to the cause, the greater the chance of recruitment.

Figure 2.1 lists the four major frame alignment processes Snow and his colleagues (1986) conceptualized. Movement actors use frame bridging to reach out to "sympathetic" members of the public who already support similar causes, and attempt to

recruit their support by bridging their movement to other related or similar issues. Frame extension is stretching a collective frame to include other issues or problems that current supporters are likely to already believe are important. Frame amplification is motivational and appeals to potential supporters' belief systems as ways of garnering support. Finally, frame transformation is a more radical alignment strategy, where movement actors encourage potential recruits to modify the way they have been thinking about a particular issue. The goal of frame transformation is to substantially change the meanings that are usually associated with the problem.

Figure 2.1: Framing Alignment Processes

Frame Alignment Process	Conceptual Definition
Frame bridging	Reaching out to those who support similar causes to establish links between frames and movements
Frame amplification	Using values to rally involvement of others to the cause
Frame extension	Stretching a frame to include what likely recruits may believe to be important (Associated with domain expansion)
Frame transformation	Asking potential recruits to stop seeing the world in their normal manner and instead see it the way the activists do

Adapted from Snow et al. (1986: 467-470)

Identification and Attributional Functions of Frames

Thus far, I have described the different frame types (diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational); have noted that frames are a kind of claim that are used to exert influence over how a particular problem is defined; and have stated that claimsmakers use frame alignment strategies to compete with other claimsmakers. Another way to conceptualize

the interpretive work of claims is to understand their identification and attributional functions, which occur simultaneously but are analytically different. The identification function of frames and claims serves to name the problem and demonstrate how and why it is problematic. This includes providing information about what the problem looks like and perhaps providing evidence of the problem's prevalence and scope (Snow & Benford, 1992: 137). Another way to think about the identification function is to consider the "grounds" component of claims (Best, 1990), which names a condition and offers quantitative evidence to suggest how widespread or prevalent the issue is. Frames and claims fulfill the identification by function bringing attention to the problem itself and by creating an image of the problem to share with audiences.

The attributional function of frames characterizes other actors in the social problems marketplace and constructs their collective character (Hunt et al., 1994). Collective character is a dimension of the broader concept of collective identity, "the shared definition of a group that derives from common interests, experiences, and solidarity (Taylor et al., 1992: 104). Frames can make implicit claims, whether complementary or accusatory, about the other actors in the marketplace. In typical social movements, where there are clearly identifiable movement and countermovement elements, claimsmakers will use framing to discredit the collective character of their critics and simultaneously protect their own collective identity. The attribution function of frames is used to influence the salience of counter-claims by challenging the credibility of other claimsmakers and their claims.

> Not only do framing processes link individuals and groups ideologically but they proffer, buttress, and embellish identities that range from collaborative to conflictual. They do this by situating or placing relevant

sets of actors in time and space and by attributing characteristics to them that suggest specifiable relationships and plans of action (Hunt et al., 1994: 185).

To attribute traits to the collective identities of other movement actors, dominant actors make specific claims about their strategic or moral character. They can depict their adversaries, or some other villain, as irrational, immoral, and devoid of compassion and feeling. As an example, consider the statements made by attorneys general from several jurisdictions across the United States about the company that publishes and operates the website Backpage.com. Backpage.com is a classifieds website where users can anonymously post personal ads, and it is considered by attorneys general to be a venue for traffickers to advertise and sell commercial sex. As dominant campaign actors, they have the ability to construct and influence the website company's collective character by making statements about its lack of moral integrity and weak commitment to protecting vulnerable people from exploitation. The quote below is an example of the attributional function of framing:

> Many state attorneys general believe that Backpage.com is attempting to minimize the discussion of child sex trafficking because they fear it will turn attention to the company's robust prostitution advertising business. The attorneys general involved believe that 'Backpage.com sets a minimal bar for content review in an effort to temper public condemnation, while ensuring that the revenue spigot provided by prostitution advertising remains intact' (Feely, 2011).

By referring to the owners of the website as just doing the minimum to avoid public scrutiny while protecting their "revenue spigot," the attorneys general are seeking to influence their collective character and imply that they are more concerned with profit than the well-being of child-victims who are allegedly being trafficked via the website.

As such, they are framed as contributing to the ongoing sexual exploitation of children for profit.

In the course of framing diagnoses, prognoses, and motives, claimsmakers locate their own organization and its views within the marketplace. Figure 2.2 outlines the three major framing tasks and compares their identification function (problem framing) and attributional function. Diagnostic framing, for example, identifies some event or condition as problematic and in need of amelioration and implicitly designates culpable agents. By specifying who is responsible for particular social ills, movement actors make implicit character claims about themselves and their organizations, such as being "not willing to tolerate suffering, injustice and the like" (Hunt et al., 1994: 199).

Figure 2.2: Identification and Attributional Functions of Frames[3]

	Identification (Problem Framing)	Attributional (Collective Character)
Diagnostic	Involves the articulation and amplification of an aspect of the world collectively considered to be in need of ameliorative action (Snow & Benford, 1992: 137)	Imputes traits and motives for those who are viewed as having caused or exacerbated the problem. Casts others in role identities of villain, culprit, antagonist; entails the social construction and avowal of motives and the identities of protagonists.
Motivational	Encourages action by emphasizing the urgent need for action, the severity of the problem, and the moral propriety of taking action (Silver, 1997).	Entails the social construction and avowal of motives and identities of protagonists. These shared identities and motives in turn serve as an impetus for collective action.
Prognostic	Identifies a plan for redress, or a solution that is, in effect, tied to the diagnostic frame.	Specifies what actions should be taken and which movement actors are appropriate to make statements about the problem's solution.

The following statement made by a federal prosecutor offers a diagnostic frame that identifies the problem of human trafficking, attributes blame to traffickers, and makes implicit claims about the appropriateness of his own agency's role in ending trafficking:

> 'The simple reason for the growth of trafficking in recent years is that it is profitable' said the report, which documents sexual slavery in 190 countries, including the United States. 'Traffickers know that the potential

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[3] Adapted from Snow and Benford (1992: 137-138) and (Hunt et al., 1994: 190-192).

profits are high and that the risk of prosecution is relatively low. That's where we come in. It's our job to go after these guys and make them pay' (Malone, 2001).

In prognostic frames, the claimsmaker offers a possible solution or plan of action that is based on the diagnostic frame. In addition to stating a solution, the prognostic frame implies which campaign actors are best suited to intervene. Movement actors can point to their framings as evidence of individual or collective character. In the following example, a county sheriff suggests that the best solution is increased prosecution, which implicitly makes claims about his and his agency's collective character, preserving their position within the marketplace as the appropriate entities to take action.

'We want to make the cost of doing business so high that these folks decide that they don't want to do this business,' Mr. Watkins said. 'We plan on vigorously prosecuting these individuals. We want to send a message to the community that we're not going to tolerate this in Dallas County' (Eiserer, 2007).

Motivational frames go beyond identifying the problem and its solutions to emphasize why action is important. Motivational frames emphasize the severity of the problem, the urgent need for a solution, and the moral propriety of collective action. These frames are also used to make claims about the motives and objectives of other movement actors, which can be complementary or accusatory. The previous quote by the attorneys general is a good example of this: their claim suggests that the website owners are motivated by greed, which trumps their desire to protect children from sexual exploitation.

In situations where there is a clear movement and countermovement (pro-choice and pro-life), it is easier to identify relevant actors and their positions. Similarly, the attorneys general example above demonstrates in-group/ out-group distinctions between

the campaign and obvious villains: traffickers and companies that facilitate trafficking activity through their website. However, in a situation such as the AHT campaign where there is no clear opposition, this concept may also apply to "antagonists" that operate within the campaign. In Chapter 1, I characterized the AHT campaign within the United States as one that is comprised of interest groups that generally agree on the severity of human trafficking and the need for comprehensive state-led reform, but have deep-seated ideological differences in their interpretations of the kind of exploitation involved. As such, those who are at one point "on board" with the campaign may later make critical statements about the campaign's activities. For example, a policymaker who aggressively pushed for the passage of a new anti-human trafficking bill may later suggest that the legislation was not an effective use of resources. Or, victim advocates who were the most visible in making claims about the needs of victims may appear to do an about-face when they disagree with a particular policy proposal. These less visible, but incredibly important, machinations have implications for understanding how meaning negotiation and interaction occur. They also offer us a chance to observe how dominant actors maintain their ability to control interpretive activity when the adversaries come from within the campaign. What is needed is a more nuanced conceptualization of the collections of actors within the marketplace that can address challenges from within the campaign.

Instead of considering in-groups and out-groups as static collections with relatively unchanging membership, Hunt et al. (1994: 192) suggest that attributions of collective character cluster around three "identity fields:" protagonist, antagonist, and audience fields. Each identity field consists of a collection of imputed or avowed

identities. This conceptualization allows us to categorize actors based on the claims about

their collective identity, as opposed to static membership in in-groups and out-groups.

The protagonist field serves as a point of reference as actors are categorized into the other

fields based on their relationship to the protagonists. For reference, Figure 2.3 defines

the three primary identity fields.

Figure 2.3: Collective Identity Fields in the Problems Marketplace

Type of Identity Field	Conceptual Definition
Protagonist	Collection of attributions and characteristics about the actors (individuals, organizational, symbolic), generally understood to the advocates of the cause. Also part of the protagonist field are the "innocent victims" or the "silent majority."
Antagonist	Constellations of identity attributions about individuals and collectivities imputed to be opponents of movement (protagonist) causes.
Audience/ Neutral	Constellations of identity attributions about individuals and collectivities imputed to be neutral or uncommitted observers who may react to or report on movement activities. For example, allied SMOs, the media, powerful elites, marginal supporters, sympathizers, and bystander publics can be the subjects of audience identity claims.

Adapted from Hunt et al. (1994)

Protagonists are generally considered to be the best-known agents of a social

movement and are typically the owners of the problem (Gusfeld, 1981). They are

perceived as the cause's leaders and experts. The actors who are in the position of

advancing influential diagnostic frames are typically the protagonists. The narrative they

advance is usually synonymous with the "dominant meaning" (Entman, 1993), which is

synonymous with the "official frame." From a framing perspective, the dominant

meaning consists of causal, evaluative, and treatment-focused interpretations of the problem that have the highest probability of being noticed, processed, and accepted by the most people. To say that a particular meaning or framing is dominant or preferred is to suggest that a particular framing of the situation is most heavily supported by the text and resonates with the audiences' most widely held values and beliefs (Entman, 1993: 56).

Claims coming from the protagonist field usually include collective identity claims about "the movement" and allied actors and organizations. They also involve a variety of personal identity attributions such as "movement heroes and heroines, paid and unpaid staffers, leaders, rank and file followers, and star supporters" (Hunt et al., 1994: 193). In the context of the AHT campaign, the protagonists are abolitionists who are generally concerned with the eradication of sex trafficking; in terms of ideology, they conflate sex trafficking with prostitution. The protagonist field includes government officials and state agencies to the extent that they carry forth the official frame, such as the attorneys general in a previous example. The protagonist field also includes advocacy, service, and other non-governmental organizations that are making claims about human trafficking and trafficked individuals. The interest groups that have been most engaged and prominent in human trafficking policy are women's, human rights, religious, immigration and refugee, and other organizations dedicated to social and international justice (Stolz, 2005, 2006; Weitzer, 2007; Tichenor, 2007). Much of what we have learned about framing processes and mobilization comes from extensively studying the protagonist field. However, Hunt et al. (1994) argue that the identities associated with

the antagonist and audience fields are as fundamental to collective action as those of the protagonist.

The other two fields are defined by their relationship to the protagonists. The antagonist field includes the entities that express challenges to or criticisms of the protagonists' claims. The term has generally been used to refer to countermovements, or entities (such as the pro-life counterpart to pro-choice) that are outside the social movement and are posing direct challenges or critiques. However, as Benford (1993b) indicates, antagonists can be members of the movement itself who disagree with the dominant claims. Here, we would include actors that challenge the claims of the protagonists. Klandermans (1992) notes that in congruence with the dynamic nature of interaction, the boundaries between these fields are fluid and constantly negotiated. Over time, he argues, we would expect to see actors shift between the protagonist and antagonist fields depending on what is happening in the marketplace. For example, policymakers and victim advocates can at one point in time be bona fide members of the protagonist field and later shift into the antagonist field because they disagree the campaign's activities.

The third identity field is comprised of the audience. A common characteristic of all imputed audience identities is that they are considered neutral or "uncommitted," but are capable of receiving and evaluating protagonist messages in a favorable light (Hunt et al., 1994: 186). The audience's attention is the scarce resource over which the claimsmakers are competing. As Edelman (1988: 32) observes, "it is the audience acceptance that makes it possible for interest groups, public officials, or anyone else to portray a set of conditions as a problem."

Social Construction of a Target Population

In addition to identifying and describing the process of human trafficking, the campaign is primarily concerned with making claims about trafficked individuals. Hunt et al. (1994) include the "target population," or the anticipated beneficiaries of social action in the protagonist field. The protagonist actors make claims on behalf of the "silent" or "voiceless" victims, for whose benefit the campaign is working. By using the term "trafficked individual" instead of "trafficking victim," I am recognizing that the "victim" is an identity that is constructed via framing practices and not necessarily one tied to the objective criteria of being trafficked.

The social construction of a target population refers to 1) the recognition of the shared characteristics that distinguish a target population as social meaningful, and 2) the attribution of specific, valence-oriented values, symbols and images to the characteristics (Schneider & Ingram, 1993: 335). For the victim to be an effective symbol, the depiction must be one that is consistent with other claims that resonate with audiences.

As claimsmakers negotiate a problem's definition, causes, and resolutions, they develop a discourse that includes understandings of who has been injured via a socially constructed process of victimization (Holstein & Miller, 1997: 29). The social construction of victims and their collective identity not only contributes to the specification of the problem, but it is also central to the formulation of responses and remedies (Holstein & Miller, 1997: 33). In the United States, someone is often categorized as a victim when others perceive that person to be deserving of sympathy. Loseke (1993: 78-79) offers the following characteristics of people who are most often deemed as worthy of sympathy: 1) people who are not responsible for the

harm they experience; 2) people who are evaluated as moral; and 3) people in exceptionally troublesome conditions. Calling someone a victim encourages others to see how forces beyond his or her control have harmed the "victimized" person. This attribution places responsibility for the harm on situations or factors external to the "victim" (Holstein & Miller 1997: 29). The "ideal" victim (Dunn, 2001) is dependent on the state or another protective entity for rescue and is part of a culturally recognized vulnerable population (Best 1990; Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Without this victim image, the social problem is without an immediately recognizable symbol to prompt urgent and immediate action.

Therefore, it is worth exploring the social construction of human trafficking victims. Who constitutes a human trafficking victim depends on the person making the claim. A key element of the AHT discourse is to reformulate prostitutes as victims instead of criminals. This construction places blame for their harm (being engaged in prostitution) on forces outside their control. The victim must be perceived as entirely lacking in agency or self-determination, unable to help themself out of a harmful situation, and an obvious non-participant in the events that have caused the person's misery (Braumann, 1993; Holstein & Miller, 1997; Carpenter, 2005). In other words, the victim must be unambiguously innocent of whatever wrongdoing led to his or her current circumstances.

The image of the defenseless human trafficking victim has been effective in mobilizing resources and has been successful in attracting international attention to the issue, but as a condensing symbol (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995), it lumps different kinds of victimization together into one stereotypical profile. Consequently, the image

homogenizes the experiences and circumstances of trafficked people all over the world (Aronowitz, 2004, Kligman & Limoncelli, 2005; Weitzer, 2007), and reduces the variation among victim experiences to a solid, cohesive and unambiguous victimization narrative (Holstein & Miller, 1997; Best, 1997). As this study will show, depictions of victims are what drive the campaign forward, but they may also be its biggest threat. If it happens that as more and more empirical information is made available that does not correspond with movement claims, the claims can lose credibility (Snow & Benford, 2000; McDonald, 2004) and thereby jeopardizing the efficacy of the entire campaign.

Control over trafficking discourse: oppositional framing strategies

Benford (1993b) argues that in social movements, the social construction of meanings is contested terrain, and that no frames are simply proffered and automatically accepted. Rather, they engage in a back and forth exchange, what Hunt et al. (1994) refer to as an "emergent drama." When considering the advancement of claims in discourse, Gamson (1988) reminds us that it is useful to think of themes dialectically: "There is no theme without a countertheme. The theme is conventional and normative; the countertheme is adversarial and contentious" (Gamson 1988: 167). This interpretive drama occurs in a competitive environment, where the most successful claims are those that resonate with, or correspond to, what target audiences already believe.

Human trafficking can be considered to be a valence issue, or one where there is little to no explicit opposition. Best's classic example is child abuse; there is no pro-child abuse lobby because to condone child abuse is morally objectionable. In the same way, there is no "pro-trafficking" constituency. However, even if they all agree on the importance of combatting human trafficking, not all participants of a movement will

share the same interpretation of the characteristics of trafficking victims or the need for new public policy, leading them to create a frame dispute (Goffman, 1974). Social movement actors expend considerable time and energy to construct particular versions of reality and to communicate those versions to various audiences in an attempt to mobilize resources, such as individuals and money, in support of the movement's objectives. But disputes often arise between different movement actors, each side portraying the social condition differently and seeing their perspective as the correct one.

Frame disputes are conflicts among actors that occur within a social movement (Benford, 1993b). Frame disputes are essentially conflicts over interpretations of reality or over the most strategic way to portray reality to maximize resource and participant mobilization. Figure 2.4 below summarizes Benford's conceptualization of frame disputes, of which there are three ideal types. The first two, diagnostic and prognostic frame disputes, are disagreements over the nature of the problem and over specific interpretations about the problem's causes and solutions. The third, resonance frame disputes, are disagreements over how reality should be portrayed in public communications. Resonance frame disputes are typically disagreements about the most effective movement strategy for framing particular issues to maximize mobilizations. Unlike diagnostic and prognostic disputes, resonance disputes are not over interpretations of what is real or true about a problem, but rather how it should be framed for audiences. Resonance frame disputes typically take place "backstage" (Goffman, 1974), in private strategy and planning meanings and are not usually part of media discourse.

Figure 2.4: Ideal Types of Frame Disputes

Types of Frame Disputes	Definition
Diagnostic Frame Dispute	Disagreement over diagnoses can pertain to problem identification or to attribution of claim or causality.
Prognostic Frame Dispute	Differences over alternative visions of reality, including what is to be done to change extant reality.
Resonance Frame Dispute	The debate is not over what is or ought to be real, but rather how reality should be presented to maximize mobilization.

Adapted from Benford (1993: 689-691).

A volley of claims between protagonists and antagonists characterizes a frame dispute where actors criticize the interpretations of the other side and offer alternative interpretations, they consider to be more accurate. The attempt to frame a condition as problematic invites counterframes, which are challenges to the original claim. Movement protagonists respond to these challenges, which may be cooperative or combative, by reframing the challenges in such a way as to limit any potential damage to their credibility. My study explores how campaign actors challenge dominant frames and how movement protagonists subsequently respond to those challenges through framing, counterframing, and reframing. Two movement concepts are central here: counterframing and reframing. When antagonists challenge the claims of the protagonists, they are engaged in counterframing. When the protagonists respond to these challenges, they are engaged in reframing. Counterframing and reframing are two oppositional framing processes where meanings associated with the social problem are challenged and either transformed or re-asserted.

Counterframing Strategies

The United States AHT campaign is an "emergent drama" between protagonist and antagonist actors, each trying to establish their claims and to challenge the claims of their opponents. Any movement actor, theoretically, can step into the social problem discourse stream to challenge the claims espoused by movement protagonists and/or to espouse their own problems claims. Counterframing refers to any attempt to "rebut, undermine, or neutralize a person's or group's myths, versions of reality, or interpretive framework" (Benford, 1997: 75).

Benford and Hunt (2003) identified four types of counterframes advanced by movement actors: problem denial, counter-diagnoses, counter-prognoses and attacking the character of the movement or its members. Benford and Hunt (2003) follow Hunt et al. (1994) in recognizing that frames have both identification and attribution functions. Counterframes offer alternative interpretations of reality, and they also implicitly construct the identities of movement actors. All four types of counterframes can damage the protagonists' collective identity, which protagonists will subsequently attempt to repair by reframing (Snow & Hunt, 2003: 162). The identification and attribution functions of counterframes are summarized in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5: Counterframing Strategies

	Identification	**Attribution**
Problem denial	Asserts there is no problem or injury worthy of ameliorative action.	By denying the existence of a problem, or denying injury, movement antagonists are essentially questioning the movement's *raison d' être.*
Counter diagnosis	Seeks to redirect public attention from the stated targets of change identified by dominant movement actors. Identifies other possible causes.	By challenging the official diagnosis, antagonists implicitly question the collective identity claims of the protagonists (Snow & Hunt, 2003: 163)
Counter prognosis	Criticizes logic of proposed solutions and suggests proposed solutions as being incorrect or harmful.	By questioning the reasonableness of movement prognoses, antagonists implicitly impugn the protagonists' character.
Attacking the collective character		By attacking the collective character of protagonists, antagonists attribute collective traits such as "They are all heart, no head;" "They have vested interests;" or "They are on the side of the villains."

While most campaign actors are committed to eradicating human trafficking, sectors within the movement may disagree with one another about what causes it and what the best solution is. In so doing, they are implicitly attributing collective identity characteristics to the other actors. The first three types of counterframes refer to interpretations of reality, or debate over characteristics of the problem. Problem denial is exactly that, an antagonistic denial of the problem's existence. By denying the existence

of the problem, antagonists implicitly suggest that the movement's actors are irrational or are "making a big deal over nothing." In valence issues like human trafficking, typically no one denies the existence of the problem (at least not in the mainstream media), so no one is questioning the legitimacy of the entire campaign. Yet, when it comes to diagnostic and prognostic claims, counterframes may problematize the claims made by protagonists and replace them with alternative claims. Counterdiagnoses and counterprognoses are alternative interpretations of the problem's causes and solutions, which could imply that the protagonists do not understand the problem and are perhaps misguided in their diagnostic and prognostic claims. By suggesting that the protagonist frames are inaccurate or incomplete, counterdiagnoses and counterprognoses suggest that campaign protagonists are not the best suited to be making claims about the problem or suggesting solutions because their understanding of the situation is inadequate or problematic.

The first three counterframe types are disagreements about the nature of the problem that also make implicit statements about the collective character of other actors. However, Benford and Hunt (2003) also identified three primary ways in which counterframers *directly* challenge the collective character of protagonists, which are also listed in Figure 2.5. The first, "all heart and no head" is a direct avowal of attributes such as naiveté and a lack of true understanding. While their goals may be noble, their understanding of the problem is flawed because their emotions are interfering with their logical understanding of the problem. "Vested interests" accuses movement protagonists of standing to benefit from any action or intervention and that their participation in the movement is driven by an alternative agenda and insincerity. The third direct challenge

to collective character is that protagonists are "on the side of the villains," accusing them of wittingly or unwittingly taking action that makes things worse for people or benefits the villains. In all of these cases, we see movement actors advance criticisms or challenges to the movement's interpretation of the reality of the social problem. These counterframes can discredit both the claims themselves and the collective character of the claimsmaker.

Reframing Strategies

Movement protagonists use diagnostic and prognostic frames to define or identify characteristics of a social problem, and also to make identity claims for themselves that legitimize their actions as the problem "owners." Their framing activity situates themselves as the "experts and heroes" of the social problem, solidly positioning themselves as the authorities and a reliable source of information. Thus, they devote considerable resources to responding to the challenges by reframing them in various ways (Klandermans, 1992; Hunt et al., 1994). Problem owners reframe challenges in order to protect and preserve their collective identity and maintain the salience and resonance of their frames. Reframing refers to the collective attempts of problem owners to respond to the counterframes of movement opponents in ways intended to "ward off, contain, limit or reverse potential damage" to the movement's previous claims or attributes (Snow & Hunt, 2003: 170). Snow and Hunt (2003) identified four primary types of reframing strategies, which are summarized in Figure 2.6.

The first is keying. Goffman (1974: 43-44) defined a "key" as "the set of conventions by which a given activity, one already meaningful in terms of some primary framework, is transformed into something patterned on this activity but seen by the

participants to be something quite else." In the area of social movements, keying occurs

when movement participants restate claims made by antagonists in such a way as to give

them new meanings that subvert or stand in opposition to the ones originally conveyed.

Snow and Hunt (2003: 170) conceive of keying as a dialectical process of meaning

attribution, interpretation, and reframing of meaning.

Figure 2.6: Reframing Techniques

Reframing Strategy	Conceptual Definition
Keying	Protagonists restate claims by antagonists in such a way as to give new meanings that subvert, or stand in opposition to, ones originally conveyed.
Distancing	Protagonists distance their organization from attributed identities that they find undesirable, and often embrace other imputed identities.
Embracing	Protagonists accept and affirm outsider's collective identity attributions (usually associated with frame transformation)
Malignment	Protagonists direct rhetorical attacks on antagonists' ideology and criticize their ideological focus, or accuse them of bias.

An example of keying, which will be explored in Chapter 5, concerns campaign

claims about the prevalence of sex trafficking in relation to other forms of trafficking.

Campaign protagonists made numerous claims that sex trafficking has been increasing in

the United States and that sex trafficking accounts for the majority of human trafficking

in the world. Campaign antagonists challenged these claims as inaccurate, offered the

counterdiagnosis that human trafficking was not a "sex" issue, but rather a "work" issue,

and argued that "real trafficking" occurs primarily in construction industries. In their

response to this challenge, campaign leaders reframed the criticism, stating that antagonists claimed that "sex trafficking is rare" and then provided data to suggest that sex trafficking is indeed common. The original challenge was about the relative prevalence of sex trafficking compared to other forms of trafficking, but the protagonists distorted the antagonists' claim as if it had reflected absolute rather than relative numbers of sex trafficking victims. By restating the challenge to be the claim that sex trafficking is rare, this eliminated any grounds for comparison with other kinds of human trafficking. The protagonists "keyed" the challenge to be a different challenge, one to which they could more easily respond.

Distancing refers to the manner in which protagonists separate themselves from problematic attributes by distinguishing themselves from those with a problematic identity. Embracing refers to the process of "acknowledging" the avowed attributes and suggesting that what challengers perceive as a problem is actually a benefit. For example, "Yes, we are trouble makers, but that is how you get things done!" Malignment is a rhetorical strategy that discredits challengers by calling out some ideological bias or suggesting that they are actually working against the campaign.

I argue that the abolitionists use reframing techniques, especially keying and malignment, to exercise control over human trafficking discourse in the United States. The abolitionists are campaign elites who can control what is said and what is not said about trafficking and trafficked individuals by reframing counterclaims in ways that protect their collective identity from being damaged. Specifically, they use reframing to veil contradiction in their claimsmaking and to insulate their claims from further scrutiny, which in turn maintains the credibility and salience of their claims and their collective

identity. This way, they can preserve their privileged position in the marketplace and maintain control over the interpretive work of the campaign.

Snow and Hunt (2003) acknowledge that these strategies are ideal types which in reality often overlap one another. They further recognize that these reframing strategies can be used in tandem. However, they suggest that questions of whether a claim is a theme, a counter theme, a frame or counter frame is largely immaterial. "Researchers must start somewhere in the stream of claimsmaking. Such distinctions are conventions, sensitizing concepts that help make sense of the unfolding drama of contested meanings and should not be construed as portraying essential features of individuals and collectives and claims" (177).

Trafficking discourse and the ideology of victimization

Taken together, the assertion of the dominant frame by protagonists, the corresponding counterframes, and subsequent reframes constitute an ongoing, continuously constructed discourse of meanings about trafficking and trafficking victims. Through oppositional framing, the "dominant meaning" (Entman, 1993) is asserted, challenged, and defended. The ability to influence the content and distribution of interpretive packages through the media is an exercise of symbolic power. Symbolic power is the ability to control what is in the mind of the public, and thus, indirectly influence what the public wants or does. Symbolic elites are able to set the agenda of public discussion, and manage the type of information that is released, especially who is being portrayed and in what way (Bourdieu 1977).

The data in this study indicate that during the 12-year period after the TVPA was passed, campaign actors utilize reframing techniques to respond to an ongoing onslaught of challenges from antagonistic entities within the AHT campaign. As I will show, they used reframing to discredit the collective identities of their challengers, veil contradictions in their own claims, and protect them from further scrutiny. They were able to accomplish this by making claims that resonated with audiences because the claims were in alignment with a victimization ideology, a set of widely-accepted assumptions about the nature of victimization.

We can think about victimization, the process by which people become victims, in two ways. The first is based on common sense. We have a generally agreed upon understanding of who constitutes a victim: any person we believe to have been unjustly harmed or injured. We routinely label persons believed to have been unjustly harmed or damaged as "victims." Because this understanding of victimization is consistent with what we consider to be victims, or "common sense," we gloss over the interpretive procedures through which the term is selected, applied, and justified (Holstein & Miller, 1997). These procedures are interactions that are foundational to constructionist processes because they are the mechanisms through which meanings are negotiated on an ongoing basis. These interactions are central to the second way in which we can understand victimization: as an interactional dynamic. Describing someone as a victim is more than describing a problematic feature in the social world: it actually creates that world (Holstein & Miller, 1997: 27). As such, a victim's status depends "as much on the identities, bases of influence, and rhetoric and counter-rhetoric of contesting parties as it

does on the characteristics of the candidate victims themselves" (Holstein & Miller, 1997: 37).

This dissertation develops an explanation of how campaign leaders have been able to maintain control over the trafficking discourse in the United States, even amid continuous challenges to their claims. This control, I argue, is maintained by campaign leaders exercising symbolic power by aligning their framing activity to be consistent with a victimization ideology. Coined by Joel Best (1997), a victimization ideology is a collection of propositions about the nature of victimization, or how one becomes a victim. The ideology is not a general theory of victimization, but is instead seven individual tenets, which tend to be invoked individually by individual campaigns that work to draw attention to particular kinds of victimization. Figure 2.7 summarizes of the seven tenets of a victimization ideology.

Figure 2.7: Seven Tenets of an Ideology of Victimization

Victimization is widespread.	Attempts to draw attention to social problems often emphasize the large number of people affected, and claims about victims routinely argue that victimization is widespread, sometimes almost ubiquitous.
Victimization is consequential.	Even a single, brief incident can have consequences that extend throughout a person's life.
Relationships between victims and their perpetrators are relatively straightforward and unambiguous.	The perpetrator is portrayed as more powerful than the victim, more aware of the exploitative nature of their relationship, and more responsible for the victimization.
Victimization often goes unrecognized.	Victimization often goes unrecognized and unacknowledged, not only by the larger society but even by the victims themselves (11).
Individuals must be taught to recognize other's and their own victimization.	Because victimization often goes unrecognized by both victims and the larger society, people must be educated. Potential victims may need preventative education (12).
Claims of victimization must be respected.	Once individuals learn to recognize their victimization, their claims to be victims must not be challenged. Challenging claims of victimization are considered "blaming the victim"; victims have already suffered, and calling their claims into question can only constitute further victimization.
The term victim has undesirable connotations.	Some advocates reject the very term "victim" on the grounds that it carries negative connotations of being damaged, passive, and powerless.

Adapted from Best (1997: 10-15).

The first tenet of the victimization ideology is the assumption that victimization is widespread and almost ubiquitous. The following claim presented by a victim advocate is a good illustration of this tenet, framing trafficking as "everywhere."

> 'In my view, trafficking is going on everywhere, but there's very little awareness of it,' Song said. 'Service providers may have seen it, but they don't know what they've seen. They might mistake it for simple domestic violence or exploitation of farmworkers' (Ferry, 2007).

The second tenet assumes that victimization is consequential. Any incident can have long-term consequences for the individual. Consequences are often physical or psychological and are usually associated with enduring some form of trauma. Best argues that this assumption legitimizes the "victim industry," a set of societal arrangements to identify and address the needs of large numbers of victims, usually through medicalized or otherwise professional means.

The third tenet makes an assumption about the relationship between the victim and the offender. Most claims about victims, like the one below, describe victimization as exploitive encounters between a victimizer who takes advantage of a vulnerable person and a victim who suffers. It is often further assumed that victims are at the complete mercy of their victimizers. In this way, the collective identities of victims and victimizers are mutually constructed.

> It is a problem of epidemic proportions in Alameda County – hundreds of young women, including preteens, being sexually exploited by men whose only real interest in them is how much money they can make (Harris, 2007).

The fifth tenet of the victimization ideology is seemingly paradoxical in that it suggests that while victimization is common, consequential, and clear-cut, it is not a visible, prominent part of social life. Instead, some prosecutors, like the one quoted

64

below, argue that the general public is often clueless about the victimization happening around them, and further, we are often unable to recognize our own victimization.

> 'You have to look beneath the surface. You'll not know it when you see it,' Brandy Gardes, an assistant U.S. attorney in El Paso, told hundreds of law enforcement officers and social workers at a conference last month in El Paso (Gilot, 2006).

Once the public learns to recognize the victimization of those around them and perhaps within themselves, victimization claims must not be challenged. The sixth proposition asserts that claims of victimization must be acknowledged and respected. Professional victim advocates insist that victims exhibit great courage in stepping forward and identifying one's own victimization. They further argue that since victims have already suffered and continue to suffer the consequences of their trauma calling their claims into question can only constitute further victimization (Best, 1997). As a later chapter will show, criticizing claims of victimization is often interpreted by victims' advocates to be "blaming the victim." Blaming the victim is a rhetorical device that suggests the victim contributed to their own victimization through actions of their own, or the choices they have made, or both. This is seen as re-victimizing the person by blaming her for conditions over which she had no control. For example, the idea that sexual assault victims somehow contribute to their own abuse by virtue of their actions or behaviors. As a collective frame, 'blaming the victim' has historical roots in the 1960s and 1970s, when feminist activists became publically concerned with the common tendency of blaming female victims of male-perpetrated violence for their own victimization (Leisenring, 2006; see Dunn, 2001; Loseke, 1999) by not extricating themselves from their abusive situations.

The seventh and final proposition of the victimization ideology recognizes that "victim" may have a negative connotation. This tenet suggests that while there are rules to understanding victimization, it can still be a negative identity. There can be implications for adopting or assigning this identity on others. Some advocates reject the very term "victim" on the grounds that it carries negative connotations of being damaged, passive, and powerless. In place of "victim," many prefer the term "survivor," to convey elements of agency and personal strength. However, this is another discursive and rhetorical Catch-22.

Together, these propositions constitute what have become "common sense" understandings that shape our perceptions of victimization. Claims that align with this ideology are more salient with the general public than those that do not, so they are more successful for mobilizing resources in a competitive marketplace. However, this ideology can be problematic in several ways, most notably because it discounts people's ability to exert control over their own lives and instead emphasizes the power of social forces over them. It can have implications for how we interact with these individuals on an interpersonal basis – how we can dismiss their statements Also, it justifies interventions on behalf of victims, because it positions claimsmakers as knowing what is best for victim's "recovery," which can include counseling, etc.

The data presented in this research will demonstrate how campaign leaders frame human trafficking and trafficked individuals with statements and images consistent with a victimization ideology. The ideology is used in discriminatory ways, in which some victims' experiences are considered to be more important than those of other victims. Claimsmakers use the ideology to create a hierarchy of victims in which certain victims

are considered more "deserving" than others. The victimization ideology is used to deflect any challenges to or scrutiny of the campaign's claims. Anyone who makes a challenge to the campaign's dominant frames can be dismissed as blaming the victim or being unable to recognize the victimization occurring all around them. Further, by using the victimization ideology to construct a social problem, we are likely pursuing a definitional process that takes us further and further away from the true picture.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the key theoretical framework and conceptual tools that will help us identify and analyze the oppositional framing processes occurring between actors in the United States AHT campaign. I have explained how campaign elites use frames to advance claims about the social problem and construct collective characteristics of other actors. If we understand meaning construction, as Blumer did, as an ongoing dynamic process where meanings are contested terrain, it is important for us to understand what happens when the dominant claims are challenged. How do protagonists respond to public challenges to their claims in an attempt to that preserve their credibility and the credibility of their claims? The remainder of this dissertation explores this question by unpacking three frame disputes, which are identifiable examples of conflict over meaning.

Before delving into the analysis of frame disputes, however, we must first understand how the "dominant meaning" associated with human trafficking and the condensing symbols associated with human trafficking victims became dominant. Chapter 3 is a historical narrative of the AHT campaign as it began in the United States in the late 1990s, which will help situate the campaign in the political and cultural context.

It will also explain how the abolitionist segment of the movement became the most

visible and influential.

Chapter 3 Establishing the Trafficking Discourse in the United States

To unpack the anti-human trafficking (AHT) discourse in United States media, I analyze 12 years of newspaper data, beginning with articles published in 2000. The AHT campaign was well underway by 2000, although its activity was not necessarily visible to the public. By the end of 2000, two important legislative documents had been enacted, subsequently shaping anti-trafficking interventions around the world: the United Nations Protocol to Suppress, Prevent, and Punish Trafficking in Persons (the Palermo Protocol) and the United States Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA). I begin the analysis in 2000 because before these two major policy documents were enacted, there were few newspaper articles published about human trafficking. Beginning in 2000, and every year after, there was an increasing amount of newspaper articles published about human trafficking each year, each article being a case in which the campaign's leaders and challengers engaged in claimsmaking. The analytical objective of this study is to improve our understanding of how the dominant meanings associated with human trafficking and trafficked individuals have endured against continuous challenges over time. To provide a context for exploring this question, it is essential to first understand how human trafficking emerged as a social problem.

According to Blumer, "The process of collective definition is responsible for the emergence of social problems, for the way in which they are seen, for the way in which they are approached and considered, and for the kind of remedial plan that is laid out…" (Blumer, 1971: 301). As such, he asserted that sociologists must understand the processes by which definitions are created as opposed to tending to the "objective" characteristics of the particular problem. Much of this "ideological and interpretive

work" occurs "backstage" and is hidden from public view (Goffman, 1974; Benford, 1993). For general insight on these backstage processes, we look to the existing research that has studied the-behind-the scenes negotiations between members of key interest groups in the agenda-setting phases of these two major policy initiatives. This chapter provides the historical background necessary to understand how popular perceptions of human trafficking and trafficked individuals have emerged from ongoing and continuous interactions among key campaign actors that have largely taken place beyond public view.

A number of case studies have shed light on the unseen lobbying activities by political, social, and religious interest groups and have analyzed their role in the recognition of human trafficking as a public problem, and more significantly, their role in shaping the dominant understandings of human trafficking. Entman (1993) defines the dominant meaning as a collection of interpretations associated with a social problem including common understandings about how it is caused, evaluated and treated. Claims that support and constitute the dominant meanings have the greatest likelihood of being noticed, interpreted, and accepted by most people in a target audience (Gusfeld, 1981; Entman, 1993).

Soderlund's (2005) and Anderson and Andrijasevic's (2008) examinations of early trafficking discourse provide valuable insight into the hidden political processes through which (sex) trafficking came to occupy the prioritized position in United States federal policy agenda. Soderlund (2005: 67) suggests that social movement organizations (SMO) and media discourses have "produced" sex slavery as a condition worthy of governmental intervention. Weitzer (2007), McDonald (2004), Guinn (2008) also

provide compelling accounts of the earliest days of the anti-human trafficking campaign, tracking the participation of various organizations and social entrepreneurs in bringing human trafficking to the forefront of transnational policy agendas. Perhaps more importantly, they worked to develop and influence definitions of human trafficking.

Agenda-setting activities undertaken by interest groups and other campaign actors in the 1990s and early 2000s set important precedents for human trafficking discourse that were carried forth over time as AHT discourse became increasingly publicized by major media outlets. I argue that the campaign leaders used framing strategies to draw from a collection of dominant beliefs about victimization (Best 1997) to motivate supporters of anti-trafficking interventions and to discourage challenges against the movement's activities.

The "Discovery of Human" Trafficking

Coercive labor practices such as forced labor, indentured servitude, and debt bondage are neither new nor newly discovered and have long been a defining part of labor markets around the world (Bales, 1999). Major international research organizations such as the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have studied forced labor. However, objective evidence of a social problem's existence is not necessarily relevant to our understanding of the problem nor does it necessarily have an influence on what is done to resolve the problem. Instead, to attract the attention of audiences, a social problem must have a "necessary degree of respectability which entitles it to consideration in the recognized areas of public discussion," (Blumer, 1971: 303). In other words, if we want to understand how human trafficking became the recognized social problem that it is today, it may be more helpful

to look at claimsmaking activity rather than empirical research on the objective facts surrounding the phenomenon.

Soderlund (2005) identified the mid-1980s, when human rights activists initiated a broad-based campaign to introduce women's sexual and reproductive rights into discussions of international human rights, as the time that sex trafficking emerged as an international concern. During this time, a diverse set of activists organized themselves to bring gender and sexuality into the purview of traditional human rights doctrine, although the issues with which they were concerned were related to forms of violence not perpetuated by the state, such as domestic violence and sexual assault. The theme of ending violence against women became prominent within the larger campaign for women's rights at such international conferences as the 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights and the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women. As part of the presentations, speeches, and film screenings that comprised these events, activists highlighted "victim-subjects" by spotlighting the personal testimonies of the most abject and vulnerable populations, such as women and children from South Asian, African, and Sub-Saharan regions (Soderlund, 2005).

Embedded in the addition of "women's issues" to the international human rights agenda were the efforts of religious conservatives, specifically evangelical Christians, who had seized upon the issue of sex slavery in the mid-to-late 1990s in a self-conscious effort to expand their base and political power through the vehicle of human rights (Soderlund, 2005: 68). Faith-based advocacy organizations, such as the International Justice Mission (IJM) and Shared Hope International (SHI) promoted rescue and

rehabilitation programs, which later became a primary institutional means though which U.S. organizations interacted with sex workers internationally.[4]

In addition to the emerging focus on issues related to human rights for women, Stolz suggests that recognition of the human trafficking problem can be attributed to the restructuring of the perception of the problem, which was also a result of interest group lobbying. Interest groups pushed a transformation in the characterization of the trafficked person from criminal to victim. Rather than the traditional depiction of women in the sex trade as criminals, the groups sought to characterize individuals in the sex trade as "trafficked" victims (Stolz, 2005), who have no control or agency over their circumstances. It is likely that this distinction drew the sympathy necessary to convert the condition into an unacceptable problem, and one that had to be addressed with global-level interventions (Stolz, 2005: 423).

We will see evidence of the transformation from criminal to victim articulated time and time again over 12 years of media data, but I highlight its emergence in the 1990s as one of the first publically visible manifestations of the victimization ideology that has come to define the United States AHT campaign. The following sections provide additional background on the early years of the AHT campaign by outlining the story of the two major policy achievements that occurred in 2000, and explaining how they contributed to the content of subsequent media discourse on the issue of human trafficking.

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[4] Former Republican Congresswoman Linda Smith, director of SHI, famously took a young woman who was "rescued" from sexual slavery to Disneyworld in Florida to show her "what a real childhood was like."

The Palermo Protocol

In December 2000, at the 55th session of the United Nations General Assembly in Palermo, Italy, over 80 countries signed the United Nations Protocol to Suppress, Prevent, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women in Children (U.N., 2001; Doezema, 2005; Stolz, 2005; Weitzer, 2007). This treaty is commonly referred to as the UN Trafficking Protocol, or more familiarly, the Palermo Protocol. The Palermo Protocol was the subject of intense lobbying by transnational networks of feminist anti-trafficking non-governmental organizations (NGOs), who lobbied over several aspects of the treaty, but especially over the formal definition of human trafficking. Prior to its ratification, two years of heated negotiations had taken place at the U.N. Centre for International Crime Prevention in Vienna. Doezema (2005) analyzed meeting notes, hearing transcripts, and official reports to study the range and content of these debates. Influential international NGOs such as the Coalition Against the Trafficking in Women (CATW), the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW) and delegations from national governments, such as President Clinton's Presidential Interagency Council on Women (PICW), were key participants in these debates, and often sparred over how to address issues of consent in formal definitions of exploitation and trafficking. The idea of consent, especially whether or not a victim can give consent to his/her own exploitation, developed into a major sticking point throughout the negotiations.

The lobbying activities and debates that went on between January 1999 and October 2000 are often referred to as the Vienna Trafficking Debates, or the Vienna Debates. Doezema (2005) noted that many of the organizations which often disagreed with each other on other issues, typically agreed on the size and scope of the global

human trafficking problem and on the need for international intervention. These coalitions were comprised of feminist and human rights activists from both the industrialized and developing parts of the world, bringing together a range of perspectives. However, these networks were staunchly divided into two clearly demarcated camps, each being ideologically concerned with the relationship between trafficking and consent (Doezema, 2005: 67). These camps represent the two ideological poles that anchor the primary positions within the human trafficking debates and the subsequent media discourse.

One of the two ideological camps was led by the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW), and referred to their bloc of organizations as the International Human Rights Network (IHRN). CATW is a prominent international NGO with strong local affiliates around the world. CATW is considered an abolitionist[5] organization because their ideological position assumes that prostitution, and the existence of the sex industry more broadly, is intrinsically linked to human trafficking and that existing systems of prostitution must be abolished in order to eradicate human trafficking. This constituency is the "abolitionist feminists;" they consider prostitution to be a form of gender-based violence and an expression of patriarchal domination over women and female sexuality. According to the abolitionists, the existence of the sex market negatively affects all women by consolidating men's rights of access to women's bodies. The IHRN and its supporters argue that prostitution and the existence of a sex industry cause the

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[5] Some scholars, such as Weitzer (2007), referred to these groups as "neo-abolitionist," because they felt that "abolitionists" referred to those involved with abolishing the transatlantic slave trade in the mid-to-late 1800s. I use the term "abolitionist" because it is was the term used by several of these organizations to describe themselves and helps to easily distinguish them from other movement actors.

widespread sexual exploitation of women and children by creating a market for sexual exploitation. Further, they believe that prostitution is a form of violence that could never be freely consented to or chosen as an occupation. Thus, prostitutes, by definition, are victims of sex trafficking. They deny the existence of "voluntary prostitution," a point illustrated by the director of CATW:

> The sexual exploitation of women and children by local and global sex industries violates the human rights of all women and children whose bodies are reduced to sexual commodities in this brutal and dehumanizing marketplace. While experienced as pleasure by the prostitution consumers and as lucrative sources of income by sex industry entrepreneurs, prostitution, sex trafficking, and related practices are, in fact, forms of sexual violence that leave women and children physically and psychologically devastated (Leidholdt 2000: 1).

They reject the term "sex work" and "sex workers" because they feel it minimizes the level of exploitation that "prostituted women" endure. Their position further states that anyone facilitating the movement of a woman from place to place in order to engage in prostitution, and anyone who purchases the services of a prostitute, is a human trafficker and should be the target of law enforcement intervention (McDonald, 2004; Soderlund, 2005; Doezema, 2005; Weitzer, 2007). They lobbied for a UN Trafficking Protocol that features a definition of trafficking that does not distinguish between forced prostitution and other forms of prostitution. In sum, the "abolitionist position assumes that trafficking is intricately connected to prostitution and measures to eradicate the market for commercial sex are simultaneously anti-trafficking measures, and *vice versa* (Anderson & Andrijasevic, 2008: 159, emphasis original).

The second camp, the Human Rights Caucus (HRC), was led by the International Human Rights Law Group (IHRLG) and the GAATW. Their position differs from the

IHRN in that they consider prostitution to be a form of legitimate labor. Accordingly, for this lobby bloc, human trafficking is characterized by the use of force, fraud, or coercion during the migration process and/or the subsequent labor or services (Doezema, 2005; Guinn, 2008). In other words, where IHRN argued that the existence of a market for the sex industry is what drives exploitation, the HRC considered exploitation to be a result of unfair, unsafe, or dehumanizing labor practices. In a position paper distributed in Vienna, GAATW states:

> Traffic in persons and forced prostitution are manifestations of violence against women and the rejection of these practices, which are a violation of the right to self-determination, must hold within itself the respect for the self determination of adult persons who are voluntarily engaged in prostitution (GAATW, 1994).

As this statement shows, this camp allows for a distinction between forced prostitution and voluntary prostitution. Included in this camp are organizations such as the International Sex Workers Outreach Project and the Sex Workers Organizing Project, and others that explicitly call for the decriminalization of sex work and for its regulation by government bodies. As Doezema (2005) notes, however, while they may have been physically present at the negotiation proceedings, their absence from the records of the proceedings is obvious.

Clinton's State Department and his Presidential Interagency Council on Women (PICW) represented the United States government in Vienna. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright chaired the PICW with First Lady Hillary Clinton as honorary co-chair. The PICW held the position that: a) recognizes sex trafficking to be a form of exploitation worthy of intervention and b) recognizes a distinction between forced prostitution and voluntary prostitution. This position is consistent with the HRC position

that recognizes a conceptual difference between forced and voluntary prostitution but does not go as far as other HRC-affiliated organizations and call for the decriminalization and regulation of sex work.

The Vienna trafficking debates proceeded with little media attention until 2000, when they emerged in mass media outlets, marking the introduction of trafficking discourse into the public arena. In the months leading up to the ratification in December 2000, a series of op-ed pieces appeared in *The New York Post* and *The Washington Post,* where a coalition of feminists associated with the IHRN and social conservatives[6] called out the PICW, particularly its honorary chair First Lady Hillary Clinton, for "weakening protections" for women. The PICW supported language that would define forced-prostitution – and not other types of prostitution – as sexual exploitation. Critics condemned this distinction, arguing that it implies the existence of legitimate forms of prostitution and creates a loophole by which predatory traffickers can escape prosecution by claiming that their victims "consented to exploitation" (Rosin, 2000). *The Washington Post* published a letter authored by the presidents of the National Organization for Women (NOW), Planned Parenthood, Equality Now, and renowned feminist Gloria Steinem, in which the authors argued that this language would make it more difficult to prosecute prostitution rings because the definition "[w]ould not cover some of the most common methods of sex trafficking, which prey on and profit from the economic desperation of women, girls and their families by securing their 'consent'" (Blomquist, 2000). IHRN demanded that consent not be part of the definition: "[C]onsent is the

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[6] These included Chuck Colson of the *Prison Fellowship,* a Christian prison ministry that operates faith-based reentry programs, and William Bennett, a socially conservative pundit and political theorist.

wedge that allows the sex industry to redefine alleged voluntary trafficking for prostitutes

as 'facilitated migration' or 'migration for sex work'" (CATW 2000:1). Dr. Donna

Hughes, in another piece, referred to the Clinton State Department as the "pro-

prostitution" mafia (see Blomquist, 2000), accusing them of operating in support of

organized criminal interests. The wide-ranging coalition of critics suggested that the U.S.

position likened prostitution to a choice:

> A strange coalition of feminist groups like the National Organization for
> Women and Christian conservatives like William Bennett argued the
> treaty was being watered down to suggest prostitution is a choice or way
> of life.

In response, The First Lady's Chief of Staff, Melanne Verveer, wrote to the editor

at *The Washington Post* and clarified the PICW position. Further, she accused the critics

of deliberately perpetrating a misinformation campaign:

> Your Jan. 21 editorial 'Defining prostitution' relies on a misinformation
> campaign that is distorting the administration's position on a very
> important proposed U.N. treaty to stop trafficking in women and girls.
> Nothing in the draft treaty would require the United States or any country
> to weaken its laws on prostitution, and we never would support any treaty
> that had such an effect. In fact, at the latest round of negotiations in
> Vienna, the U.S. delegation reiterated our strong opposition to prostitution
> in all its forms. Our intent always has been to gather support for an anti-
> trafficking protocol that would impose new punishments on the
> perpetrators and provide unprecedented assistance to victims − whether
> they are sold into prostitution, sweatshop labor, domestic servitude or
> other exploitative situations (Verveer, 2000).

Indeed, the Clinton State Department and PICW negotiators never argued for de-

criminalization or legalization of prostitution, nor did they express support for countries

that did. Their preference for a definition distinguishing between forced and voluntary

prostitution was practical. The PICW and the State Department supported a distinction

between forced prostitution and other types of prostitution, but not because they

supported the idea of prostitution as "sex work" or a legitimate profession. Rather, they

justified their position in more pragmatic terms of garnering the broadest support possible

from multiple countries. Countries with legalized prostitution (such as the Netherlands

and Turkey) would refuse to ratify the treaty because it would be in contradiction with

their national laws. Otherwise, they risked "alienating other governments, and

undermining international support for the treaty, if [they] pressed too hard for a definition

of sexual exploitation that included all forms of prostitution."

The Palermo Protocol was ratified in December 2000, thus formalizing the

definition of human trafficking as any act that includes:

> [R]ecruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by
> means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of
> fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power of a position of vulnerability or
> of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent
> of the person having control over another person for the purpose of
> exploitation (UN, 2000).

An important aspect of the Protocol is that it specifically states that the consent of

trafficked individuals to their intended exploitation is irrelevant where any means set

forth in the protocol have been used (Stolz, 2005: 410). In other words, if the Protocol is

being used to prosecute or define an act as trafficking, the consent of the victim is moot.

This represents a victory for the abolitionists because it precludes and disarms any

defendants from arguing that their "victims" were consenting adults. However, it also

prevents anyone from resisting the victim label because they cannot consent. Another

important contribution of the Palermo Protocol is that it defines a child as any person

under the age of 18 and states that the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or

receipt of a child for the purposes of exploitation is considered trafficking whether or not

it involves the means of coercion and that evidence of force is not required to make a determination of trafficking (Stolz 2004, 2005; Jordan, 2002).

The back and forth barbs over the definition of human trafficking continued even after the Palermo Protocol was ratified in 2000. In 2002, former First Lady and then Senator Hillary Clinton, formerly the First Lady, was scheduled to deliver remarks at the Globalization and Trafficking Conference in Hawaii. Also scheduled to speak was Dr. Donna Hughes, who had previously characterized the U.S. State Department as the pro-prostitution mafia. Hughes re-visited her criticisms of the Clinton Administration's position on a trafficking definition that included qualifications such as force and coercion:

> Ms. Hughes argued that some at the Hawaii conference would want to re-legitimize prostitution. 'If the listed keynote speakers, which includes Hillary Clinton, remain true to form, they will passionately denounce the trafficking of women as a modern form of slavery, but steadfastly avoid mentioning prostitution as the demand that drives it.'

Stolz argues that the Vienna trafficking debates were primarily over beliefs about prostitution and have implications for the larger anti-trafficking campaign. The debate over prostitution oversimplifies the understanding of the crime of trafficking and ignores the complexity of the broader trafficking problem. This echoes a position expressed by Melanne Verveer and Ann Jordan of the IHRLG, who both suggested that the "political demagoguery" was distracting from developing meaningful interventions against labor exploitation more broadly. Stolz acknowledges the political value of Hughes' position: "[S]uch a conceptualization of the trafficking debate may be in the interest of some groups and may be useful in reaching some audiences, particularly those with

membership or constituencies concerned about prostitution as a moral and or social issue" (Stolz, 2007a: 329).

The Palermo Protocol's story is confounded by parallel and simultaneous efforts to establish a protocol against trafficking in the United States. Some of the organizations that were key players in the Palermo negotiations also sought to influence the developing U.S. initiative through the press, thereby exposing U.S. policy makers to the groups' concerns, arguments, and accusations about the moral character of some campaign actors who supported particular definitions of trafficking.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000

Barbra Ann Stolz' (2005, 2006, 2007a, 2007b) research on the role of non-criminal justice interest groups demonstrates how interest group organizations brought the human trafficking problem to the forefront of the United States' public policy agenda. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), she argues, is a story of interest groups creating awareness among policymakers about a shocking and heinous social problem, thereby defining a new criminal act and encouraging global responses. Her findings support Kingdon's (1984) theoretical framework, which suggests that interest groups not only influence which phenomena become social problems, but also which social problems become policy issues. The late 1990s comprise what Stolz refers to as the "education and agenda-setting" phases the TVPA. Most notable during this time was the participation of interest groups that did not typically provide services to the clients of the criminal justice system. Stolz characterized these groups as "so-called non-professional criminal justice interest groups with an ad hoc interest in criminal justice" (Stolz, 2005: 419). Similar to the transnational activist networks involved in the Palermo

Protocol, these organizations were primarily responsible for raising the level of awareness among policymakers in the executive and legislative branches of the U.S. government, and by doing so they contributed to the policymakers' recognition that something had to be done about the human trafficking problem. The interest groups that have been most engaged and prominent in formulating human trafficking policy are women's, human rights, religious, immigration and refugee, and social welfare groups and other organizations dedicated to social and international justice (Tichenor, 2007). What was at stake in their debates was the definition of human trafficking.

Several of the major organizations that were working on the TVPA were the same organizations that lobbied during the debates over the Palermo Protocol in Vienna, including NOW, Planned Parenthood, Equality Now, and other service groups, on the political left, and on the right, Focus on the Family, International Justice Mission, Shared Hope International, and other faith-based groups such as the Catholic Counsel of Bishops and the National Association of Evangelicals. Just as Doezema identified two lobbying networks − the Human Rights Caucus and the International Human Rights League − Stolz identified two similar constituencies attending to the agenda-setting of the TVPA: The abolitionist sphere and the anti-labor exploitation sphere[7].

The abolitionist constituency contains interest groups, NGOs, SMOS, and others that argue that prostitution reduces women to objects to be bought and sold, and is always

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[7] Other scholars such as Doezema (2001) and Aronowitz (2004) refer to this ideological constituency as the "anti-human trafficking" sphere, or something similar, in correspondence to their emphasis on human trafficking more generally, as opposed to solely prostitution. I use the term "anti-labor exploitation" to refer to this group because it more closely fits their ideology than the generic term and it is less likely to be confused with the anti-human trafficking campaign generally.

necessarily degrading and damaging to women. They recognize no distinction between forced and freely chosen careers in the prostitution industry. They argue that by tolerating, regulating, or legalizing prostitution, governments permit the repeated violation of women's inherent rights to dignity and sexual autonomy (Anderson & Andrijasevic, 2008: 139).

The anti-labor exploitation sphere opposes the abolitionist equation of human trafficking and prostitution. The anti-trafficking sphere perceives human trafficking as primarily a labor exploitation issue. Proponents claim that the lack of protection for workers, including workers in the sex industry, leaves room for extremes of exploitation including trafficking. This constituency also includes those who argue for promotion of sex workers' rights and who support the idea that by bringing the sex sector above ground and regulating it in the same way that other employment sectors are regulated, exploitation of sex workers can be eradicated (Doezema, 2005; Anderson & Andrijasevic, 2008).

In April 1997, the Global Survival Network's director presented to lawmakers in Washington DC the documentary *"Bought and Sold"* in one of the first campaign actions targeting policymakers in the United States (Stolz, 2007b). In June 1999, the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, chaired by United States Congressman Christopher Smith, held the first hearing on human trafficking. Both the film and the hearing focused on the sex trade and the trafficking of women and children in Europe and the United States. Testimony was provided by witnesses such as representatives from President Clinton's PICW, the Global Survival Network, and the Protection Project from The Johns Hopkins University.

While the Vienna trafficking debates were primarily over consent and concerns about sex trafficking, the U.S. Congressional and Senate hearings featured a greater number of discussions of non-sexual forms of slavery. Many witnesses, including those from the PICW, testified that human trafficking should be defined to include both labor and sex trafficking, as they perceived human trafficking as referring to a range of types of unfree labor US. Congress. Senate, 2000: 45). In contrast, representatives of abolitionist groups, including the Protection Project (US Congress. Senate, 1999: 43) and IJM (US Congress. Senate, 1999: 41-42), held that a distinction should be made between labor and sex trafficking, and that trafficking legislation should focus only on sex trafficking because sex trafficking was the more serious problem (Stolz, 2007a:318). Further, the IMJ witness emphasized the seriousness and distinctiveness of sex trafficking, making comparisons to distinctions between assaults and sexual assaults (US Congress. Senate 1999: 41). The Protection Project's witness suggested that sex and labor trafficking were different problems that should be dealt with separately (US Congress. Senate, 1999: 42).

In 2000, Minnesota Congressman Paul Wellstone presented his draft of the bill to the U.S. House of Representatives. The Wellstone-sponsored bill included provisions to prosecute forced labor in all its guises; it stressed that involuntary servitude was not exclusive to segments of the sex industry but was also liable to occur in other arenas, such as agriculture, domestic labor, garment, food service and other industries. This bill had wide support from refugee, sex worker rights, and labor rights interest groups, along with the endorsement of Clinton's State Department. The key assumption of the Wellstone bill was that the relative autonomy or dependency of the worker was the defining factor in determining whether a particular incident constituted voluntary

migration, a form of debt bondage, or outright slavery (Soderlund, 2005: 73). In other words, the key determinant of human trafficking was the conditions under which the labor was performed, not the type of labor, per se.

Senator Christopher Smith from New Jersey sponsored the Senate version of the bill, which corresponded closely to the claims of the abolitionist sphere. Hearing transcripts indicated that Senator Smith formally acknowledged the contribution of several organizations in the drafting of the bill, and highlighted a diverse ideological range of contributors, including Charles Colson, Gloria Steinem, The Family Research Council, the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, and the National Association of Evangelicals. He also described support from "impartial experts" such as Michael Horowitz of the conservative think-tank the Hudson Institute and representatives from IJM, SHI, and the Protection Project (Congressional Record, 7 July 2000: H2683, 2684). The range of activists that supported this bill argued that the Wellstone bill and its broader focus on a range of labor issues would distract from the more important work of combatting sex slavery (Soderlund, 2005).

In much the same way as Hughes used the "pro-prostitution" epithet to conflate the PICW position with support for legalizing prostitution, abolitionists cast supporters of the Wellstone bill (who could be considered part of the anti-labor exploitation sphere) as supporters of child prostitution (Soderlund, 2005). Further, individuals such as Charles "Chuck" Colson and William Bennet characterized existing institutional relationships between the State Department and the international aid organizations that supported harm reduction activities such as condom distribution and health care for sex workers, as

supporting child molesters and their advocates, and they often threatened to publically label them as such (Soderlund, 2005: 74).

On October 28, 2000, President Bill Clinton signed the TVPA into law. The TVPA created the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons within the State Department. It also enacted a number of innovative provisions such as the T-visa, which allows trafficked individuals to remain in the United States while their case is being heard in U.S. courts, and other mechanisms by which the U.S. State Department evaluates the anti-trafficking activities of other countries. The most significant provision, however, was a two-tiered definition of human trafficking. The TVPA distinguished trafficking (which may be "voluntarily" entered into), from "severe" trafficking (which involves force, fraud, coercion or persons under 18); protections and sanctions applied only to those involved in severe trafficking (Weitzer, 2007; Soderlund, 2005; Stolz, 2007).

In general, the abolitionists were satisfied with the new State Department agency, but they remained displeased with the statute's definition and provisions regarding trafficking. The abolitionists fought against this two-tiered approach and wanted sanctions to be applied to all forms of trafficking because they rejected the distinction between coercive trafficking and voluntary migration for sex work. They were unsuccessful, however. The Clinton Administration rejected the major abolitionist claims by distinguishing between forced and voluntary prostitution, by not linking prostitution to human trafficking and by not claiming that legal prostitution increases trafficking into a country. Yet what would seem to be certain defeat for the abolitionists was short lived. They would soon have another chance to make their case, perhaps to a more agreeable audience. The bulk of the TVPA activity had taken place during the final years of the

Clinton presidency. The change of presidential leadership in January 2001 set the stage for another round of policy debate about the nature of human trafficking.

When George W. Bush became United States President in 2001, many of the institutional relationships the Clinton State Department had established with international aid organizations were kept in place, including contracts with organizations that worked on harm reduction activities for sex workers and other groups such as condom provision, counseling, and legal support. However, in 2002, the TVPA's most influential groups pressured the Bush Administration to change its handling of the Act. In a situation reminiscent of Hughes's previous indictment of the Clinton Department of State, Michael Horowitz of the Hudson Institute and a key figure in establishing the TVPA, wrote to a fellow advocate that he did not believe the Bush Administration would like to see its State Department publically portrayed as supporting programs that teach "seven year old girls how to get their customers to use condoms and to use techniques that make sexual penetration less painful" (Soderlund, 2005: 75).

After 2001, the claims of the abolitionist sphere began receiving more favorable hearing at the White House, as the Bush Administration rejected the Clinton/Wellstone approach and replaced it with a model that was almost identical to the one sponsored by Senator Christopher Smith. Between 2001 and 2005, groups affiliated with the abolitionist coalition became the star organizations of the AHT campaign. They procured the majority of federal AHT dollars and were featured by the most prominent media and policy spokespeople (Soderlund, 2005), further securing their position as "problem owners" of the human trafficking issue (Gusfeld, 1981). Weitzer (2007) found evidence of institutional changes associated with a re-focusing on sex trafficking in general and

prostitution in particular, including a major Justice Department report, written by renown

abolitionists Donna Hughes and Janice Raymond, titled "*The Link Between Prostitution*

and Sex Trafficking." This report asserted that those individuals, most of them women,

who are involved in prostitution, are also victims of sex trafficking.

TVPA Reauthorizations

The TVPA was reauthorized in 2003, 2005, 2008, and 2013. The first two

reauthorizations, in 2003 and 2005, were instrumental in further institutionalizing the

ideological underpinnings of the abolitionist sphere. In 2003, as part of the Trafficking

Victims Protection Act Reauthorization (TVPRA), the administration announced that the

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) would stop funding any

group perceived to be encouraging or supporting sex work. The new policy stated that

groups "advocating prostitution as an employment choice or which advocate or support

the legalization of prostitution are not appropriate partners for USAID anti-trafficking

grants" (Hill, 2003). This meant that organizations affiliated with the anti-labor

exploitation sphere that were also engaging in AIDS/HIV outreach or were offering other

harm reduction services to sex workers were no longer eligible to receive funds from

USAID (Weitzer, 2007; Soderlund, 2005; Stolz, 2007b).

In 2003, Attorney General John Ashcroft allocated 91 million dollars in

appropriations for AHT activities, including granting contracts worth millions of dollars

to SHI and IJM. After 2003, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, awarded 100 million

dollars to service organizations and law enforcement organizations at the federal, state,

and local levels. Further, under President Bush's Faith-Based Initiative, over 300 million

"anti-human trafficking" dollars were allocated to religious organizations in the United States and abroad that were involved in promoting a conservative social agenda, including anti-abortion programs, abstinence education, and church-run social services.

The stated objectives of the 2005 TVRPA were to "combat commercial sexual activities," which would have criminalized "any sex act on account of which anything of value is given to, or received, by any person." This approach targeted a wide variety of sex acts including lap dancing in strip clubs, legal brothels in Nevada, and pornography. Further, the 2005 Reauthorization contains a section on "combatting domestic trafficking" in persons by reducing client demand. Again, abolitionists worked to blur the line between trafficking and commercial sex, and conflate demand for prostitution with demand for sex trafficking, all supported by the Hughes/Raymond report for the Department of Justice[8]. For example, the statute authorized the distribution of $25 million per year for increased prosecution of those who purchase commercial sex and for "Johns Schools," which consist of day-long lectures designed to educate men who purchase sex on the harms of prostitution (Weitzer, 2007; Stolz, 2007). The 2005 TVPRA also contained a new emphasis on the domestic sex trafficking of minors, or "child prostitution." The statute provided funds for pilot shelter programs and other interventions to provide support for children who were being trafficked in their own communities. This new development, together with the focus on domestic sex trafficking, represented a shift in official trafficking discourse relative to the 2000 TVPA, which primarily focused on "foreign women and children."

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[8] This report was based on interviews with 40 women who were participating in organizations committed to getting women out of prostitution. From this limited sample, the authors made generalized conclusions about victims of sex trafficking and prostitutes, concluding that the two groups are in fact identical.

Discussion

The proceeding sections have provided historical background on two major developments occurring in the early days of the U.S. AHT movement: first, the process by which human trafficking was "discovered" as a social problem, and second, the processes by which sex trafficking and prostitution eclipsed more general understandings of human trafficking through the lobbying efforts of campaign actors as they advocated for specific definitions of human trafficking in two chronologically simultaneous policy initiatives, both with global implications. Both of these developments, the "discovery" of human trafficking and the increasingly exclusive focus on sex trafficking, have been the result of intense lobbying and negotiation among key movement actors occupying two major ideological camps: the abolitionist sphere and the anti-labor exploitation sphere.

Prior research has characterized the movement's activity up to 2001 as a sequence of initiatives by various groups with somewhat differing agendas, but with a common concern about protecting women from sexual exploitation. Feminist, religious, refugee, labor, human rights, and other interest groups have educated decision-makers at the United Nations and the United States executive and legislative branches on the scope of the trafficking problem and have lobbied for specific solutions. As Blumer has emphasized, defining social problems and thus their solutions are always collective processes:

> A social problem is always a focal point for the operation of divergent and conflicting interests, intentions, and objectives. It is the interplay of these interests and objectives that constitutes the way in which a society deals with any one of its social problems (Blumer, 1971: 301).

These efforts converged in the context of the legislative processes associated with the Palermo Protocol and the United States TVPA. However, even though some organizations were present, their contributions and input were overshadowed by debates over prostitution. The participation of NGOs, human rights organizations, and other civic groups that are involved in assisting non-sex trafficked workers and other unfree laborers, most importantly migrant agricultural and service workers, would have brought balance to the discussion, but they were systematically excluded (Ruwanpura & Rai, 2004: 150). Further, those organizations that would have advocated for the legalization or regulation of sex work were completely absent (Doezema, 2005), primarily because they had virtually no access to media and political elites (Weitzer, 2007).

One common objective of all of the organizations involved with the Palermo Protocol and the TVPA was to remove the criminal stigma from those who had been trafficked and redefine them as victims. The goal was to delink any criminal behavior from the trafficking experience itself, so trafficked individuals could not be charged for crimes, such as prostitution and illegal immigration, that were committed while being trafficked. This identification of trafficked individuals as victims plays a foundational role in the ongoing AHT discourse. On the surface, this development appears to be positive because trafficked individuals cannot be prosecuted for criminal activity they engaged in under coercion, and it minimizes the likelihood that victims can be "re-victimized" by a prosecutorial system. However, it also has symbolic implications that are less positive and can undermine the well-meaning actions taken by campaign actors.

Emphasizing a trafficked person's victimization makes *a priori* assumptions about their level of agency. Wholesale dismissal of consent denies or minimizes agency

92

among trafficked individuals, and in this way it homogenizes a range of victim experiences into one sensationalized and simplified narrative. Agency refers to the ability for an individual to exercise rational choice and exert control over their actions. In public discourse, representations of victims exercising agency show victims choosing and deciding to act in ways that foster (or resist) victimization (Dunn, 2001). Agency also encompasses the degree to which individuals can make rational decisions while operating under structural impediments such as unemployment or a lack of access to an adequate social service safety net. However, to depict trafficked individuals as having agency muddies the ideological assumption that victims do not have control over their lives. Downplaying agency among trafficked individuals is a strategic move. By omitting references to agency, the constructed victim is unambiguously blameless, and therefore, completely worthy of support.

Generally, the campaign's primary narrative makes invisible the ways that trafficked individuals exercise agency and resistance in their everyday lives. It also oversimplifies the public's understanding of human trafficking as a social problem by portraying one simplified dimension of trafficking and omitting perspectives that recognize a broader range of victimization, especially those associated with non-sexual exploitation. Essentially, this narrative creates a public perception of human trafficking that equates it with sex trafficking, and views all prostitutes as sex trafficked victims. Meanwhile, those who are exploited for non-sexual labor are still framed as illegal immigrants, a criminal identity, which leaves them vulnerable to prosecution and deportation and without the protections afforded by the TVPA. Victims of labor trafficking, especially those that can be labeled "illegal immigrants," are a hard sell in

this campaign because they are perceived as having agency; they "chose" to enter the country illegally. It is well-established fact that individuals who choose to enter the country illegally, through the use of a "coyote" or other means, can still be victims of human trafficking. If an immigrant no longer has control over their labor, or is being coerced with threats of deportation, the immigrant qualifies as a human trafficking victim, regardless of their voluntary and illegal entry to the country. However, according to the human trafficking discourse, by choosing to make an illegal entry into the country, migrant workers participated in the events that brought about their victimization and, therefore, are not blameless. This perception makes them less worthy of support and even worse, suggests that they "deserve what they got" (Jordan, 2002).

Both of the policy documents that were enacted in 2000 include the use of the term "sex slaves" to refer to the legitimate targets of anti-trafficking interventions, a term that "functions to obliterate distinctions between voluntary and involuntary sex work" (Soderlund, 2005: 74). This constituted a clear victory for the abolitionist sphere, which holds that all sex work is coercive. Further, in 2006, the United States Trafficking Czar John Miller issued a directive to U.S. agencies urging them to avoid using the term "sex worker" because it dignifies the activities of criminals and the sexual exploitation of women. In an interview, he stated:

> People called 'sex workers' did not choose prostitution the way most of us choose work occupations … Governments, non-governmental organizations and citizens who care about fighting human trafficking and want to break the cycle of stigmatization and victimization should not use terms such as 'sex worker' … To abolish modern day slavery we must not be afraid to call slavery by its real, despicable name (cited by Parameswaran, 2006).

The inauguration of George W. Bush altered the political opportunity structure for anti-prostitution actors, providing a degree of access and influence that had not existed since the Reagan administration two decades earlier: Religious organizations such as Focus on the Family, National Association of Evangelicals, Catholic Bishop's Conference, Traditional Values Coalition, Concerned Women for American, Salvation Army, International Justice Mission, Shared Hope International (Weitzer, 2007: 244). The ideological assumptions held by these organizations were being articulated by national leaders and were being institutionalized through the TVPAs reauthorizations. Discourse typically refers to a "summation of symbolic interchange" (Johnston, 2002), or in other words, what is being talked and written about. Victimization discourse is the creation of a category of individuals, victims, by use of rhetorical and communicative strategies. According to Holstein and Miller (1997), victims are interactionally constituted through exchanges of communication. Following symbolic interactionism, to define someone as a victim is more than offering an objective description about a feature of the social world; rather, it creates that world by attributing meaning to the victim status (Holstein & Miller 1997: 27). Both ideological camps, the abolitionist and the anti-labor exploitation spheres, have engaged the process not only of defining the problem of trafficking, but also of making claims about the identity and status of trafficked individuals.

The problem with the victimization ideology is that it uses agency and coercion to make distinctions among victims that affect their qualifications for support and legal protection under the TVPA. Early in the campaign Chapkis suggests, leaders publically stated that this was done to make a distinction among types of illegal immigrants. Given

the general anti-immigrant sentiment of the late 1990s and early 2000s, as evidenced by the increase in immigration restrictions, the campaign needed to "counter the expectation that all migrants are 'guilty' by creating an utterly passive, entirely pure, and extremely vulnerable victim who is above reproach" (Chapkis, 2005: 53). In contrast to women perceived to be "sex trafficking victims" who were trafficked as a result of their vulnerability to coercion and lack of agency, migrants who might have been experiencing forced labor were still considered to be atomized actors exercising individual choice. By creating this new class of helpless victims, the AHT narrative reinforced the idea that other victims whose blamelessness is less "pure," are less important and unworthy of support.

The political implications of advancing an ideological orientation toward victimization are important to consider, primarily because a discourse of victimization discounts individuals' ability to control their own lives and emphasizes their vulnerability to social forces. At the transnational level, victim discourse has been implicated in the creation of Western feminists' sometimes patronizing attitude toward nonwestern women onto whom victim status is projected (Mohanty & Russo, 1991). At the more localized level, a focus on the victimization of vulnerable people can distract attention away from the role that the government or the dominant economic system have in contributing to conditions that foster the lucrative exploitation of labor (Anderson & Andrijasevic, 2008).

The research reviewed in this chapter describes the back-stage activities of key campaign actors and their role in limiting discussions of human trafficking to sex trafficking. However, meanings are not so much established as they are proffered,

96

challenged, modified, re-asserted, and negotiated. As such, the abolitionist sphere

achieved "ownership" status of the human trafficking problem and its proponents are

widely considered to be experts and heroes. Yet their position and their claims have not

gone unchallenged. The remainder of this dissertation analyzes the public dimension of

AHT discourse as it plays out in major newspaper outlets in the United States, paying

special attention to the ways in which movement protagonists preserve their focus on sex

trafficking and individuals who are trafficked for the sex industry. Chapter 4 presents the

data collection and analysis methodologies for studying this discourse.

Chapter 4 Data Collection and Data Analysis Methodologies

This study explores the oppositional framing strategies campaign actors employ to control the public discourse surrounding human trafficking and trafficked individuals. To do so, I analyze 12 years of newspaper articles that address human trafficking to assess the nature of the discourse by identifying major analytical themes. The symbols, language, metaphors, and discursive elements that are used to attribute meaning to human trafficking all emerged from the data via qualitative methods. The newspaper data provide a systematic record of claims about the causes of, the solutions to, and the imperatives for action against human trafficking. This chapter outlines the methodologies I employed to locate, code, and analyze the newspaper data, which are based on principles of Glaser's constant comparison method (1965), Goffman's frame analysis (1974), and Altheide and Schneider's qualitative media analysis (2012). Qualitative analysis of media related documents such as newspaper articles or television newscasts helps us to: "1) place symbolic meaning in context, 2) track the process of its creation and influence on social definitions, and 3) let our understandings emerge through detailed investigation" (Altheide & Schneider, 2012: 12).

Newspapers are an appropriate data source for understanding the public discourse on a particular issue because they are the way most people learn about issues of which they have no direct experience. An expert in media discourse analysis, Teun van Dijk (2008:58), writes, "Knowledge acquisition and opinion formation about most events in the world appear to be largely based on news discourse in the press and on television, which is shared daily by millions of others. Probably no other discourse type is so pervasive and so shared and read by so many people at more or less the same time." For

most categories of social problems, especially violent crime, the general public garners its understanding of these problems through vicarious experiences that are mediated by mass media, as opposed to direct personal experience (Iyengar, 1991; Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Since the majority of people in the United States do not have direct personal experience with human trafficking, their knowledge and understanding of it is shaped by news media (Tuchman, 1978; Surette, 2007).

For these same reasons, social movement actors use mass media, or general audience media, as vehicles for publicizing social problems and for stirring up public outrage over or support for any associated interventions. Campaign actors also use news media to recruit potential supporters to their causes by educating them about the problem. Mass media is one of the most important political resources for several types of organizations, including service organizations, social movement organizations, and any others that require material and moral support if they are to act freely and effectively in accordance with their objectives. Historically, mass media has been very instrumental in social reform campaigns, especially those that are based on moral claims, such as prohibition, white slavery, and pornography. In these cases, print media has been a common stage for publicizing specific events or actions in order to garner enough publicity to incite public discussion in the hopes of achieving a public mandate that "something must be done!" (Jenness & Grattet, 1996). Such support is often vital to initiating public policy. As Carpenter (2005) concluded, actions of the United Nations and national governments in response to humanitarian crises have been integrally bound up in public opinion; without public support, very little action could have been taken.

Given that most people's general perception of a particular situation is acquired through the mass media, and that social movement actors use it to educate and recruit supporters to their cause, media is an excellent arena in which to observe the interactional framing dynamics in which we are most interested. A systematic analysis of newspaper articles allows us to identify the terrain of the discourse and its dominant influences. It is an appropriate strategy for considering how particular groups are able to control the definitions of and meanings associated with public events and social problems by studying the prominence of particular types of sources (van Dijk, 1988), their statements (Snow & Benford, 2000), and their sources of evidence (Andreas & Greenhill, 2010). Data can be generated from newspaper coverage, which can be analyzed for the symbols used therein to understand the social construction of target groups (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). In this dissertation, I am less interested in the immediate impact of news messages on some particular audience member than in assessing how the media discourse defines the problem of human trafficking and attempts to construct and clarify its meaning for various audiences.

Data Collection

Following Altheide and Schneider's (2012) approach to analyzing media discourse, I collected electronic versions of newspaper articles from LEXIS-NEXIS (LN), an electronic archive of print media. LN allows researchers to use key search terms to search periodical sources from around the globe. Articles are indexed with key words analogous to subject headings used in other digital databases such as JSTOR and EBSCO. To identify appropriate articles, I searched the LN database using the following

key words: *traffic*, human traffick*, slave*, forced labor, sex traffick*, labor traffick**.[9] I

limited the results to English-language newspapers that were published in the United

States from 2000 to 2012. The starting year of 2000 reflects the point at which human

trafficking became commonly covered in the mass media. Prior to 2000, even though

AHT activity was occurring, it did not frequently appear in the mass media (Farrell &

Fahy, 2007) and was not part of a larger campaign. In 2000, with the passage of the

Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), references to human trafficking became

much more common in newspapers, reflecting a growing public concern with the

problem. Only after 2000, with the beginning of a national campaign, did campaign

actors frequently make public claims about human trafficking, which are the basis for this

study.

One limitation of this selection methodology is that it is dependent on the

reliability of the LN indexing procedure. It is possible that by relying on keyword

searches, I ran the risk of excluding articles that discuss human trafficking without the

use of these key terms (Earle, 2004). I think this is unlikely because in the U.S.

contemporary era of academic and public discourse, human trafficking, a relatively new

public concern, is conceptualized by means of these terms. Another more likely scenario,

because human error is always a risk, is the possibility that articles were not properly

indexed with key words. I minimized these risks by conducting multiple searches with

several key terms with the goal of "saturation," or eventually producing searches that

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[9] The asterisk is a Boolean search modifier that commands the search engine to return
and highlight any word that begins with the root/stem of the word truncated by the
asterisk. For example: traffick* returns trafficked, trafficking, trafficker.

yielded no new results. Through this process, I found that some terms, such as "prostitution" or "slavery," were often not associated with human trafficking as we conceptualize it in the 21st century. For example, the term "slavery" retrieved hundreds of articles that were about the anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, which had nothing to do with human trafficking. Even though I limited my search results to articles that were filtered by publication date, used the English language, and were published in U.S. media, the search results included over 800 articles from Canada, China, Australia, and other countries. It is likely that they were included because they were published in the United States originally, but then picked up by a wire service such as the Associated Press or Reuters Wire and were subsequently re-published in international periodicals. I eliminated about 35% of the search results because they were not appropriate or were duplicates. I ended up with a sample of 1,655 newspaper articles, which I believe capture the bulk of media discourse on human trafficking in the United States between 2000 and 2012.

It is possible that I missed articles, but any missed articles are unlikely to add any new information to the analysis, as a function of saturation, which is where the collection of new data does not provide additional information (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In qualitative research, there is a point of diminishing returns in a qualitative sample—as the study goes on, more data does not necessarily lead to more information. This is because one occurrence of a piece of data, or a code, is all that is necessary to ensure that it becomes part of the analytical framework (Ritchie et al., 2013). Frequencies are generally not as important in qualitative research, as one occurrence of the data is potentially as useful as many in understanding the process behind a topic. Figure 4.1 shows the number

of articles included in this study according to the year they were published. The figure

shows that few articles were published in 2000, 2001, and 2002, but after that the number

steadily increased. In 2007, 2008, and 2009, there were 100, 119, and 215 articles

published, respectively. The greatest number of articles (366) were published in 2012.

Figure 4.1: Number of published human trafficking articles by year
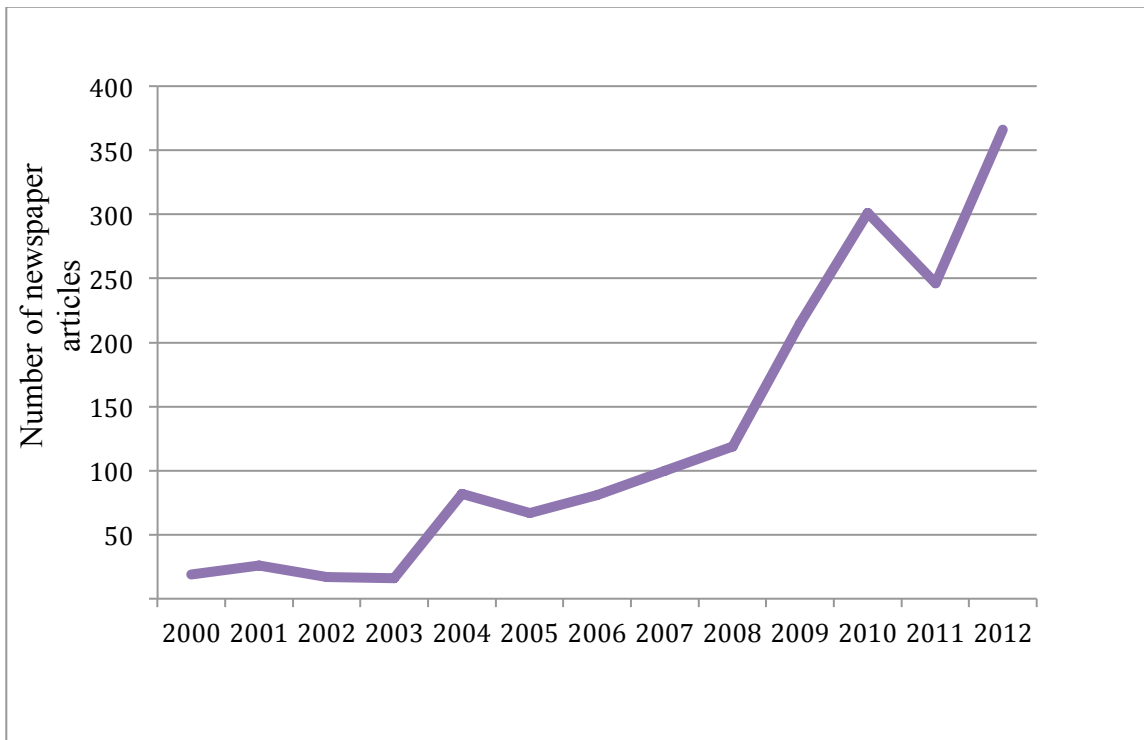
The steady increase in the number of articles is linked to the growing number of policy

initiatives at the federal and state levels. Beginning in earnest in 2005, individual states

began pursuing their own legislative initiatives against human trafficking, resulting in

increased newspaper coverage.

Coding and Data Analysis

To code and analyze the newspaper articles, I employed an analytical technique,

qualitative content analysis (QCA), which is a type of content analysis. Unlike

traditional content analysis, which uses pre-determined coding categories, coding sheets, and numerical counts, QCA is an inductive methodology in which the researcher's interpretation emerges through ongoing analysis and constant comparison. QCA is consistent with the tenets of symbolic interactionism because it focuses on the meaning of the activity or communication and the situation in which it emerges. This type of analysis requires an orientation toward constant discovery and constant comparison of relevant situations, settings, styles, and nuances (Glaser, 1965; Altheide, 1996: 16). QCA involves focusing on and collecting narrative and numerical data inductively and allowing categories to emerge and be refined through constant comparison with other categories, in contrast to the quantitative content analysis method of categorizing and quantifying data within *a priori* categories.

Opening Coding and Axial Coding

In qualitative approaches to textual analysis, coding categories are typically generated either from theoretical interests or from an initial round of analysis. Consistent with methodologies associated with grounded theory (Charmaz, 1996) and other inductive epistemologies (Creswell, 2004), data are coded in three sequential phases: open coding, axial coding, and theoretical coding. In open coding, categories or variables of interest initially guide the study, but others are allowed and expected to emerge as the research proceeds, following an orientation toward constant discovery and constant comparison of relevant situations. In axial coding, the researcher attempts to find patterns among the codes and perhaps organizes them into categories. Finally, theoretical coding is where the researcher attempts to explain the relationships between categories and theoretical propositions.

104

I coded the data according to these phases, beginning with open coding a "pilot" sample. In inductive research, it is often suggested to code a small subset of data to identify possible themes and codes, much like a pilot study. I coded a small sample of 100 randomly selected articles to identify general themes and open codes. In the beginning, I was on the lookout for statements that were theoretically significant because they depicted the core framing tasks: diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational (Snow & Benford, 1988), and I coded them as such. However, in this subset of articles, I observed a pattern noted by Gamson (1987), that one sentence can simultaneously accomplish more than one framing task, which limited the usefulness of my coding strategy. Rather than categorizing sentences and statements by the framing task (diagnostic or prognostic), I instead coded them to signify the content of the statement based on what it "accomplishes" in the progressive tense, such as "describing" the profile of a typical victim, "estimating" the prevalence of trafficking, "highlighting" a trafficked person speaking on their own behalf, or "describing" the arrest of a trafficker.

Klandermans (1992) concluded on the basis of his study of the peace movement that membership in the antagonist and protagonist fields was fluid and shifting, as evidenced by movement actors who "changed sides" based on the context of their claimsmaking. For example, when describing the profile of a typical trafficked person, law enforcement officers were protagonists in that they typically articulated the official frame by describing women and children who were tricked into sexual exploitation. However, when law enforcement officials articulated their positions on proposed legislation, they often advanced a counterframe by expressing skepticism and criticism about the proposal's implications, thus becoming part of the antagonist field. To account

105

for this possibility, I reserved identifying protagonists and antagonists for the axial coding phase, and instead initially coded the statements according to their contents. By using open coding to identify a range of categories and themes and then using axial coding to categorize these themes based on context, I was able to uphold symbolic interactionist principles of emergent meaning by determining the type of framing tasks and classifying protagonists and antagonists in the context of a frame dispute.

After coding the "pilot sample" and modifying my coding strategies based on the two theoretical considerations I just described, I conducted open coding for all 1,655 articles. When this was complete, I followed Creswell's axial coding method, in which one open code is selected and is positioned as the central element of the story. In other words, the researcher selects one or two codes that represent a theme that is of particular conceptual interest because it represents the particular process being studied. The researcher then returns to the data to understand the categories that relate to this central phenomenon.

My study attempts to understand how dominant campaign actors respond to challenges to their frames by using reframes to minimize or to deflect damage to the credibility of their claims. Movement actors use these strategies in the context of frame disputes, or instances where there is disagreement over what is real (Benford, 1993b), so I selected the open code *"criticizes statements & actions of problem owners"* as my central code. I used this code to signify statements where either the journalist or a movement actor expressed a negative response to actions or to statements made by other campaign actors. I was able to identify over 1,200 critical statements, which comprise the counterframes that are analyzed in this study.

From there, I used Glaser's (1965) constant comparison method (CCM) to group each critical statement into a category based on the specific focus of criticism. I developed three major categories of criticism, each reflecting the basis of an important frame dispute. For instance, the largest category of critical statements was *"[criticism of] the portrayal of characteristics & experiences of stereotypical trafficking victims,"* where a campaign actor expressed dissatisfaction and/or disagreement with the characteristics associated with trafficked individuals when being described by other actors. This category became the basis for the first frame dispute explored in this study, which is an ongoing discursive disagreement over the interpretation of characteristics and experiences of "typical trafficking victims." Two other categories of critical statements similarly constitute two other frame disputes: *"[criticism of] the statistical/ prevalence claims about trafficking victims and trafficking activity"* and *"[criticism of] policy solutions and justifications for new policy."*

After categorizing the critical statements into three frame disputes, I returned to the data to identify the corresponding "official frames," or the claims to which the critical statements were responding. In other words, since I had a collection of statements that were critical of how trafficked people were depicted, I went back to the data to find the original descriptions of trafficked people. I could do this by using the open codes to identify statements "*describing characteristics of typical trafficking victims*."

Developing the Three Frame Disputes

I categorized the "*criticizes statements & actions of problem owners*" statements into general categories based on the topics or themes of which they were critical, each

category becoming one of three frame disputes, which are summarized in Figure 4.2. By

creating three discrete frame disputes for analysis, I am analyzing emergent dramas that

are centered on three different discursive dimensions of the AHT movement.

Figure 4.2: Three Frame Disputes in AHT Media Discourse

Frame Dispute	Empirical Significance	Theoretical Significance
Who are the victims of human trafficking? (diagnostic frame dispute; Chapter 5)	Uncovers the oppositional framing strategies used to challenge the personal and experiential characteristics associated with the stereotypical victim image.	Explores the use of the victim image, a central component of public problems social construction and social movement mobilization.
Where are the victims of human trafficking? (diagnostic frame dispute; Chapter 6)	Reveals the oppositional framing strategies used to challenge the empirical claims about the prevalence of human trafficking.	Explores the use of rhetoric among protagonist actors when their diagnostic claims are not supported by empirical evidence and they are faced with accusations of overstating the trafficking problem.
How will legislation help eradicate human trafficking? (prognostic frame dispute; Chapter 7)	Unpacks the oppositional framing strategies used to challenge the justifications for and content of anti-human trafficking policy at the local level.	Explores the use of the victim image and collective identity attribution in the justification of policy solutions.

The CCM process requires the researcher, when categorizing each statement, to

compare it to other statements already included in the same category. Whenever I

categorized a statement into this category, I compared it with other statements that I had

previously put into the category. Glaser writes that with constant comparison, the

researcher starts to generate dimensions and other properties of each category. The frame

dispute that involved the greatest number of articles was in regards to descriptions of the

characteristics and experiences of trafficked individuals. Namely, it responded to the

question: *Who are trafficking victims*? When I revisited the data to identify the official

claims, I was able to discern the dimensions of the dominant frames, some of which were

challenged while others were not. By dimensions, I am referring to the specific

characteristics that are used to describe typical victims, such as gender, age, and

nationality. I observed changes in how trafficked individuals were portrayed in reference

to these traits. Chapter 5 illustrates the dominant frame by quantifying elements of the

victim descriptions over time and unpacking the associated counterframes and reframes.

The second frame dispute, the focus of Chapter 6, explores disagreements concerning the

empirical credibility of protagonist claims. The media data are replete with empirical

claims about the prevalence of human trafficking (see Andreas & Greenhill, 2010).

These claims depict how many individuals are trafficked each year and typically specify

their personal and experiential characteristics. As the campaign progressed through the

2000s, very few victims were identified by law enforcement agencies and even fewer

prosecutions were secured, posing the question at the base of the second frame dispute:

Where are the trafficked victims? This frame dispute includes discourse that attempts to

explain the existence of such discrepancies between the estimated and observed

prevalence of victimization.

The first two frame disputes are diagnostic disputes; they reflect disagreements

over the causes or characteristics of human trafficking. The third frame dispute is a

prognostic frame dispute, where movement actors disagree over the best solution, or the

agency or institution that is best suited to provide the solution, to human trafficking. As

can be expected with any crime, the most popular solution is the development of new

legislative tools that will punish the perpetrator and protect and/or rehabilitate the victim. However, the justifications for and the specific content of proposed legislation is up for debate. Reflecting the dynamic nature of social construction and the fluidity of collective identity (protagonist, antagonist, etc.), in each of these disputes, the organizations and other movement actors that represent the protagonist and antagonist fields can, and often do, change (Klandermans, 1992). For instance, several advocacy organizations may be on board with movement protagonists and agree with their assessments of who is most vulnerable to trafficking and understand the reasons for a small number of identified victims, yet at the same time they may challenge the proposed policy initiatives.

Operationalizing Elements of a Frame Dispute

I developed the three frame disputes based on the three categories of "criticisms and challenges." Once I had the three dispute categories in place, I worked inductively to identify the official frames and the reframes. The official frame, borrowing from Entman's (1993) definition of "dominant meaning" and Gusfeld's (1981) definition of "problem ownership," is comprised of the statements and claims advanced by campaign protagonists. Specifically, they are the statements expressed by campaign actors who are most often considered by general audiences to be the primary supporters of the cause. In the case of human trafficking, the official frame is articulated by government agencies, policymakers, recognized advocates, experts and others. Best (1990) refers to these actors as "insider claimsmakers," both because they have the most access to the polity, and because they serve as the "go-to" people for journalists and other media professionals who are seeking quotable sources that lend legitimacy, authority, and thus, credibility to their articles.

A major advantage of the CCM is that it allows operational definitions of important concepts to emerge from the data, especially when it is unclear how these concepts can be observed, or what they "look like" when they are expressed empirically. This was especially important when I encountered the challenge of differentiating between an assertion of the official frame and a reframe, which can look very similar. One would think that since one is a given statement and the other is a response to a criticism, it would be easy to tell them apart, but the difference is more nuanced. Take, for example, the following two quotes, both of which have almost the same content and are making the same point.

> Every day, in Florida and around the world, victims are compelled into sexual servitude and forced labor through acts of violence, coercion, and deception by traffickers preying on society's most vulnerable citizens. 'It's truly hidden in plain sight,' the Sheriff said, urging South Floridians to be on the lookout (Kim & Perez, 2006: 1).

> Everyone is so concerned with numbers. People ask 'Where are these victims?' All around us: in sweatshops, in mines or on farms, doing dirty, dodgy or dangerous work, or in the sex trade. They are everywhere, we just can't see them (Costa, 2007: 6).

The first statement is an assertion of the official diagnostic frame; the Sheriff is defining trafficking and describing its clandestine attributes and the difficulty in identifying victims, even though victims are allegedly ubiquitous. The second statement makes a very similar claim: that victims are all around us; they are just invisible. However, it is the context of each statement that distinguishes the official frame from the reframe. While the first quote provides diagnostic information, the second quote provides the same information in the form of a response to a challenge over the low number of victims that have been identified. We can tell that the second statement is a reframe because the claimsmaker makes an explicit reference to a common counterframe

by which people ask, "Where are these victims?" While they may look similar, the "framing task" is different in each statement. The original claim is intended to educate and inform potential audiences about human trafficking, while the reframe is intended to ward off, contain, limit, or reverse potential damage to the campaign's previous claims or attributes (Snow & Hunt, 2003) that could occur as a result of counterframes.

Snow and Hunt (2003) suggest to scholars that questions of whether a particular frame is the official frame, a counterframe, or a reframe are largely immaterial, in that researchers must begin somewhere in the claimsmaking process because there is not necessarily a beginning and end. Distinctions such as counterframes and reframes are conventions; Snow and Hunt (2003: 173-174) suggest that they "are sensitizing concepts that help make sense of the unfolding drama of contested meanings and should not be construed as portraying essential features of individuals and collectives and claims." I nevertheless have the task of systematically identifying these concepts as they appear in media discourse and to do that, I require an operational understanding of what these concepts look like when expressed in written discourse.

Operationalizing Counterframing Activity

Counterframing is any activity that attempts to "rebut, undermine, or neutralize a person's or group's myths, versions of reality, or interpretive framework" (Benford, 1987:75). A counterframe does not have to advance an interpretation that is the logical opposite of the official frame, as might be expected from the term "counter." Rather, if any statement refers to an official frame and criticizes it by faulting its logic, proposes an

alternative explanation, or challenges the character of the dominant movement actors, it is a counterframe.

In my coding scheme, for a statement to be categorized as a counterframe, it had to directly refer to an element of the official frame, advance a criticism, and/ or propose an alternative interpretation. Often, these were in the form of a letter to the editor or of statements made by antagonistic campaign actors. After I identified the counterframing statements and categorized them into the appropriate frame dispute(s), I had little difficulty in identifying the "types" of counterframes they represented. Snow and Hunt (2003) categorized the counterframing statements in their studies as counter-diagnosis, counter-prognosis, and attacks on collective character. How they were used, however, differed in each frame dispute and I leave those descriptions for subsequent chapters.

Operationalizing Reframing Activity

Exploring the ways campaign protagonists respond to challenges is theoretically important because it can help us understand how campaign protagonists have maintained their focus on sex trafficking and sex trafficked people despite frequent direct and public claims that this focus distorts the empirical complexity of human trafficking. Operationalizing reframing activity is done by identifying statements that demonstrate the protagonists' processes of protecting, repairing, and re-asserting their collective identity within the social movement after being issued direct challenges through the use of counterframes. In addition to challenging their claims about the causes of and solutions to human trafficking, counterframes also challenge their identity as the experts and heroes of the AHT campaign. Snow and Hunt (2003: 169) describe reframing as collective

attempts to respond to the counterframes of movement challengers in ways intended to ward off, contain, limit, or reverse potential damage to the movement's previous claims or attributes.

Reframing statements were identified in the media data in two ways. One way was that the campaign actor made a reference to a specific counterframe (whether explicit or implied) and responded directly. This operationalization ensured the chronological order, such that the reframe occurred after the criticism. This was most apparent in letters to the editor, or other opinion-based articles. For example, in the following exchange from *The Washington Post*, the first quote is from the September 23, 2007, issue, where a Health and Human Services Department (HHS) official expressed disappointment over the amount of money being spent on efforts to identify victims, which had been largely unsuccessful. This statement is a counterframe because it is critical of the positions or actions taken by dominant movement actors. The second quote, published on September 26th, is taken from a "Letter to the Editor" response to the September 23 article, and features a social service provider who received HHS funds, who was responding to the critique by reframing it to argue that the number of victims is irrelevant because even one victim is too many:

> [T]he government spent $28.5 million in 2006 to fight human trafficking in the United States, a 13 percent increase over the previous year. Steven Wagner, who helped HHS distribute millions of dollars in grants to community groups to find and assist victims, said '[T]hose funds were wasted. Many of the organizations that received grants didn't really have to do anything,' said Wagner, former head of HHS's anti-trafficking program. 'They were available to help victims. There weren't any victims' (Markon, 2007: PA01).

The Sept. 23 front-page article 'Human Trafficking Evokes Outrage, Little Evidence' gave substantial space to the tragic crime of human trafficking, but it left readers without a clear understanding of why the number of prosecuted cases is so low. Human trafficking crimes are underreported for a variety of reasons. Many police investigators are not aware of the federal anti-trafficking law and how to use it. Many view women involved in the sex industry as deserving of their fate and feel that law enforcement officials have more important crimes to pursue. And how many police officers know that a minor working in the sex industry is by definition a trafficking victim? ("Hype and Horror," 2007: PA18)

Reframes like the second quote above were more easily identifiable as reframes because they included an explicit reference to the challenges to which it was responding and provided a direct response.

The second indicator of reframes was when the journalist, in the interest of providing "both sides of an issue," organized the format of the article so that a protagonist claim was presented, immediately followed by a counterframe articulated by a campaign challenger, and then followed with a reframe by the protagonist, a pattern that suggests a direct response. It is difficult to know if the protagonist was, in fact, responding to a direct challenge, or if the journalist had organized statements from different, perhaps unrelated, sources and discussions to make it appear as though the protagonist was responding to the challenge. In any case, I consider this a reframe because it functions as a reframe in that it presents campaign protagonists as responding to challengers and having the last word. In the following example, the journalist went back and forth, giving the illusion of a discussion, where no direct interaction may have actually occurred. The first statement also comes from the September 23 article from *The Washington Post* and highlights the disparity between the estimated and observed number of trafficked victims. This counterclaim is criticizing the dominant diagnostic frames about the prevalence of trafficking. The second quotation is from the same article and

features an official from the Bush Administration who was responding to criticisms about

the low number of identified victims:

> Ronald Weitzer, a criminologist at George Washington University and an expert on sex trafficking, said that trafficking is a hidden crime whose victims often fear coming forward. He said that might account for some of the disparity in the numbers, but only a small amount. 'The discrepancy between the alleged number of victims per year and the number of cases they've been able to make is so huge that it's got to raise major questions,' Weitzer said. 'It suggests that this problem is being blown way out of proportion' (Markon, 2007: PA01).

> Administration officials acknowledge that they have found fewer victims than anticipated. But Tony Fratto, deputy White House press secretary, said that the issue is '[N]ot about the numbers. It's really about the crime and how horrific it is.' 'We have an obligation to set an example for the rest of the world, so if we have this global initiative to stop human trafficking and slavery, how can we tolerate even a minimal number within our own borders?' (Markon, 2007: PA01)

In this example, the second quotation's role as a response to the first is implied. Tony

Fratto may not have been responding to the counterframe articulated by Ronald Weitzer,

but may been responding to someone else, or to this criticism in general. Although it is

less explicit than the back and forth that is found in op-ed pieces where direct references

are made to specific statements made by campaign actors, we can observe similarities in

how reframing statements operate in these two examples, even though one is made by a

service provider and the other is made by a federal official. They both acknowledge the

discrepancy between the numbers of estimated and observed victims or the discrepancy

between the number of dollars spent and the number of identified victims. But as they

both make the same claim that focusing on the numbers distracts from the more important

elements of human trafficking, which is where we should be focused -- namely the

vulnerability of its victims and the moral obligation to act on their behalf.

116

It was not until subsequent coding phases when I had identified a large number of reframing statements, that I was able to categorize them into categories corresponding to Snow and Hunt's (2003) concepts − keying, distancing, embracing, and malignment. Snow and Hunt acknowledge that these categories are ideal types and that there is extensive overlap among them. Often, a reframing statement could be categorized as reflecting more than one type. For example, it could acknowledge the criticism that their statistical estimates are not legitimate (embracing) and then condemn the challengers for putting concerns such as money and numbers above serving vulnerable victims (malignment). In accordance with Snow and Hunt's description of these categories as "sensitizing concepts" and not essential and concrete features of framing processes, I consider these categories to be general ways of thinking about the context of reframing statements and their objectives, whose value is in their context and demonstration of oppositional framing rather than in their ability to provide meaningful quantitative insight or comparison.

The systematic analysis of reframing strategies has been identified by social movement scholars as underdeveloped but still key to improving our understanding of the contested nature of social construction and movement discourse (Snow & Hunt, 2003; Benford, 1993). What I observed by constantly comparing the different reframing techniques is that movement protagonists, or articulators of the official frames, generally move away from addressing the substantive content of the counterframes and instead focus their interpretive energies on strengthening their position in the public problems marketplace and discrediting and dismissing the positions of their challengers by attacking their character. They do this by using reframing strategies to veil contradictions

in their claims and to insulate them from further criticisms and scrutiny by making it inappropriate to challenge them. In the context of the AHT movement, protagonists call on resonant symbols, images, and beliefs that are consistent with victimization discourse.

Theoretical Development

After organizing the data into the three frame disputes and identifying the counterframes and reframes, I began another level of analysis called theoretical coding, in which I examined relationships between categories and attempted to develop explanations for these relationships (Creswell, 2004). In other words, I first compared elements of the official frame to their corresponding counterframes, and then compared the counterframes to their corresponding reframes. By doing this, I observed that not all elements of the dominant frames were challenged by campaign antagonists. Rather, only particular elements were the target of counterframes and prompted reframing activity. These elements were directly related to the social construction of victims, or victimization, suggesting that the oppositional discourse inherent in the AHT campaign is primarily concerned with advancing a victimization ideology, where discourse is used to attribute victim status to trafficked individuals. The reframing processes associated with all three frame disputes that I identified support the victimization ideology and the victim industry, which is a system of societal arrangements that are based on widely held beliefs about victims and victimization (Best, 1997). By using reframing strategies that uphold a victimization discourse, campaign protagonists are able to preserve and emphasize the credibility of their claims, not by contributing additional empirical support, but by expressing emotive claims that use the victim ideology to veil contradictions in their claims, justify their preferred interventions, and discourage further scrutiny. In each of

the following chapters, I explain how a frame dispute is comprised of the framing and reframing of human trafficking and trafficked people to support a victimization discourse.

Limitations of This Approach

This study examines two diagnostic frame disputes and one prognostic one. These types of frame disputes are disagreements over interpretations of what is "real." In other words, they are disagreements over the characteristics of human trafficking, trafficking individuals, and how best to use policy tools to address the presumably growing problem. Even though Snow (1993) conceptualized three types of disputes, the third type, "resonant frame dispute," is not addressed by this study because a resonant frame dispute is not a disagreement over interpretations of reality ("what is real?") but rather a dispute over how reality should be portrayed by movement actors in order to maximize mobilization. Resonant frame disputes are not about "what is" but rather "how it should be portrayed." Snow (1993) and Snow and Hunt (2003) suggest that much of this activity happens behind the scenes in the private strategizing meetings of movement leaders and is not necessarily played out in the media. Accordingly, the approach used here, analyzing the public discourse as it resides in the public forum, is not suited to analyze a resonant frame dispute. My focus is on the public strategies used by campaign actors to manipulate the public's perception of human trafficking and trafficked victims, which can be analyzed by data generated from newspaper articles. It is likely that what is portrayed in the public media is the result of the closed door strategizing, but we cannot make those links explicit with the use of media data.

This study is comprised of analyses of these three frame disputes. There were others present in the data that are not explored in this study, primarily because they were

119

either peripheral to my argument about the discourse of victimization, or they could not be explored sufficiently with media data. One such dispute, for example, concerns the position of the U.S. government as monitor and evaluator of the anti-trafficking interventions being developed in other countries. A key objective of the TVPA was to establish a system by which the U.S. Department of State would monitor, evaluate, and rank the anti-human trafficking activities of other countries and produce an annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report. The report would list the country rankings that were based on three tiers. Countries that had repeatedly ranked in Tier 3, the lowest and least favorably rated, could be subject to non-humanitarian sanctions by the United States. This provision invited challenges familiar to U.S. foreign policy, that the United States has again assumed the role of "world police," the country is engaged in hypocrisy by evaluating other countries but not itself, and accusations of overreaching into foreign policy arenas. This is an important dimension of AHT discourse in the United States, but it was beyond the scope of this project.

The following three chapters present the analyses and findings of this study. Each of the following three chapters corresponds to one of the frame disputes listed in Figure 4.1. The next chapter, Chapter 5, presents the findings associated with the first frame dispute, which concerns the constructions of meanings associated with stereotypical victims of human trafficking and the challenges they invite.

Chapter 5 Disputed Interpretations of "Typical Victims of Trafficking"

The bulk of frames comprising the anti-human trafficking (AHT) campaign in the United States highlight the abuse and exploitation of the world's most vulnerable populations, who are considered to be victims with little or no voluntary agency, who are morally deserving of attention and protection. "Social problems in-the-making" are "problems in search of victims" in the sense that the problems themselves are not fully constituted until their victims are made apparent (Holstein & Miller, 1997: 41). Constructing a class of "injured persons" is an integral part of the construction of social problems. Yet, constructing deserving victims is not necessarily a simple task because in order for people to be deemed worthy of sympathy, and thus assistance, their moral worthiness must resonate with audiences (Clark, 1997).

The concepts of "victims and victimization" are social constructions in that they are based on the attributes and meanings that come to be associated with particular kinds of people. The victim is a symbol evoked by claimsmakers to suggest what a problem "looks-like," whom it affects, and what solutions are most appropriate. "As an act of interpretive reality construction, victimization unobtrusively advises the audience in how they should understand persons, circumstances, and behaviors under consideration" (Holstein & Miller 1997: 29).

The victim-image is a collection of characteristics that are attributed to the target population or the beneficiaries of collective social action. The term is borrowed from Joel Best's (1990) account of the social construction of child abuse. He argues that the victim-image of children who were being intentionally hurt by their caregivers was primarily responsible for a spate of state-level legislation to combat child abuse in the late

121

1960s. Generally speaking, the victim-image is a construction that has been created by politics, culture, history, media and other social processes, and transmitted intergenerationally via socialization (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). These characterizations are normative and evaluative, using symbols and metaphors to portray groups in either positive or negative terms (Schneider & Ingram 1993: 335; Schneider, 2005), and evaluating whether they are deserving of assistance. Portraying someone as an object or target of victimization can imply that the person deserves help or compensation (Holstein & Miller, 1997: 33). The implications of these images reach beyond rhetoric: meanings associated with particular categories of victims can influence the content and design of public policy because lawmakers are pressured to develop beneficial policy for "deserving" populations (Schneider & Ingram, 1993: 335; Stolz, 2005, 2007). Considering the competitive nature of claimsmaking for mobilization, there is a strategic advantage in constructing a victim-image that corresponds with stereotypical perceptions of the social problem that victimizes them. Human trafficking victims are no exception.

Depictions of trafficked individuals and their experiences are the symbols that evoke a sense of urgency and provide justification for possible public policy responses to human trafficking (McDonald, 2004; Carpenter, 2005). The stereotypical trafficking victim is a foreign woman or girl who was removed from her home through force, fraud or coercion and taken to another country where she was forced into sex slavery under a constant barrage of threats, abuse, and unspeakable violence. The victim is characterized has being helpless, unable to control the circumstances in which she finds herself and unable to escape without assistance.

The primary criticism of the stereotypical image of a trafficked person is that it does not reflect the vast majority of trafficked people, and that any person who does not correspond to the victim-image on which the AHT campaign is based will likely not see any meaningful benefit from the campaign's activities (Demleitner, 2001; Doezema, 2005). This criticism has been expressed by actors within the campaign who argue that conventional stereotypical images and horror stories are incomplete and inaccurate interpretations of human trafficking and the people affected by it. In this chapter, I unpack a diagnostic frame dispute in which campaign actors disagree with each other's interpretations of which people are being trafficked and what they experience in the trafficking process.

Diagnostic frame disputes are typically disagreements over how movement actors interpret what "is real" in relationship to a problematic social condition. Diagnostic frames perform both identifying and attributional functions in constructing a social problem. Analytically, the identification and attributional functions are distinct. Problem identification involves the definition and amplification of a condition that is collectively considered to be in need of ameliorative action. This includes providing information about what the problem looks like and offering evidence of the problem's prevalence and scope, including a description of the injured parties. The attributional function of diagnostic frames specifies the character traits of the "villains" that are to blame for the problematic condition.

The diagnostic frame dispute under consideration here is an adversarial process that has three steps. First, dominant movement actors advance frames that define and describe the problem by designating (and dramatizing) the persons who are injured by a

particular social condition or phenomenon. In this way, victims and the causes of their injury are mutually established. Specifying "victims" elucidates "problems" (Holstein & Miller, 1997: 40).

Second, the official frame is challenged by antagonists within the campaign who express counterframes in criticism of the dominant interpretation of trafficked individuals and sometimes give their own version, one that they perceive to be more accurate. Counterframes criticize not only the content of the frame, but also the actors who are advancing it. They criticize the content of the official frame as inaccurate, overstated, or incomplete. Further, they often criticize the collective character of the campaign protagonists by arguing that their claims are indicative of their unwillingness to understand the problem generally or that they are protecting ideological or material interests.

The third element of a frame dispute occurs when protagonists respond to the counterframes with reframes. Reframes work by restating or rebutting challenges to the protagonists' claims and collective character. I argue that by reframing challenges to their claims, campaign actors are exercising symbolic power over human trafficking discourse by controlling what can and cannot be said about trafficking and trafficked individuals. The evolution of the AHT campaign demonstrates that the abolitionists use these kinds of framing and reframing strategies to refute empirical challenges to their construction of human trafficking and its victims.

During the Vienna trafficking debates and the agenda-setting phases associated with the Palermo Protocol and the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA),

various interest groups in the abolitionist sphere were successful in making sex trafficking a stand-in for human trafficking, generally, and in limiting discussions of other forms of trafficking. They testified in congressional hearings by describing the plight of sexually exploited women and children while providing little recognition of individuals trafficked into non-sexual labor. The abolitionists maintained that all prostitution is forced and exploitative and thus all prostitutes are, by definition, victims. Further, they rejected any consideration of voluntary consent within the definition of exploitation or human trafficking because they assumed that no person could possibly consent to exploitation in any form. They advanced a definition of victimization that assumed total coercion and a complete lack of autonomy, agency, or voluntary consent on the part of the victim.

Scholars (Kelly & Ragin, 2000; Aronowitz, 2004, Soderlund, 2005) have advanced alternative ways of conceptualizing human trafficking victimization, each highlighting a range of scenarios in which coercion and exploitation can occur, depending on the "relative autonomy" of the exploited person. For instance, trafficking can be conceptualized as reflecting a range of scenarios depicting an ordinal progression of coercion and lack of volition. At one end of the range, a high degree of coercion occurs when a person is kidnapped outright and forced into servitude. At the other end of the continuum, a lesser degree of coercion occurs when individuals are informed about the kind of work in which they will engage and how much they will be paid, and they agree to do the work, but they are denied payment or forced under threat of harm or legal intervention to work more hours than were originally agreed upon. Between these poles are scenarios in which individuals have been promised jobs outside of the sex industry,

125

such as working as a nanny or domestic worker, and they agree to do the work, but once they are away from home they are forced into the sex trade. Another category in the progression would include situations where individuals were told they would be working in the "sex industry," as sex workers or dancers or strippers, but were subsequently forced into serving more clients than they expected to or were not paid as promised. In each of these categories, consent and coercion are intertwined. What is for certain, however, is that trafficked individuals are not all coerced exploited in the same way, but instead their victimization is characterized by a nuanced interplay between consent and coercion.

Conceptualizations such as these, which recognize a continuum of coercion, are consistent with the assumptions of the anti-labor exploitation sphere, which hold that coercion is a function of the conditions under which the labor is being performed, not of the type of labor in itself. This conceptualization of coercion makes attitudes toward prostitution irrelevant because exploitation is about the working conditions and pay arrangements in any type of work, and the sex industry is considered to be only one place in which forced labor occurs. Accordingly, for this lobby group, trafficking is characterized by the use of force, fraud, or coercion during either the recruitment process or the subsequent provision of labor or services, or both (Aronowitz, 2004; Doezema, 2005; Guinn, 2008). These considerations are not just ideological counterpoints, but are based on previous research on forced labor and sex work. This body of research is based on the idea of relative autonomy and has demonstrated that experiences of forced labor of any type are characterized by variety and context (Weitzer, 2000). However, these

nuances are rarely translated into media coverage and do not play a significant role in the social construction of human trafficking victims.

Personal characteristics of trafficked individuals and their experiences, as framed by dominant campaigners, comprise what Loseke (1999) would refer to as "stock characters" and "formula narratives." The following sections show how claimsmakers have rebuffed challenges to their stereotypical depictions.

Identifying the Official Frame, Counterframes, and Reframes

In the open coding phase, I coded statements that described the "typical victim" of trafficking as having specific characteristics and experiences. Since this frame dispute is about the interpretation of the victim-image and is not meant to describe observed cases, I focus on statements that include generalizing language such as "commonly," "most frequently," and "most." The majority of the articles included in this study contained at least one statement that makes generalized attributions to victims. To provide an example of this kind of statement, the quote below is taken from a news conference announcing the release of the first Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report, where Secretary of State Colin Powell gave the following general description:

> Secretary of State Colin Powell, unveiling the [TIP] report at a news conference, said the overwhelming majority of the victims are women and children who have been 'lured, coerced or abducted by criminals who trade in human misery.' ("Report: More needed to stop human trafficking," 2001: B7)

Statements such as these, which do not refer to a specific case, were made by a variety of insider-campaigners, including representatives of the federal government, officials at the national and local levels, law enforcement, and major advocacy and social service organizations. These actors comprise the protagonist field − those individuals and groups

127

who are generally understood to be the primary legitimate and most influential advocates of the cause (Hunt et al., 1994). Gusfeld (1981) would call these actors the problem's "owners" because they possess the authority to define the condition as a problem and to suggest what can be done about it because their information and ideas about the problem are given priority attention to the exclusion of others.

I first categorized this collection of open codes into the two dimensions of the victim-image that were most prevalent in the data: personal characteristics of trafficked individuals and experiences of trafficking. The personal characteristics I coded for were gender and age, and nationality. While "gender and age" are empirically distinct characteristics, they are most often depicted together in the data, such that "women and children" is a frequently encountered expression.

For the trafficking experiences dimension, I coded for the type of trafficking individuals are most likely involved in (sex/ labor/ both); the mechanisms by which vulnerable individuals enter into trafficking situations (recruitment); and finally, the types of coercion used to keep trafficked individuals in servitude. Given the disagreement between the abolitionist and anti-labor exploitation spheres, it is reasonable to expect that considerations of consent and agency will be primary features of the official frames and likely grounds for counterclaims. The elements of trafficking experiences (type of trafficking, recruitment, and coercion) that I have coded shed light on the roles of consent and agency in the attribution of meaning to trafficked individuals.

To identify counterframes, I tagged the statements that I coded in the open coding phase as "criticisms and critiques" that made explicit reference to one or more of the

dimensions of the official frame. Identifying reframes involved a similar process. I sorted by statements describing "typical victims" and I filtered out those that made explicit reference to challenges from antagonistic campaign actors.

After identifying the counterframes and associating them with corresponding elements of the official frame, I found that not all elements of the official frame were challenged. In fact, the only elements of the official frames that were challenged were those associated with trafficking experiences, specifically as they related to two important characteristics of the collective character of trafficked individuals: consent and coercion.

For the most part, reframes defended protagonist claims by re-asserting their interpretations of trafficked individuals, particularly re-emphasizing their experiences of coercion.

The Official Frame and Counterframes: Personal Characteristics and Trafficking Experiences of "Typical Victims"

The victim-image is a symbol, or stereotype, that represents the personal characteristics of trafficked individuals and generalizes accounts of their experiences. It is a stand-in used by campaign actors to frame the problem of trafficking with resonating aspects of victimization, especially vulnerability, consent, and coercion. The following sections describe how dominant campaign actors articulate the official frames that identify typical trafficked individuals and their experiences. They also outline how dominant frames are challenged with counterframes.

Gender and Age Characteristics

The ubiquitous phrase, "women and children," represents the gender and age characteristics most often associated with "typical" trafficked individuals. This is no surprise because women and children are often represented as being the most vulnerable of victims in several human rights arenas (Carpenter, 2005), and they are easy populations to envision as being unable to control or influence the situations in which they exist (Holstein & Miller, 2007) and therefore deserving of protection (Schneider & Ingram, 1993; Dunn, 2001). Figure 5.1 compares the four phrases most commonly used to depict the gender and age of the most frequently trafficked individuals and their prevalence over the 12-year period under consideration. About 40% of all of the articles included in this study referred to "women" as the typical victims, while 25% referred to "women and children." I coded the articles by the specific phrase used, such as "women and children," or "children." Coding according to the phrase and not the attribute is appropriate in a qualitative content analysis because we are more interested in the usage and salience of the phrase as a symbol than we are of the frequency with which a particular attribute was mentioned. Campaign claims repeatedly invoke the phrase "women and children" to equate women's and children's vulnerability and lack of agency (Chapkis, 2005; Weitzer, 2007).

Figure 5.1: Gender and Age Characterizations of "Typical" Victims of Trafficking
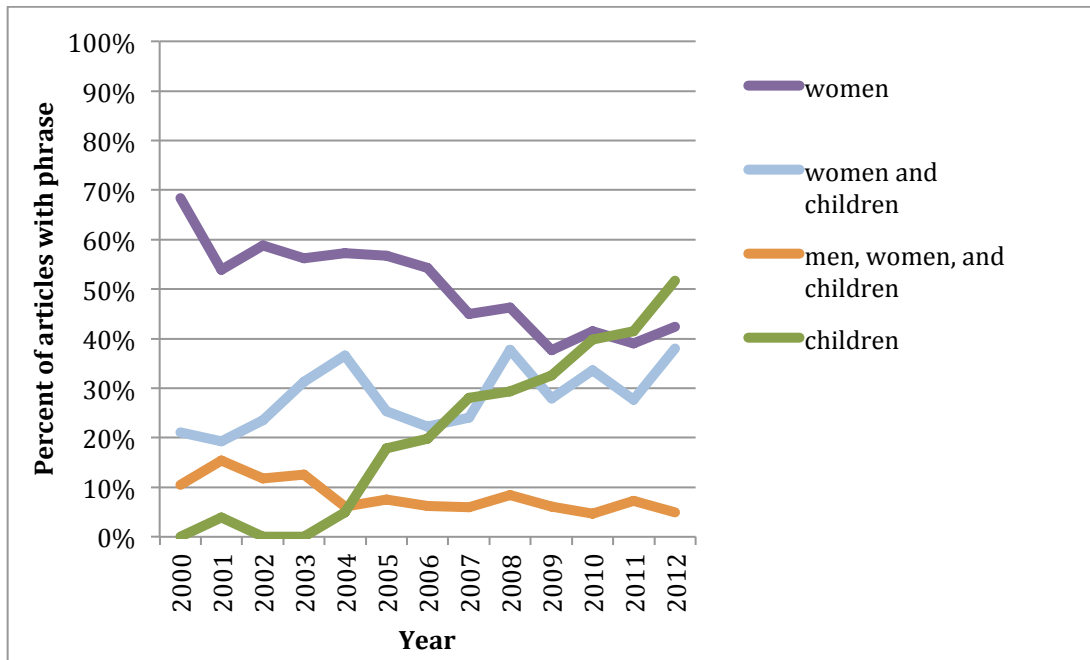
Figure 5.1 shows a few important patterns. The most obvious tendency is the

preponderance of women as the primary victims of human trafficking. Through 2006,

phrases that depicted women as the primary victims of human trafficking appeared in at

least 50% of the articles published each year. After that, the incidence of the singular

category "women" began to decline, reaching its lowest level of usage (38%) in 2009.

After 2006, we can observe a corresponding increase in the depiction of trafficked

persons as "women and children" or "children." The increase in framing victims as

children makes sense because campaign claimsmakers would want to feature victims that

are unambiguously blameless, and children are most likely to be viewed in these terms.

Feingold (2010) suggests that there is no area of human trafficking that attracts more

attention than child sex trafficking. He also suggests that focusing on children, who have

"legally designated innocence," shields us from the "vexing questions of agency,

motivation, consent, and the nature and extent of exploitation that frequently complicates adult victim identification" (Feingold, 2010: 54).

This gradual shift in the portrayal of trafficked individuals suggests "frame extension" on the part of campaign actors. Typically, frame extension is employed when movement actors are strategically highlighting a specific aspect of a problem, or extending the scope of focus to appeal to the values and beliefs of potential supporters (Snow et al., 1986). The change of focus from "women" and "women and children" to "children" suggests a strategic move on the part of dominant campaign actors to highlight the vulnerability of the individuals to being trafficked because children are generally considered to be more vulnerable and in need of social protection than adult women. This increase in the "children" category corresponds with the abolitionist ideology, making the consideration of consent irrelevant. As campaigners claim over and over, children, according to both international and national law, cannot voluntarily consent to commercial sexual activity because they are, by definition, below the age of consent. With this frame extension, campaigners are contributing to a collective understanding of human trafficking that assumes absolutely no agency and total coercion of victims, corresponding with the ideal victim-image and its associated feature of unambiguous, 100% innocence.

This shift can also be observed qualitatively in the phrasing used in some of the statements made by campaign leaders. Journalists quoted many sources that described this "new focus" with the use of qualifying language to suggest an evolution in "common knowledge," or the presentation of information that challenges the generalized "public opinion." For example:

132

And it's not just women who are being exploited, which is what we usually think about. Gilbert said teenage runaways in Maine could become entrapped and forced into prostitution, trading their bodies for money or drugs (Kesseli, 2006).

We often think of women, but victims are often teenagers, even as young as 13. Traffickers target them in malls, on the streets, at bus stations -- anywhere kids gather. Children who have been sexually abused are especially vulnerable. Homeless youth are vulnerable. One in three teens on the street will be lured into trafficking within 48 hours of leaving home ("First Lady Addresses Convention," 2012).

Language that presents a claim that is "contrary to what we think" could represent a shift in thought, or perhaps a more enlightened understanding of the trafficking situation based on new information. It could also indicate frame extension, whereby claimsmakers expand the range of victims to include other vulnerable and blameless groups. I do not consider the above statements to be challenging the dominant claims. If statements like these were counterframes, one would be able to observe other challenges to the claim that victims are primarily women. Yet, the data did not reveal unambiguous counterframes in response to the official depictions of women, nor did any counterframes suggest that more children are trafficked than movement actors have stipulated, so it is difficult to interpret this shift in framing as a response to criticism. Statements such as these suggest a shift in discourse through frame extension rather than a response to a criticism.

This change in public discourse within the mass media parallels an observed a shift in discourse occurring at the national level. The TVPA Reauthorizations in 2005 and 2007 introduced new intervention areas for funding and policy development, specifically in the area of sexual exploitation of children, or "domestic sex trafficking of minors." The causal reasons for this frame extension at the national level cannot be determined through newspaper data alone. To establish a cause and effect link, we would

require a close examination of the lobbying activities undertaken by advocacy organizations, similar to the efforts of Soderlund (2005) and Stolz (2005, 2007), who analyzed the behind-the-scenes discourse by reviewing official communiques, reports, and announcements that were not part of the public discourse more broadly. Here, our focus is on the outcome of these activities, and what we observe in Figure 5.1 is an empirical shift in the descriptions of typical trafficking victims from women to children.

As I continued to compare statements containing language about children to each other, another qualitative pattern emerged. Children were described as victims of trafficking in two main ways. The first included claims about child victims that characterized them as runaways, throwaways, children who have histories of sexual abuse, and other characteristics that make them "at-risk" of further victimization. The second category of claims about child victims viewed them as at risk not because of something they had done, such as running away, but because of their age and status as children. In this kind of claim, all children are at risk due to the ubiquity of traffickers who are looking for underaged victims. From 2006 onward, more and more statements described scenarios where average or "normal" children were being recruited into prostitution from their schoolyards by traffickers (whether conceptualized as members of street gangs, or entrepreneurial "boyfriends" or other deviant figures) who are ever vigilant in their hunt for child victims from all walks of live. I further explore these categories in later sections.

Another pattern observable in Figure 5.1 is the relative rarity of depictions of male victims. Men were almost never described as typical victims of human trafficking, even though empirical research suggests that they are equally or more likely than women

134

to be objects of coercion. When they were considered at all, it was in inclusive phrases like, "men, women, and children," but such statements consistently accounted for the smallest number of articles, usually under ten percent of published articles annually. The following quote given by Ann Jordan of the International Human Rights Law Group, a key organization in the Human Rights Caucus during the Vienna debates, is an example of this type of description. It is interesting to observe that in this quote, there is no explicit equation of human trafficking generally with sex trafficking in particular.

> At the end of the last century, the world witnessed the growth of a modern form of slavery -- trafficking in human beings. These modern traffickers treat women, men and children as commodities to abuse, sell and move across borders like illegal drugs or stolen weapons (Valdez, 2003: 1B).

However, claims of this type were rare. In most claims, the typical victims were described as women and/ or children.

Counterframes: Gender and Age

I found little indication of disagreement or dispute over the interpretation of trafficked individuals in regards to their gender and age. There were almost no statements where a claimsmaker suggested that the depiction of victims as predominantly women and/or children was inaccurate or otherwise problematic. A few articles mentioned boy victims who were used as child soldiers or beggars in regions in Africa and South Asia, but they were rare compared to depictions of "children" and "girls." Instead, we witness an increasing emphasis over time on children as the primary victims of trafficking. This suggests the pervasiveness, or resonance, of this dimension of the official frame.

Existing empirical research has suggested that women and children are not the most common targets of human trafficking because sex trafficking (which does primarily

target these categories of people) comprises only a minority of human trafficking (ILO, 2002, 2012; Belser & Cock, 2005). Trafficking of migrant laborers, mostly men, is much more common globally than sex trafficking. Male migrant workers caught in labor trafficking are probably the least understood group of trafficked persons (Ruwanpura & Rai, 2004) even though in many regions of the world, including Europe and Africa, adult males appear to be the primary subjects (ILO, 2002), and this may be true of the United States as well (Pizarro, 2012). Yet such complexity, even though consistent with empirical evidence, does not readily enter the public discourse. Instead, the newspaper data demonstrate a deliberate framing of victim characteristics to highlight women and children, a pattern that is further developed by common claims about the origin of victims.

Official Frame: Origin of Trafficking Victims

Another element of the trafficking victim-image is the origin of the individual, i.e. the place from which the trafficked person has come. During the Vienna debates and the TVPA pre-legislative hearings, representatives from a range of interest groups, NGOs, and governments lamented the plight of foreign women and children who were either tricked or forcibly taken from their homes to another locale where they were sold into servitude. During this pre-2000 period, the problem of human trafficking was closely associated with "irregular immigration" concerns such as the smuggling of migrants (Aronowitz, 2004; Anderson & Andrijasevic, 2008; Farrell & Fahy, 2007). This is somewhat ironic because neither the Palermo Protocol nor the TVPA include movement or transportation across national borders in their definitions of trafficking, but nonetheless, the victim-image during these pre-2000 years was that of foreign women. In

a major media campaign relating to the release of the first Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report, Congressman Christopher Smith described typical victims as foreign women looking for work:

> Mr. Smith said many young women are lured to the United States with the promise that they will obtain legitimate jobs, but when they arrive, '[t]heir passport is pulled and then they realize the nightmare that they're in for' (Seper, 2001: PA9).

The newspaper data show that almost all newspaper articles published in the 2000-2002 period depicted foreigners as the most commonly trafficked persons. Such views became less and less common over time. As Figure 5.2 illustrates, there was a decrease in the depictions of foreign victims, and a corresponding increase in portrayals of victims as having originated from within the United States. The decrease in foreign victims could be attributed to continuous lobbying on the part of abolitionist groups to increase focus on "domestic sex trafficking" and to target law enforcement interventions on the "johns" and other traffickers (Chapkis, 2005). Abolitionists typically associate "street level" prostitution as the primary cause or expression of sex trafficking (Soderlund, 2007; Stolz, 2007a). Their influence is suggested by my finding that by 2012, about half of the newspaper articles described victims with language such as "our kids," and "our girls," referring to children "in our own communities."

Figure 5.2: Origin of "Typical Trafficking Victims" in Newspaper Data, 2000-2012
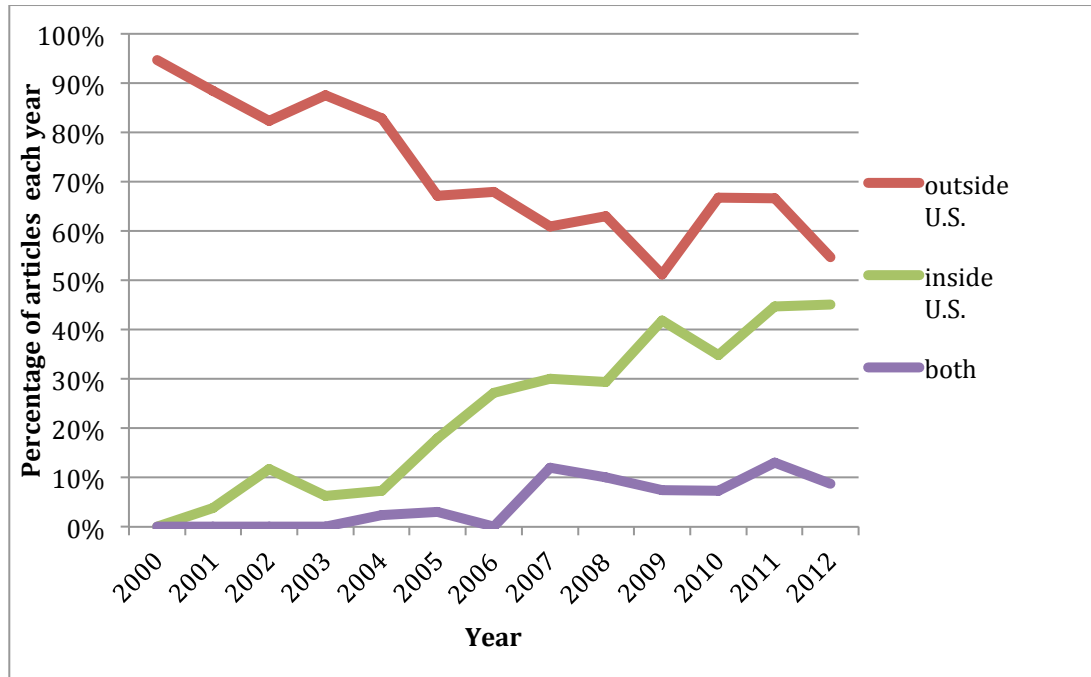
The shift to "local victims" corresponds with the previously described change from women to children in that there is a shift from "adult foreign women" to "local children." The following quotes demonstrate the shift from foreign women to "homegrown girls," substituting one category of vulnerable persons for another, even more defenseless one:

> Contrary to public opinion, the worst of America's human trafficking arguably doesn't involve foreign women smuggled into the U.S., but homegrown girls. Homegrown girls. … [G]irls who succumb to the attentions of an online 'boyfriend,' or a new 'friend' from the mall. He means girls who meet a charming parental figure, realizing too late, that this is their new 'pimp.' He means girls whose gang rape is filmed to coerce her into sex-for-money out of fear that it will be posted on YouTube. He means hometown girls . . . from any community in this beautiful country. Girls who are our children and grandchildren. Girls who are our daughters and our sisters. Our girls (Travis, 2012).

It is estimated that every year in Minnesota, 10,000 to 15,000 people, mostly girls and boys, are prostituted. Most of them are Minnesota kids -- they are not from other countries or other states. The average age of the child being trafficked is 12 to 14 years old, and the life expectancy for a person sold into prostitution is seven years following her or his first experience. These people are 18 times more likely to be murdered than people outside of the sex trade (Ortega & McDonough, 2012).

Again, it is possible to associate this shift in focus toward local victims with a corresponding change at the national level. The 2007 Reauthorization Act amended the TVPA to include measures to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts (prostitution) and new sections addressing domestic trafficking in persons. These measures included support for initiatives that would reduce the demand for commercial sex by targeting individuals who purchase sexual services. One such initiative in Toledo, Ohio, developed "Johns Schools" (Blake, 2011), which aim to educate men about their role in perpetuating the sexual exploitation of women and children. Abolitionists generally consider any person who purchases or facilitates commercial sex in any way to be a human trafficker.

Considering both Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2, we can make some general statements about what characteristics were being attributed to trafficking victims and featured in the trafficking victim-image and how they shifted over time. The data suggest that in the early 2000s, the victim-image was generally constructed to encompass foreign-born women and children who either migrated, usually under false pretenses, or were forcibly taken to the United States to be sold into the sex trade and forced into prostitution. Over time, the victim image shifted to "women and children" and "children" from the United States, which represented a new search for victims in the United States. A possible explanation for this shift to include minors is that it emphasizes

139

the idea that consent is irrelevant because by definition, minors do not have the capacity

for voluntary consent, and this shift equates the vulnerability of adult women to that of

children. A key tenet of the victimization ideology is that victims are without agency and

have little or no control over their lives, leaving them vulnerable to the influence of

traffickers and therefore, they are not responsible for the circumstances that led to their

capture. Foreign women, in a new environment where they cannot speak the language or

are afraid of law enforcement officials, are helpless and vulnerable. But an even better,

more convincing and resonant case can be made for children, namely "our children," for

whom blamelessness is automatically assumed.

Counterframes: Origin of Trafficking Victims

Similar to the official frames associated with the age and gender of victims, there

were no significant challenges to the frames regarding the national origin of victims.

There are several possible explanations for why these frames have not been challenged,

the exploration of which is fertile ground for further research. Perhaps these claims are

relatively unchallenged because there exists a general consensus or agreement about the

interpretive depictions of the origin of trafficked persons. It is also possible that this

shifting interpretation of the victim-image is in the best interest of the victim industry

(Best, 1997) and justifies their intervention. The victim industry is a set of societal

arrangements that are primarily concerned with identifying large groups of victims.

McDonald (2004: 145) notes that as a result of hundreds of millions of federal dollars for

grants and special anti-human trafficking projects, organizations often 're-branded'

themselves as organizations that now specialize in human trafficked individuals.

"Existing organizations that operate shelters for battered women, legal services for

refugees or immigrants, medicalized services for traumatized children, victims of sexual assault or domestic violence can modify their mission to account for newly identified victims, especially if the victims are more and more depicted as 'from our own communities.' " As one service provider observed:

> Although funding is one of the obstacles [to serving child victims], Megason said the greater challenge has been developing a care and treatment plan to empower the survivors the shelter seeks to serve - girls 12 to 17 who have long fallen under the radar, as anti-trafficking resources have largely been devoted to victims kidnapped or lured into the United States from other countries (Ulloa, 2005).

The framing of trafficking victims in terms of their age and gender has highlighted the vulnerability of women and young people, because these categories of people are considered the most defenseless and most in need of protection. As Loseke (2003) and others (Best, 1997; Leisenring, 2007) have suggested, victims who are acceptable to the public must not in any way be assumed to be responsible for the harm they endure, and they should be in exceptionally troubling conditions. What is left out of these framings are depictions of adult men as victims, because their gender presumably protects them from being vulnerable to human traffickers.

Victim Experiences of Trafficking

The stereotypical profiles of the gender, nationality and age of "typical victims" were not challenged in any significant manner in newspaper articles written during the 2000- 2012 period. This is because these profiles are salient and they resonate with widely-held assumptions about the vulnerability of women and children in troubling circumstances. However, in order to resonate with audiences and strategic partners such as lawmakers, the victim-image must not only highlight their vulnerability, but must also

demonstrate how they are injured or otherwise unjustly treated (Loseke, 20003; Miller &

Holstein, 1997), which is the focus of the following sections. The injuries are

communicated through "formula narratives," which are standard stories through which

the story of their victimization experience is carried. Through the use of "atrocity tales"

(Best, 1990) and "horror stories" (Weitzer, 2007), readers are informed about the

horrendous treatment of victims at the hands of their traffickers. These types of

narratives mobilize public concern by emphasizing the severity of the problem and the

urgent need for intervention. The newspaper data demonstrate commonalities in how

trafficking is portrayed as being experienced by its victims. These fall along three

dimensions: the type of trafficking (sex or other kinds of forced labor), how the presumed

victims entered into the trafficking situation (recruitment), and how their agency is

completely eroded through coercive practices such as violence and threats of violence.

Unlike depictions of victim characteristics over which there is consistent agreement

emanating from the AHT campaign, conventional accounts of trafficking experiences are

indeed challenged by critics.

Types of Human Trafficking Associated with Typical Victims

To assess the trafficking type that was most commonly associated with typical

trafficked individuals, I coded statements about typical victims into one of three

categories of trafficking: 1) sex trafficking, which includes involvement in prostitution,

pornography, strip clubs, brothels, etc; 2) labor trafficking, which includes forced labor in

industry, agriculture, domestic service, and other employment sectors; and 3) both sex

and labor trafficking. Of course, an article could have multiple statements that referenced

the locus of the exploitation. In this case, each reference was counted, enabling us to

make comparisons between the number of times trafficking was associated primarily with sex trafficking compared with other forms of forced labor.

As we would expect given the dominant position of abolitionist actors in the AHT campaign, most claims depicted sex trafficking as the type of trafficking experienced by most trafficked individuals and comparatively little mention was made of non-sexual forms of trafficking (see Figure 5.3). Statements like the following are representative of the claims describing the "majority" or "typical profile" of victims:

> The government has estimated that 45,000 to 50,000 women and children are trafficked each year into the United States, trapped in modern-day slavery like situations such as forced prostitution (Seper, 2001: PA12).

Figure 5.3 shows three consistent patterns. The first is that victims were primarily associated with sex trafficking, a pattern persisting over 12 years of newspaper data. Every year, more than 65% of newspaper articles asserted that, in general, trafficking victims were working primarily in the sex trade.

Figure 5.3 Type of Trafficking Associated with "Typical Victims"
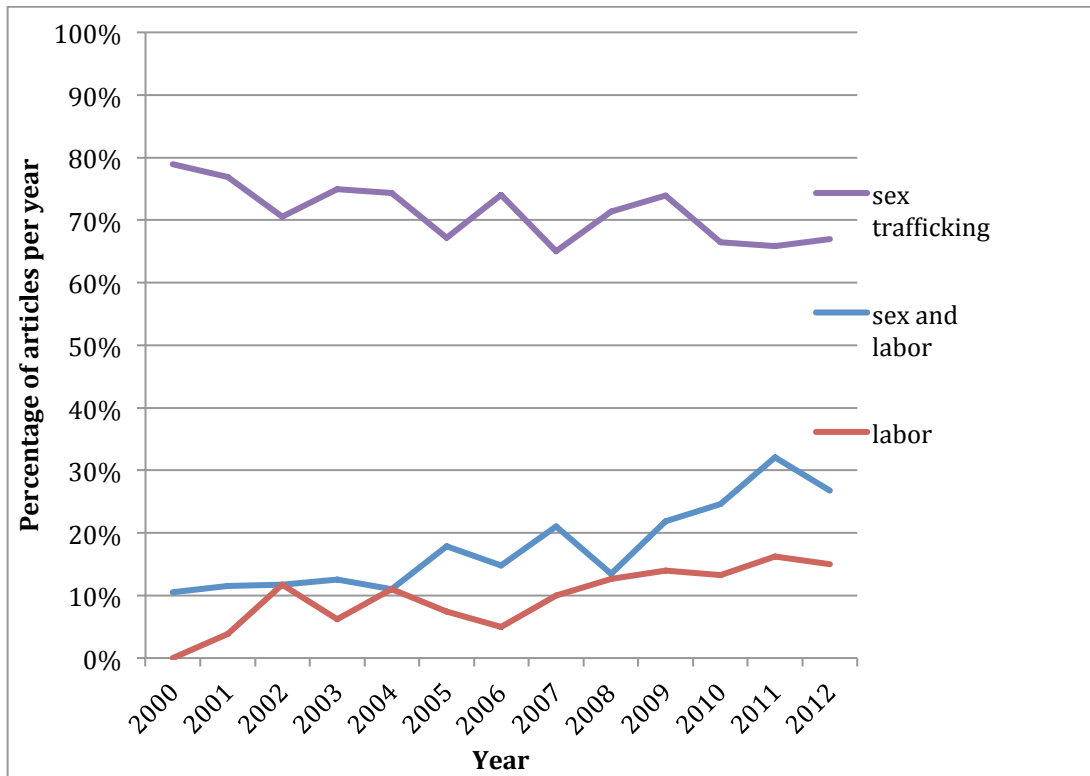
The second most common description, although a distant second, were descriptions

where both sex and labor trafficking were described, for example:

> Many are indentured and work menial jobs to pay off the costs of coming
> to the United States. Many work in the agricultural industry, sweat shops
> and as prostitutes (Orlov, 2007: N3).

> They could be quietly suffering in any town or neighborhood – girls and
> women forced into prostitution; laborers toiling away under dangerous
> conditions; nannies and other domestic workers trapped in forms of
> indentured servitude. ("Human trafficking is a crime against us all," 2007).

The third trend was that very few articles highlighted forced labor outside of the

sex industry as the primary type of human trafficking. The data show that non-sexual

labor was identified as the primary form of exploitation in less than 15% of the articles

each year. This is a significant trend because it shows a persistent focus on sex

trafficking, even though sex trafficking is only a small part of the human trafficking globally and within the United States. The pattern suggests that sex trafficking is the more important or pressing issue for claimsmakers, even though their claims are not supported by empirical evidence. The converse of the persistent focus on sex trafficking is the systematic exclusion of non-sexual forms of trafficking from the public discourse. Entman (1993) writes, "Frames call attention to particular aspects of the reality described which logically means that frames simultaneously direct attention away from other aspects. Most frames are defined by what they omit as well as include." This omission is the focus of a major frame dispute, representing disagreement over the interpretation of human trafficking as primarily or exclusively involving sex trafficking.

Counterframes: Type of Trafficking

Over 400 articles contained a statement made by a campaign actor or journalist who explicitly identified a misrepresentation or inaccuracy in the claims about trafficked individuals, specifically in regards to the prevalence of sex trafficking compared to labor trafficking. These first two quotes aptly illustrate the tone of these counterframes, directing attention toward the seemingly unbalanced nature of anti-trafficking intervention:

> 'Labor trafficking unfortunately seems to be forgotten since it's not as sensational as sex trafficking,' said Jenny Clark, chair of STC's women studies program and co-chair of the three-day conference. 'But labor trafficking is more prevalent. It's sometimes called the 'hidden' form of trafficking' (Morton, 2012).

> [Some] say the government has placed too much emphasis on sex trafficking and too little on workplace abuses at sweatshops and farms. 'We see sex cases being prioritized [by federal prosecutors], but other cases we're having a hard time getting looked at,' said Elissa Steglich, an attorney for the Chicago-based Midwest Immigrant and Human Rights

145

Center. 'Whatever type of slavery you're dealing with, they're horrors all the same' (Crary, 2005).

Counterframes regarding the unbalanced attention given to sex trafficking appeared in 412 articles, most of which were published after 2006. The largest proportion of articles reflecting this counterframe (24%) were published in 2012. This peak is associated an increase in media attention regarding a controversial policy proposal in California, where many high profile campaigners began to question the efficacy of the policy proposals being presented to the state legislature. Organizations that had long been leaders of anti-trafficking work in California began publically criticizing the policy proposal before it went to a vote. Challengers said the policy targeted sex trafficking only and did nothing for victims of other forms of trafficking. They argued that the law was problematic because it was based on the false premise that victims of human trafficking were primarily exploited in the sex industry. The form of human trafficking most threatening to people living in, or traveling through, California is not sex trafficking, they argued, but rather labor trafficking, and this policy took legislative focus away from a large constituency of trafficking victims. Critics of the policy were concerned that the policy represented a dismissal of trafficking victims who were not in the sex trade and thus it was inconsistent with the goals of the campaign.

While the policy was specific to California, the media coverage was nationwide, perhaps because this dispute was one of the few times that counterframers organized a visible "protest" of anti-human trafficking policy, a newsworthy development. I further unpack the framing of anti-human trafficking policy in Chapter 7, but it is a key part of the counterframe explored here, which maintains that labor trafficking is being minimized by campaign leaders, and thus victims of labor trafficking are being ignored

146

by the campaign. This challenge was not associated exclusively with the California proposal, but the proposal was high profile enough to bring this counterframe into a prominent position in the national media discourse.

I identified 412 articles that included statements making explicit challenges to the claim that typical trafficking victims were in the sex trade. Challengers criticized claims that they felt downplayed the prevalence of labor trafficking. Most of these counterframing articles (67%) made counterdiagnoses and suggested either that most victims are involved in labor trafficking, or that labor trafficking is more common than the campaign would suggest.

Most of the 412 counterframing statements can be categorized as "counterdiagnoses," where challengers stated that claims depicting sex trafficking either as the most prevalent form of trafficking or as the only form of trafficking, were incorrect interpretations of the problem and provided an alternative interpretation. This was done in a variety of ways, two of which are worth mentioning here. The first is to depict sex trafficking as a form of labor trafficking. The director of an anti-human trafficking advocacy group in North Carolina offered an alternative interpretation of trafficking as involving the person's work situation generally, and not being not limited to prostitution or sexual exploitation. She equated prostitution and other kinds of labor as exploitive when people are compelled to work against their will.

> She added that lawmakers often describe foreign women in brothels when they talk about human trafficking, but that is not always the case. 'This is an example of where it's kind of hidden in plain sight, in a hair salon,' she said. 'It's a work situation; it's not a sex situation. In either context, someone is being forced to work against their will and they don't really have any way of escape' (Reeves, 2012: N3).

The quote below reflects another way the counterdiagnoses was expressed

through a direct statement asserting that other forms of labor apart from the sex trade (in

this case, work in the building trades) accounts for the majority of trafficking:

> 'Most human trafficking is not about sex work, it's about construction,'
> Alexander said (Hennessey, 2006).

These quotes challenge the substance of the claim that trafficking is primarily an issue of

sexual exploitation and offer a counterdiagnosis that counterframers consider to be a

more accurate interpretation of reality: human trafficking is an issue of labor exploitation

and is not limited to forced sexual activity.

Counterframes do more than dispute the information presented in official frames;

they also may challenge the character of the official claimsmakers who are advancing the

claim. Statements that challenged the collective character of claimsmakers were found in

161 (39%) of the 412 counterframing articles. Counterframes that targeted the collective

character of AHT campaign actors implied that the focus on sex trafficking at the expense

of a more nuanced consideration of all forms of human trafficking was intentional and

represented a political agenda:

> Some victims' advocates say the government stresses sex cases because
> they generate more news coverage or because they are a priority of
> conservative Christian groups loyal to the Bush administration (Crary,
> 2005).

A following quote makes the stronger accusation that the conflation of human trafficking

with sex trafficking is intentional and makes circumstances more dangerous for the

individuals involved.

> The migration of sex workers has been confused with trafficking, and
> trafficking has been confused with prostitution. The campaign succeeds by

making connections that are simply not there. In the end, by obscuring the real issues, it hurts those it claims to help (Goodyear, 2007).

While not generally part of the public discourse on human trafficking in the United States, research on forced labor and human trafficking around the world has consistently failed to support the claims that characterize the AHT campaign. The International Labor Organization (ILO), which has established itself among scholars and other researchers as the most legitimate data-driven authority on human trafficking, has reported that sex trafficking, or forced prostitution, comprises less than 1/3 of forced labor worldwide (Belser& Cock, 2005; ILO 2012). In 2005, the ILO published a report in which they estimated that of the 12.3 million people forced into servitude around the world, only 11% were involved in sex trafficking (Belser & Cock, 2005). The ILO researchers acknowledged that the estimate was conservative and that their estimation model had not yet been validated, but they claimed that the estimates were trustworthy extrapolations of existing data. In 2012, the ILO produced another report, with improved and validated estimation models. Their new estimate was that 21 million people worldwide were engaged in forced labor and about 23% of them were being exploited in the sex trade. Similar conclusions were reached by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Trafficking who conducted a special mission at the U.S.-Mexico border in 2005. She concluded that she observed an over-emphasis on sex trafficking interventions, especially in the United States Southwest, where she said labor trafficking was a more significant problem than sex trafficking (Pizarro, 2012).

## Recruitment into and Coercion within Trafficking Scenarios

Characterizations of typical victims and their trafficking scenarios regularly include descriptions of how victims enter, or are recruited into, trafficking situations and the means by which they are forced to remain under the trafficker's control. The parts of the "formula narrative" that pertain to how individuals enter into and are kept in trafficking scenarios are testaments to their vulnerability and lack of agency, which are key elements in constructing "blameless" victims.

The three most commonly depicted ways of "entering" trafficking situations are by being lured or duped (deceived), kidnapped (taken by force), or led into coercive circumstances due to their adverse structural conditions (economic deprivation). This third way implied that women, given their typically disadvantaged economic and/or social standing, had no other choice but to enter prostitution, so in this sense they were forced by circumstances beyond their control. The claim is that certain political and economic circumstances can make individuals especially vulnerable to deception or even kidnapping, so in this way, this category is not mutually exclusive of the other two. This overlap is not problematic because these categories are not meant to be empirically accurate descriptions of how individuals get involved in trafficking, but instead are indicators of the frames used to highlight particular characteristics of the trafficking process. I include the third category here even though it is conceptually different from the other two in that it prioritizes structural characteristics experienced by individuals at risk for trafficking, as opposed to the other two, which highlight their specific individual situations and experiences often without consideration of structural influences. Each

category represents the primary way in which an individual could get involved in trafficking, according to media accounts.

Figure 5.4 shows the prevalence of each of these frames over 12 years of newspaper data. The most commonly depicted way of being recruited into trafficking is through deception or fraud. Statements that highlight deception and fraud describe how individuals, primarily women and children, are "lured" into exploitative arrangements with promises of a better life resulting from a new job or a move to a new geographical location where economic opportunities are perceived to be better.

Figure 5.4: Typical Victims' Recruitment into Trafficking
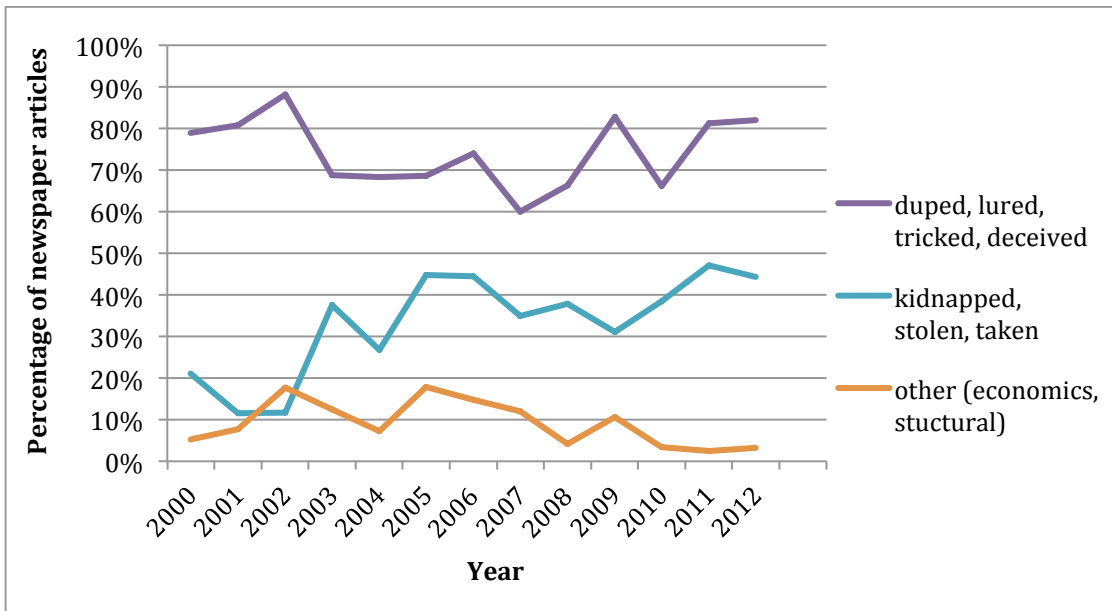
The following quotes provide context for these trends and for the trends identified in the preceding sections by highlighting the vulnerability of trafficked people due to their gender and country of origin. In the early 2000s, trafficking media discourse was

primarily concerned with migrant women from Eastern Europe and the articles

highlighted the various deceptive ways in which they were recruited.

> [Trafficking] involves luring teenage girls and young women from economically deprived Central Europe, Asia and the former Soviet republics to seemingly lucrative foreign jobs as waitresses, babysitters or nurses, and then trapping them in sexual bondage, according to Theresa A. Loar, director of the nonprofit Vital Voices Global Partnership (Boutsany, 2001).

> According to recent CIA estimates, 2 million women and girls from Asia, Latin America and the former Soviet Union every year are lured by traffickers with promises of plane tickets and good jobs abroad (Malone, 2000).

These narratives emphasize how women were "tricked" or "lured" with promises

of jobs in legitimate industries, such as childcare, restaurants, or modeling. I previously

described two trends whereby the depiction of victims shifted from foreigners to

"homegrown" victims and from adults to children. In an interesting way, these trends

coincide with the data on how victims are deceived. Over time, the frame of luring

foreign victims with promises of jobs and opportunities in the United States shifts to the

frame of luring U.S. women into domestic trafficking situations with promises of money,

romantic attention, and of course, a better life. After 2005, we observe another shift

whereby the frame of luring U.S. women into trafficking is supplanted by depictions of

luring young U.S. girls into trafficking with promises of money and affection. In each of

these three portrayals, from foreign women to U.S. women, and then to U.S. girls, there is

claim about their inherent vulnerability to fraud or deception by traffickers.

These later narratives described situations where a trafficker would recruit girls

into the sex trade by posing as a loving boyfriend. He would gain their trust by giving

them lavish gifts, attention, and money. In these articles, instead of a trafficker posing as

an "employment broker," or "recruiter," the trafficker was often referred to as a pimp, or other nefarious figure, disguised as a boyfriend. In the following quote, Dr. Donna Hughes, a professor, anti-prostitution activist, and a key figure in the abolitionist sphere, explains how U.S. teenagers are lured into trafficking:

> Back home, pimps recruit young women by plying them with lavish gifts and the promise of a better life, Hughes said. Some men even mislead these vulnerable teenagers into thinking that they are loved. But the glamour quickly fades, and before long, the victims have become emotionally traumatized and addicted to drugs (Borg, 2007).

In early depictions, foreign women were seen as being lured with the false promises of a good job, a better life, and more social and economic opportunities. Later depictions view U.S. women as being lured with false promises of gifts, romantic attention, and promises of a better life. By 2012, the victim-image has been expanded to include "our children" being recruited from "our schools" by traffickers posing as boyfriends.

> Brooklyn prosecutors have busted Bloods gang members on charges of running several sex trafficking rings that recruited girls from junior high schools, the Daily News has learned (Sherman, 2010).

> [Former police officer] Gilbert said teenage runaways in Maine could easily become entrapped and forced into prostitution, trading their bodies for money or drugs (Kesseli, 2006: C10).

The second most commonly employed recruitment frame is in regards to individuals being kidnapped, or forcibly taken by traffickers, a frame that is much less common than the deception scenario. Statements about kidnapping typically did not include explanatory descriptions other than "they were kidnapped," and kidnapping was mostly listed along with other ways of recruitment without discussing its relative frequency or distinguishing how it overlapped with them. Regardless of this lack of specificity, however, the portrayal of kidnapping as a common recruitment method is

consistent with other trends I have described, namely the shift from a focus on women to a focus on girls. The first quote below, from 2005, mentions kidnapping as a way by which foreign women are forced into the sex trade, although this mechanism is not referred to as often as fraud or deception. The second quote describes how U.S. girls are kidnapped or otherwise forced into prostitution.

> Some people are abducted by criminals and brought to the United States, but many come willingly, swayed by promises of good jobs or marriage that prove false (Crary, 2005).

> 'The average age of girls is 12 or 13 years old when they get lured into this business,' Powell said. 'Most of the time they are kidnapped or sometimes their families are involved' (Shank, 2012).

There were a few articles that suggested an interesting juxtaposition between kidnapping and deception as a way to highlight the insidiousness of sex trafficking. Claimsmakers suggested that kidnapping is not necessary to capture young girls because they will often come willingly in response to the smooth words of traffickers. As one county sheriff described:

> Sexual trafficking is rarely a case of kidnapping. Its victims are vulnerable because they often come from poverty or from homes of abuse. 'Many people who take advantage of these kids are opportunists,' she said. 'Men charm these young girls who you know already have self esteem issues growing up by acting as their boyfriend, by providing riches. He breaks her down, he builds her up' (Campfield, 2012).

As this quote suggests, the ways children are recruited into trafficking may be invisibly situated in the everyday interactions of young people and others with whom they have contact.

The third general trend that can be observed in Figure 5.4 is that the structural explanations are consistently the least common explanation, suggesting that the narratives

focusing on direct experiences of deception or force at the individual level have greater resonance with audiences than the more abstract conceptions of victims' disadvantageous structural circumstances. Statements that described economic and political structures or situations as "pushing" individuals into trafficking are mostly associated with foreign victims, whom we have already seen to have a decreasing presence in media coverage over time. A qualitative examination of these particular statements indicates that that the structural explanations are typically, although not exclusively, associated with depictions of women from Eastern Europe (and some from Southeast Asia and Central America). According to these frames, the region's emergence into the global economy exacerbated the relative vulnerability of women and amplified their susceptibility to deceptive practices.

Stolz (2005) suggested that human trafficking was recognized as a problem in the late 1990s due to the "new supply" of sexual labor as a result of the communist collapse in Eastern Europe and the region's integration into the global capitalist economy. However, these claims make stronger assertions than "structural conditions made them more vulnerable" to traffickers than they would be otherwise. They suggest that structural issues such as chronic unemployment and uncontrolled inflation combined with patriarchy and the relatively low status of women leave women *no other choice* but to take risks and move abroad. This is a key point because it emphasizes victims' lack of agency and vulnerability. Their situations were presumably so dire that women were forced by circumstances over which they had no control to leave their homelands in order to survive. A human trafficking victim advocate from Ukraine described the effects of structural inequality to U.S. legislators:

155

'It was absolutely clear that high-level unemployment of women in Ukraine and poverty pushed our women to look at jobs abroad,' she said. (De la Garza, 2001).

At the same press event, Christopher Smith, a federal lawmaker who is a major figure in the AHT campaign, also put Eastern Europe in focus as a source of trafficking victims;

'Man's inhumanity toward women is simply without restraint,' he said. Although the trafficking of women and children is an established practice in some parts of the world, including Asia, experts say the problem has mushroomed since the collapse of the former Soviet Union. 'Traffickers have taken advantage of economic chaos and military conflict and the lowly status of women to promote their business' (De la Garza, 2001).

Even though this frame was consistently the least common way of describing how trafficked individuals are recruited, it is important because it reveals a qualitative difference in how AHT claimsmakers frame structural issues and their role in "forcing" women compared to how researchers and scholars generally frame structural influences which they generally consider to be "push" factors than can include pushing individuals to enter trafficking situations. In contrast to the former frame that structural issues "force" women into human trafficking, leaving them absolutely no choice in the matter, in the latter frame structural characteristics contribute to an environment where many citizens have limited choices for economic survival and trafficking is lucrative for traffickers and criminal networks. For instance, Tiano (2012b) attributes human trafficking to a "perfect storm" of global factors. She argues that by "privatizing government functions, eroding state budgets, and promoting neoliberal ideologies that view markets, rather than governments, as the only legitimate way to shape economic behavior, globalization has weakened the internal and external controls that might otherwise dampen demand for illicit labor or sex workers" (Tiano, 2012b: 45). This is an important distinction because Tiano (2012a) and others (Aronowitz, 2004; Weitzer, 2007) still allow for the

consideration of individual agency and acts of resistance even though individuals are surviving under structural limitations.

Rather than assuming that the structural limitations eliminate all agency, as do many AHT claimsmakers, scholars generally understand that such a perspective minimizes recognition of agency and resistance on the part of vulnerable populations. Consistent with the anti-labor exploitation sphere, most scholars of human trafficking would suggest that although limited by structural constraints, individuals can still exercise some agency, and thus to consider them wholly victims is problematic because it does not recognize the ability for individuals to make and be responsible for their decisions, even though their choices may be limited, but instead portrays them as helpless.

Abolitionists would argue that even though people might think they have a choice in their actions, they are in fact operating under "false consciousness." Based on an analysis of legal testimony in Scandinavian sex trafficking cases, Levy (2014) suggests that arguments about false consciousness are often used to undermine the testimony of sex workers and others who do not problematize sex work or who claim agency or free choice in their selection of occupation. Levy argues that "assumed histories of abuse and trauma that are asserted to distort sex workers objectivity feed into an undermining of agency exercised in a 'decision' to sell sex." As will become more clear in proceeding sections, the argument of false consciousness is often used in reframes to undermine any counterframes that suggest volition on part of trafficked individuals.

Characteristics of Victim Coercion

Coercion refers to the actions taken against trafficked individuals to ensure their obedience. It is the "force" component of forced labor and forced prostitution, which compels individuals to take actions against their will. Whereas the preceding section referred to the ways typical victims are recruited by traffickers, this section focuses on how traffickers maintain their control over the person over time. Coercion refers to practices that may be used to keep an individual from fleeing, to restrict their movement, or to keep them in bondage. Examples of coercion are physical violence, threats of violence against the individual or their family, physical restraint, and forced drug dependency. For a victim-image to resonate with audiences, the victim must have no control over his/her own circumstances, including the inability to leave the "workplace" (Carpenter, 2005; Doezema, 2001).

> According to Hughes, the culture glamorizes prostitution when, according to one study, at least 89 percent of sex workers want to get out of the profession (Borg, 2007).

The implication here is that they only stay because they are unable to leave.

This section further illuminates the construction of the trafficking victim-image by examining the types of coercion that are used to characterize typical victims. The newspaper articles that included information about coercion typically associated the form of coercion with words such as "commonly," "routinely," or "repeatedly," suggesting that these types of coercion are the norm among trafficked individuals. Further, terms such as "enslave," "force", and "control" highlight the lack of agency and self-determination that is presumed to be characteristic of typical victims.

In the early 2000s, trafficking victims were primarily depicted as being migrant women, whose, coercion typically meant the illegal confiscation of their passports. Over 80% of the articles in the early 2000s mentioned this type of coercion. Other forms of coercion that were associated with their status as undocumented immigrants included traffickers' threats of deportation or turning the victims into authorities who would subsequently prosecute and deport them. This image continued to appear in later accounts, though less frequently. The following quotes describe the isolation and vulnerability of being trapped in a foreign place:

> Unsuspecting young women are exchanged for money, or swapped directly for drugs and traded in an underground network that is difficult to escape; often they have been smuggled into countries illegally and their passports pocketed by the traffickers (Seper, 2001).

> Criminal cases can't be made without victims coming forward and that's not happening because victims are 'paralyzed with fear of law enforcement,' a federal review concludes. People smuggled into the country are generally viewed as lawbreakers, not victims, and so they don't regard the police as their friends ("Protect Trafficking Victims First," 2006).

Figure 5.5 shows a decline in the perceived use of immigrant-related types of coercion over time, corresponding to the emergent emphasis on the victimization of U.S. citizens, which I described in previous sections. The second most prevalent way of maintaining coercive control over victims was using their fear of police to keep them from fleeing their traffickers. According to campaign claimsmakers, coercion not only keeps victims enslaved, but it also prevents them from seeking help on their own behalf. In the early 2000s, fear of police was mostly associated with immigrants, but as the portrayal of typical victims shifted from foreign women to women and children who were

159

U.S. citizens, the idea that their questionable legal status was what kept them from

seeking help took on a qualitatively new dimension.

Figure 5.5: Types of Coercion Attributed to Typical Victims of Trafficking
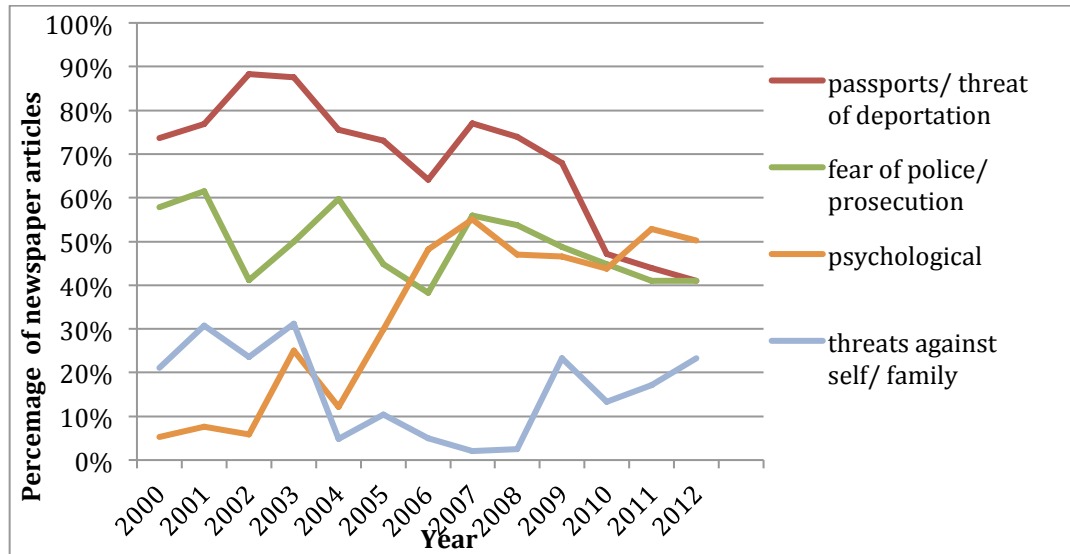
Over time, the fear-of-police frame in the media coverage focused less on migrant's fear

of police and instead highlighted how sex trafficking victims from the United States are

afraid of police because they are often confused with prostitutes and considered

criminals:

> The McKennas said victims are often charged with prostitution after
> police stings, which doubly victimizes them. The couple is working with
> local authorities to correctly identify victims (Jiggetts, 2012).
>
> In fact many sex trafficking victims have found themselves aggressively
> interrogated by law enforcement officials as if they themselves are the
> criminals (Thukral, 2004).

No matter who the victims are, or where they have come from, they are portrayed as

having a fear of police, a fear that can be manipulated to ensure their obedience and keep

them from seeking help. Claimsmakers suggest that the fear of police also plays a role in

keeping victims hidden because they are too scared to seek help. This fear-of-police is used to justify further law enforcement intervention; if victims do not step forward, then it is the job of law enforcement and others to go and find them. In a later chapter, we will see the fear of police emerge again as a way of explaining the lack of victims identified through campaign interventions, and as a way of justifying increased law enforcement actions to further seek victims out through the use of raids and sting operations.

All four quotes presented above mention that victims are often confused with criminals, which keeps victims from seeking help. These claims are consistent with the campaign's goal of redefining prostitutes as exploited women and not criminals. Arguably, migrant men who are trafficked could be confused with illegal immigrants and criminally prosecuted, but almost no public claims were made that would suggest that they also should be redefined as trafficking victims and not criminals.

The third most common depiction of coercion was psychological coercion. Depictions of psychological coercion, often referred to as brain-washing or traumatic bonding, increased dramatically after 2004. Psychological coercion refers to the dependence of trafficked individuals on their traffickers to meet psychological needs such as feelings of safety, protection, and in some cases, love. This form of coercion helps explain, according to campaign actors, why some victims do not seek help and refuse to testify against their perpetrators. This more subtle form of coercion also explains how some trafficked victims, especially young girls, do not realize that they are victims or that they are being trafficked. We see scenarios of this type of coercion increase dramatically, corresponding to the increasingly common image of minors as typical victims. Interestingly, in the first quote presented below, the speaker suggests that stronger forms

of coercion may not be necessary to successfully recruit a young girl, for whom coercion often takes a more subtle, insidious shape that problematizes the notion of consent.

> Even if these women are not physically abducted, they are often psychologically coerced. Pimps, she said, target runaways and other vulnerable teenagers who are, in some way, unmoored. Often, something called traumatic bonding occurs, in which the victim sympathizes with her abuser (Jiggetts, 2012).
>
> 'The next thing they know they are being turned out on the street and are suffering abuse and indignities.' Bock said many prostitutes, especially younger ones, 'suffer from Stockholm syndrome and identify with their captors or fear them and feel there is no way to extradite themselves from the life on the streets.'

Many of the victim traits and experiences that I have reviewed thus far have changed over time in a way that constructs human trafficking as ubiquitous, invisible, and "all-around us." With victim characteristics, we observed a shift from relatively easily identifiable "foreign women" to the more localized "U.S. runaway children." We observed the mode of recruitment go from a more obvious and clear-cut force or fraud to the more subtle allure of boyfriends who are ever-present in the personal and online lives of children. Concerning the types of coercion employed, we see a shift from direct threats to a more subtle and insidious psychological dependency of trafficked children on their traffickers. To me, these trends suggest a growing tendency to construct trafficking as an invisible but ever-present threat, which warrants the increased activity of law enforcement, policymakers, and advocates in their ongoing efforts to protect trafficking victims.

Counterframes of Trafficking Experiences: Recruitment and Coercion

As previously noted, the abolitionists argue that prostitution and human trafficking are the same thing, which means that all prostitution is forced. In Weitzer's

conceptualization of the sex trafficking campaign as a moral crusade, he identifies a major theme in their claims: prostitutes lack agency.

The mechanisms by which individuals become trafficked and the strategies used to maintain their oppression are among the more controversial or frequently challenged elements of the victim-image. Challengers were primarily concerned because the portrayal of recruitment and coercion has been characterized by force, fraud, and vulnerability, and does not correspond with their interpretation of how recruitment and coercion actually operate. They argue that some individuals whom the campaign would assume to be victims, like prostitutes, may not see themselves as victims nor would they see themselves as having been forced into their form of employment. Further, the campaign does not consider some individuals, like forced laborers, to be victims because they are perceived to have made a rational non-coerced decision to enter into an exploitative form of employment and therefore, they are not blameless. Challengers worry that this oversimplified version of victimization will result in a mis-match between campaign claims and the objective reality of victimization.

The stereotypical depictions of trafficking victims exclude or ignore any consideration of the possibility that some people might voluntarily choose sex work, and that engaging in sex work is not in itself a sufficient indicator of victimization. We would expect this considering the influential role played by the abolitionist claimants who consider all commercial sexual activity to be exploitative and human trafficking and deny that any individual would rationally chose sex work as a legitimate occupation. Another way to think about the counterframes are that they disagree with the conflation of human trafficking, sex trafficking, and prostitution into one undifferentiated crime.

The counterframes regarding the experiences of trafficked individuals rarely if

ever call for including the experiences of migrant workers into the discourse of

trafficking and exploitation; instead their objective is to warn against the equation of

"willing" prostitutes with victims of trafficking. There are two lines of reasoning behind

this counterframe, each arguing that a wholesale conflation of prostitution and sex

trafficking is problematic. The first line of reasoning is advanced by campaign

antagonists who disagree that all prostitutes are forced into prostitution. In this line of

argumentation, to assume that prostitutes are all victims is over-reaching and has

unintended negative consequences for the individual's well-being and perception of self.

These challengers are also worried about the tendency to be "automatic" with the victim

label, which may actually get some women in trouble with the law. In the quote below, a

sex workers advocate expresses her hesitation to accept the victim label and her

frustration with the campaign's overly zealous use of the victim label:

> 'Trafficking and prostitution are not the same thing,' Ms. Troy said.
> 'Trafficking is against one's will. It is possible that some women chose
> sex work to make ends meet. Sure, it may not be a lot of women and sure,
> it's hard to believe – but it does happen – and these women do not want to
> get caught up in all this trafficking stuff. They don't think they're victims,
> but they are being told that they are victims, but only if they cooperate
> [with prosecutors]. To me, that's exploitation. That's extortion.'

Carol Leigh, a renowned sex workers' advocate, expressed similar frustrations in a 2012

letter to the editor of *The Washington Post*:

> In general, I struggle with the language of 'automatic' victimhood. I feel it
> ignores the resiliency and resourcefulness so many people possess. And
> what does it mean to go to service providers or to interact with law
> enforcement and be told, 'You're a victim?' What does that mean for
> somebody who said, 'I had to do this on my own, I think I did a pretty
> good job for the limited options I had' (Leigh, 2012).

These quotes are illustrative of the most common type of diagnostic counterframe in

regards to the experiences of trafficked individuals. They directly challenge the "assumed abuse and exploitation" component of sex work; they acknowledge that while prostitution can involve coercion and exploitation, these are not inevitable aspects of the profession. To assume that prostitution is inherently coercive and abusive is to homogenize the experiences of all prostitutes and to minimize the resourcefulness of many sex workers and more concretely, to force them to embrace a victim identity or face prosecution. The first quote above suggests that forcing sex workers to accept a victim identity and cooperate with prosecutors is itself a form of exploitation. These counterframes recognize an operational difference between trafficking and prostitution so have the benefit of social science research[10] to back them up. In one study (Soderlund, 2005), the majority of foreign trafficking victims were aware that the jobs offered them would be in the sex industry; if they were misled it was because they were not informed about the level of coercion that they were going to face. Other studies (Kelly & Ragin, 2000; Doezema, 2001; Weitzer, 2009; Agustin, 2012) have shown that a proportion of migrants had sold sex prior to relocating or were well aware that they would be working in the sex industry in their new home country. The body of research on migration and labor has shown that there are multiple migration trajectories and worker experiences, ranging from highly coercive and exploitative circumstances to ones that reflected informed consent and intentionality on the part of the migrant. Yet despite this variety in experiences, "… the crusade presents only the worse cases and universalizes them" (Weitzer, 2007: 454).

The second line of reasoning behind this counterframe comes squarely from federal law enforcement. They acknowledge that considering prostitution and trafficking

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[10] See Weitzer (2009) for a comprehensive review of the literature on the sociology of sex work.

to be the same crime poses the possibility of obligating federal law enforcement, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), to pursue cases against local pimps, which is considered by some to be a waste of resources. Using federal resources to pursue cases against pimps is indeed a goal of the abolitionist segment of the campaign, but is often considered by the federal officials themselves to be a misuse of resources. The following quote refers to a letter written a Justice Department official in response to state-level efforts to prosecute pimps with human trafficking charges:

> The letter expresses opposition to the provision that Justice officials said would expand federal jurisdiction to cover prostitution offenses, which the department calls unnecessary and 'a diversion from Federal law enforcement's core anti-trafficking mission.' A senior Justice official, who was not authorized to speak for the record, reiterated the department's opposition yesterday. 'Prostitution is abhorrent, but state and local law enforcement officials already do an excellent job fighting it,' he said.

The counterframes against the campaign's portrayal of the experiences of human trafficking victims are critical of the exclusive focus on sex trafficking and the related tendency to assign victim status to a wide range of individuals, including those who would not consider themselves to be victims, while simultaneously denying the label to other individuals who certainly meet the formal criteria of human trafficking and would benefit from intervention. The following section outlines how campaign leaders have responded to these counterframes.

Reframing Victims of Human Trafficking

The previous sections have outlined the primary characteristics of typical trafficking victims and their experiences as portrayed by dominant campaign actors, including policy-makers, law enforcement officers, and victim advocates. The sections also identified the corresponding counterframes, which were associated with two

important features of the trafficking experience: consent and coercion. Collectively, these counterframes serve as counter-diagnoses, in which those who are challenging the dominant frame are disputing the interpretation of reality proffered by dominant movement actors.

Research on social movements and social problems suggest that for claimsmaking and framing to be effective, the vulnerability and victimization must be absolute and unambiguous, otherwise policymakers and other audiences may be less inclined to support or bear the cost of interventions (Schneider & Ingram, 1993; Dunn, 2004). If there is any ambiguity in the portrayal of victim characteristics, their victimization is not explicit. Opposing claims over the characteristics and experiences of trafficked individuals are at the center of this diagnostic frame dispute. Those who support the campaign's abolitionist segment have worked to advance a victim-image that emphasizes the important elements of the victimization narrative, specifically a complete lack of voluntary consent and agency. Depictions of trafficked individuals that correspond with these features have dominated the newspaper coverage of human trafficking over the 12-year period, but they did not go uncontested.

Challengers to these frames have engaged in counterframing: they have provided counter diagnoses that challenge both the identification and attributional functions of framing. The counterframes have challenged the identification function by demonstrating that the diagnostic claims articulated by campaign actors were incomplete or inaccurate. Specifically, they have argued that most human trafficking victims are forced into exploitive labor outside the sex industry. They have challenged the attributional function specifying who the victims are. And they have attributed collective

traits to dominant campaign actors by implying that they are pursuing a political agenda or an ideological crusade against commercial sex, and that campaigners are not concerned with the entire human trafficking problem because they are happy to leave out discussions of non-sexual trafficking.

In this section, I analyze the campaign's responses to these challenges. I argue that by reframing challenges made to the campaign's claims regarding trafficked individuals and their experiences, the abolitionists are able to control the media discourse to highlight only the plight of sex-trafficked victims. The first counterframe has challenged claims about sex trafficking accounting for the majority of human trafficking activity and, more generally, they have questioned the movement's obvious emphasis on sex trafficking. The contentious issue here is the obvious lack of attention to non-sexual forms of trafficking on the part of media and campaign actors. The second counterframe has addressed depictions of force and coercion for all workers involved in the sex industry. Both of these counterframes were primarily concerned with the conflation of human trafficking and prostitution and attempted to make distinctions between forced prostitution and sex work. As we would expect, the reframes were employed in an attempt to erase these distinctions. By reframing the counterframes directed against them, AHT campaigners are attempting to strengthen the credibility of their original claims and to repair any damage to their collective character or reputation resulting from challenges.

Reframes are a way for actors to respond to antagonistic challenges. Movement actors typically use reframes to repair their own collective identity and attack the character of those who advanced counterclaims (Hunt et al., 2004). The primary way to bolster the credibility of frames is to increase the frame's resonance (Snow & Benford,

168

1988). A frame's resonance is key to its effectiveness as a mobilizing strategy (Snow & Benford, 2000). The two elements of frame resonance are highlighted in this frame dispute. The first is empirical credibility, which refers to the apparent fit between framings and events in the world. At issue here is not whether the diagnostic frame is empirically valid, but rather whether the claimsmakers' "empirical referents" can be accepted by audiences as real-world expressions of the claim. Second, the perceived credibility of the frame articulators is key to sustaining a frame's resonance. The greater the status and/or perceived expertise of the claimsmakers, and the more closely their claims represent the attitudes of the audience, the more resonant the framings or claims (Snow & Benford 1988: 620-621; see Spector & Kitsuse, 1973: 151).

We can organize the reframing activity into two primary reframes. The first reframe addresses criticisms about the prevalence of sex trafficking in relation to other forms of trafficking, where the second reframe addresses challenges concerning universal coercion and lack of consent on the part of trafficked victims. The following sections discuss the reframing strategies used by campaign actors in an attempt to bolster their claims' credibility and simultaneously criticize the collective character of the challengers.

"Sex trafficking is not rare"

One of the major counterframes challenged the unbalanced attention given to sex trafficking despite empirical evidence suggesting that labor trafficking is the more common phenomenon. Dominant campaign actors consistently stated that the primary concern of the campaign is the sexual exploitation of women and children from both outside and inside the United States, and they further equated sex trafficking with all

forms of prostitution. Critics challenged the claim that most human trafficking victims are working in the sex trade and offered a counterdiagnosis that sex trafficking does not account for the majority of trafficking cases and that it is relatively rare compared to forced labor in other industries such as construction and agriculture. By challenging the basic assumption that human trafficking and sex trafficking as the same thing, the critics challenged the *raison d'être* of the campaign's protagonists, not in the sense that human trafficking is not real, but that the exclusive focus on sex trafficking and sex trafficking victimization is grossly misguided.

This criticism appeared in 412 articles, becoming more frequent after 2004. These counterframes challenged both the enduring focus on sex trafficking and the conflation of prostitution and sex trafficking. I identified 209 articles that contained a reframing statement in direct response to a counterframe regarding the prevalence of sex trafficking versus labor trafficking that attempted to "de-link" prostitution from sex trafficking.

In response to this criticism, campaign protagonists deployed a number of reframing strategies, the most common of which was keying, appearing in 125 (60%) of 209 articles. Keying is an oppositional process of meaning attribution, interpretation, and changing of meaning (Hunt et al. 2004: 170), which occurs when movement participants restate claims made by antagonists in such as way as to give them new meanings that subvert or stand in opposition to the ones originally conveyed. In other words, campaign protagonists re-formulated the counterframe in a manner different from how it was originally expressed. Campaign challengers criticized the focus on sex trafficking in relation to other forms of trafficking and suggested that prostitution is distinct from sex trafficking. Campaign protagonists "keyed" the counterframe and re-articulated it as "sex

trafficking is rare." They accomplished this transformation by using three types of distortion. They keyed the original counterframe into one they could easily refute by:

1) Replacing claims about the prevalence of sex trafficking in relation to labor trafficking with claims about the absolute prevalence of sex trafficking;

2) Using invalid measures of sex trafficking to support their claims of the absolute prevalence of sex trafficking; and

3) Confusing the "risk" of being trafficked with the actual "incidence" of being trafficked.

The original counterframe was "Most victims of human trafficking are exploited in non-sex industries." In an attempt to reframe this criticism, campaign leaders deliberately switched the "relative claim" that sex trafficking is less prevalent than labor trafficking to an "absolute claim" that sex trafficking is rare. In their response, rather than responding with a statement about the incidence of sex trafficking relative to the incidence of labor trafficking, they made a statement about sex trafficking in absolute terms, which made it much easier to refute on the basis of empirical evidence. "Sex trafficking is rare" is an absolute statement about the rarity of sex trafficking. The distortion between absolute and relative frequency can be a subtle one, which makes this reframing strategy hard to notice or detect.

The second distortion brought about by keying is the use of invalid measures to support their claims about the absolute prevalence of sex trafficking. The following example illustrates both kinds of distortion. First, the reframe restates, or "keys", the counterclaim from relative to absolute by stating it as "sex slavery is rare." Then the

reframer attempts to buttress its claims about the frequent occurrence of sex slavery by

using national statistics on the exploitation of runaways as an acceptable indicator of sex

slavery of children.

> The NYT article is operating on a misconception that 'sex slavery is rare.'
> Unfortunately, sex trafficking is not rare. A University of Pennsylvania
> study showed that hundreds of thousands of U.S. citizens are estimated to
> be at high risk for being trafficked within the United States, many of them
> prostituted children. According to the National Incidence Studies of
> Missing, Abducted, Runaway and Throwaway Children, one in three teens
> on the street will be lured towards prostitution within 48 hours of leaving
> home. The University of Pennsylvania study also revealed that 75 percent
> of runaway and sexually exploited children have a history of abuse.

It is important to reiterate that the original article that is allegedly operating on the

misconception that sex trafficking is rare did not make the claim that sex trafficking is

rare, only that sex trafficking is less common than other forms of trafficking. Those

articulating the counterframe were criticizing the campaign's focus on sex trafficking,

and the reframe doubled-down on the conceptual distortion by conflating human

trafficking with the sex trafficking of children, and attempting to claim empirical

credibility by using data from an incidence study of a phenomenon, missing children, that

was clearly not the same thing as human trafficking, so was an inappropriate proxy

measure for it. To further confound the distortion, they used "elastic" statistical estimates

("hundreds of thousands") to suggest the pervasiveness of the sexual exploitation of

specific groups (Andreas & Greenhill, 2010), especially minors with histories of abuse.

Implicit in this process is motivational framing, where claimants highlight urgency, haste,

and severity as a way to maximize mobilization and public attention. The above quote

contains a "ticking clock" (Benford, 1993a) that implies the rapidity and inevitability by

which runaway minors are ensnared in the sex trade.

The third distortion confuses "risk of being trafficked" with the actual incidence of trafficking and conflating runaway minors with sex slaves. Challengers took issue with the claim that sex trafficking is the primary and most common form of trafficking in general, and reframers responded with a description of a sub-group of individuals, runaway minors, who are presumably at risk of being trafficked. In this conceptual sleight-of-hand, to support their claim that sex trafficking is common, the above quote says "hundreds of thousands" of children are at risk of being prostituted and this claim is assumed to provide evidence of the presumed high frequency of human trafficking. Claims such as this confuse "at risk" with "being trafficked." We will see this distortion again in the next chapter with examples of claimsmakers using data about homeless children to support their claims of the widespread sexual exploitation of minors.

In addition to the three logical distortions I just described, another reframe attempted to cast doubt on the credibility of the claimsmakers themselves. This reframing strategy attacks the collective character of the challengers. In the quote below, a member of a faith-based advocacy group lambasts challengers who suggested that sex trafficking is less frequent than labor trafficking. The reframe demonizes the challengers as not caring about children and being emotionally distanced from the problem, and suggests that they would likely have another opinion if they experienced the victimization of their own children.

> Critics try and say that sex trafficking is 'Only a minority of cases," but how can they say that when it's our children who are being raped and killed? How can they dismiss the kidnapping and sexual abuse of children as 'just a piece of the problem?' I bet they wouldn't say that if it was their child that was stolen from their street and sold to sex predators.

As with the previous example, the counterclaim the reframe was responding to did not make any assertions about the sexual exploitation of children; instead it stated that sex trafficking is just one piece of the larger problem of exploitation.

"There is no such thing as voluntary sex work, do not blame the victim"

The most contested elements of the official trafficking frame are those that conflate sex trafficking and prostitution and thus assume all prostitutes are victims of sex trafficking. For challengers, what distinguishes them is voluntary consent a distinction the abolitionists have worked to eradicate. The official frame heavily emphasizes how women and young girls are recruited for or captured into trafficking situations by depicting trafficked individuals as being vulnerable to deception, empty promises, and outright kidnapping. The counterframers took issue with these interpretations, arguing that they overlooked those groups of women who engage in sex work voluntarily, without being duped or deceived, and criticized the whole conflation of prostitution with forced labor and human trafficking.

Again, this reframe is accomplished by keying the counterframe into a critical statement that is different from the one originally articulated. In doing so, campaign leaders commit another distortion. The distortion here is to replace the conceptual category of "prostitute," which encompasses sex workers of all ages, many or most of whom are adults, with the conceptual category of "sexually exploited children," who are below a certain, though unspecified, age. Essentially, campaign leaders are replacing one conceptual category (prostitutes) with another (sexually exploited children). Replacing prostitutes with children is a strategic move because with children, consent and choice are

moot points; children cannot consent so, by definition, if they end up in commercial sex

situations its is because they were forced into it. By replacing adult women with children

in this way, campaign leaders are implying that women, like children, do not have the

capacity to give voluntary consent. Campaign challengers have suggested that it was

problematic to assume that sex trafficking and prostitution were the same thing because

some prostitutes did engage in sex work consensually; but protagonists responded by

saying "children cannot consent."

> 'I think the biggest misconception is that somehow these girls want to do
> this or enjoy doing this. I mean they do this when they have no other
> options. This is it,' said sex-trafficking attorney Stephanie Preciado, who
> works at the Diane Halle Center. According to the Diane Halle Center,
> citing the National Center on Missing and Exploited Children, most
> runaway children are approached by a pimp or drug dealer within their
> first 48 hours of life on the streets. 'They're not welcome home, they have
> nowhere to go, then they meet these pimps,' Preciado said. 'These pimps
> are very suave.' The pimps groom their victims, waiting until their
> desperation peaks, and then they pounce with generous ways to make
> money. (Quigley, 2012).

When counterframers articulated the counterclaim that not all prostitution is

forced it was in reference to adult women. The quote above shows a distortion in its

focus on "girls," and again uses measures of runaway children as a stand-in for sexually

exploited children. Where earlier examples of evidence to establish empirical credibility

showed the use of numerical estimates, this reframing statement uses anecdotal support

from their own community, a very common strategy that is further explored in Chapter 6.

Using anecdotal information, the county commissioners quoted below argued that

"children are being forced into sexual slavery" in their Los Angeles communities:

> Snawder and Chacon argued that some critics are just unaware of the
> extent of the human trafficking problem; they think prostitution is a choice
> when they see young females working the streets. This is usually not true,

they charged. Most have been trafficked as children and forced into prostitution. There is a higher incidence of prostitution in Southern California cities and Pomona happens to be one of them. 'Children are being forced into sexual slavery right on our streets, sold over the Internet and exploited by gangs that formerly focused on drug trafficking, but have moved into human trafficking,' Chacon reported (2010).

Another distortion in the reframes equates the suggestion of consent with blaming the victim. In this distortion, dominant campaign actors try make the suggestion that some women engage in prostitution by choice as "off-limits" by equating acknowledging their possible voluntary consent with "blaming the victim." Protagonists insulate their claims from scrutiny by accusing those who disagree with the claim that all sex workers are there by force of victim blaming. Victim blaming, used in this way, is a rhetorical device comprised of two related statements. The first is that to "blame the victim" is to say that the victim participated in or contributed to her own victimization and thus is responsible, directly or indirectly, for his/her own situation.

Of course, campaign antagonists are not blaming trafficked people for their own plight, but they are problematizing the universal victimizing of sex workers. Further, they acknowledge that some women may have consented to commercial sexual activity at one point, but their situation subsequently changed into one in which they were being coerced and exploited. It appears as though the reframing is a warning against blaming the victim. The theme is that they have suffered enough and that their experiences must not be questioned, or else we run the risk of accusing them of participating in their own harm. Kris Kristoferson expressed in a 2004 opinion piece in *The New York Times:*

> Those who think that most of the women in prostitution want to be there are deluded. Surveys consistently show that a majority wants very much to leave. Apologists love to spread the fantasy of the 'happy hooker'. But the

176

world of the prostitute is typically filled with pimps, sadists, psychopaths, drug addicts, violent criminals and disease.

In another editorial, a victim advocate is responding to the counterclaim that not all prostitution is forced by making statements about vulnerable teenagers who will "inevitably" be trafficked into the sex trade. As the speaker suggests, to blame children for their own victimization is "just wrong."

> They're not being prostituted by choice, but rather by coercion. I don't see how people would believe that children choose to be prostitutes. They are victims of a serious crime and to blame them for being trafficked is just wrong. Victims are often teenagers, even as young as 13. Traffickers target them in malls, on the streets, at bus stations -- anywhere kids gather. Children who have been sexually abused are especially vulnerable. Homeless youth are vulnerable. One in three teens on the street will be lured into trafficking within 48 hours of leaving home. It may start out as couch surfing, but then it turns into survival sex -- trading sex for a place to stay, a meal, or to avoid a more perilous bed (2012).

The second assumption inherent in accusations of victim-blaming is that to hold a victim responsible for his/her own harm is in itself a form of "re-victimization" or "re-traumatization." A major tenet of the victimization ideology is that claims of victimization must be respected and honored. Campaign protagonists argue that to imagine that someone could enter a sex work situation voluntarily challenges this ideological assumption, which they view as re-traumatizing victims by accusing them of participating in, and thus being responsible for, the harm they endure.

In the sexual assault and domestic violence discourse of the 1960s and 1970s, it was common for the actions of the victims of these crimes to be questioned about their own role in or responsibility for their abusive situation or violation. For example, if a sexual assault victim was dressed provocatively at the time of her assault, she was often accused of "asking for it" – and held responsible for her own victimization. During this

time, feminists took great issue with criminal justice discourses which looked to the actions of victims as a way of "explaining" male-perpetrated violence against women. Using a victim's sexual history in a sexual assault case, or asking a battered wife why "she didn't leave the abuse" were common ways that victims were blamed for or held responsible for their own abuse. Best (1997) calls accusations of "victim blaming" a rhetorical "trump card" that keeps claims of victimization from being challenged and from being questioned. In the context of human trafficking victims, antagonists who question the universal "victimization of sex workers" in the abstract sense are maligned as victim-blamers who hold "sexually exploited women and children" responsible for their own victimization and figuratively "look them in the eye" with accusatory contempt. In the following two quotes, protagonists are responding to the claim that, in general, the possibility exists for some individuals to voluntarily consent to sex work and that, in general, some individuals consider it to be a legitimate form of work.

> 'The FBI and its partners cannot restore the innocence lost from those women who are forced into prostitution,' said FBI Assistant Director Chris Swecker. 'These women are victimized three times; first by the pimp who exploits them and secondly by the individuals who purchase them, and then by those who suggest they "chose" to sell their bodies – It is like victims are being told that it's their own fault' (Seper, 2005).

> In addition to being trafficked, there is a second kind of captivity that is facilitated by those who would suggest that these victims chose to be prostitutes. The Rev. Allan Ramirez contended that many victims will not come forward because they are afraid of being victimized again by those who would look them in the eye and say 'You chose this. This is on you' (Baker, 2004).

The AHT challengers were in no way trying to question specific claims of victimization or coercion, especially of children. Rather, they were problematizing the way that AHT protagonists assumed that adult sex workers were forced and exhibited no

178

agency on their own behalf. The reframes replace this generalized scrutiny of conceptual

definitions with an image of an interpersonal interaction, whereby a non-believer is face-

to-face with a victim and directly challenges their victim status. AHT protagonists use

malignment to keep consideration of consent "off limits" thereby insulating from scrutiny

their claims about the universality of "forced prostitution." They malign those who

recognize a nuanced understanding of human trafficking and victimization, calling them

victim-blamers and accuse them of holding prostitutes responsible for their own harm and

contributing to their re-victimization.

Taken together, through the articulation of the official frame and subsequent

reframing, campaign actors are able to keep the campaign's message tightly focused on

sex trafficking and the sexual exploitation of populations that are commonly understood

to be vulnerable and in need of protection, namely women and children, although the

depictions of these groups have shifted over time. The specific strategy of extending the

victim-image to include, and prioritize, runway children is one that we will see over and

over again in the two other frame disputes covered by this study. I argue that the purpose

of this expansion and exaggerated focus on children is to undercut the argument over

choice and consent, both symbolically and formally. It erodes the argument symbolically

because it is difficult for audience members to conceptualize a child giving consent to

sexual activity, especially when claimsmakers emphasize their status as prey in an

environment characterized by ever present and ever vigilant sexual predators. It erodes it

formally because by law children cannot give voluntary consent.

In order for a trafficked person to be eligible for protection and other services

(including permission to stay in the United States) that are allowed by TVPA, coercion

must be demonstrated. Symbolically, coercion is a key element of the victimization narrative because it implies that trafficked individuals have no control over their situations and are unable to flee, escape, or otherwise get out of their exploitive situations. It is generally assumed that all trafficked individuals, including prostitutes, have been forced to engage in exploitative behavior, whether via sexual servitude or forced labor. The process of formal certification as a victim is downplayed and often ignored completely by campaign leaders, as this could be construed as suggesting victims' experiences are more complex than media accounts would suggest.

Conclusion

The objective of this dissertation is to develop an explanation for the enduring focus on sex trafficking and sex trafficking victims by the AHT campaign in the United States, even amidst direct, often empirically based challenges to the campaign's official claims.   This chapter unpacks the first of three primary frame disputes that I identified in the newspaper coverage for the 12-year period. This particular frame dispute is a collection of oppositional interpretations of "who are the victims of human trafficking?" Scholars of social problems and social movements have studied the significant interpretive work that occurs by constructing a class of individuals who are injured by a problematic social condition or activity. In the context of the AHT campaign, newspaper accounts of "typical victims of trafficking," and "trafficking experiences," construct a very narrow image of trafficking victims and thus the trafficking phenomenon more generally. The newspaper data reveal a concerted effort to limit victim descriptions to women and children, highlight their vulnerability to coercion, and discourage further scrutiny of campaign claims.

A category of affected victims is necessary for a social problem to be recognized and deemed worthy of intervention, but in order to be perceived as victims, individuals must meet certain conditions, the most important of which is that they have not caused or contributed to their own victimization (Loseke, 1999). The experiences presumably associated with trafficked victims, primarily their total lack of consent or voluntary agency, are effective framing devices because they resonate with widely held beliefs and values in the larger society. Loseke (2000) refers to these accounts as "formula narratives" -- narratives closely tied to familiar plots and with "stock characters," which usually stand in for the victims of harm.

The job of social problems claimsmakers, then, is to construct a portrayal of the virtue of the victims by elevating their moral worth or by making their victimization appear understandable to general audiences (Dunn, 2001: 238). Clark (1997) argues that in the construction of sympathy-worthy victims, blamelessness is a crucial determinant of whether or not audiences (potential sympathizers, he calls them) feel they are "deserving" of sympathy.

The analysis in this chapter has unpacked the frame-counterframe-reframe process as it relates to three imputed personal characteristics of trafficked individuals and features of the stereotypical trafficking experience. The findings demonstrate that dominant actors exercise control over interpretations of trafficked "victims" by keying the challenges with logical distortions. They anchor their framing and reframing activities within an ideology of victimization, which frames scrutiny of victims and their experiences as a problematic and inappropriate form of victim blaming.

Three tenets of an ideology of victimization, as conceptualized by Best (1997), are supported by the framing activity of dominant campaigners. The first important tenet of the victimization ideology that is invoked in this frame dispute is the notion that victimization is often unrecognized or invisible and that individuals must be taught to recognize the victimization of others and their own victimization (Best, 1997: 11-12). The idea that victimization often goes unrecognized is a key element of the victimization ideology that is used to veil contradictions in their claimsmaking and to discourage scrutiny into their claims.

Campaign leaders used keying to diffuse a major contradiction that essentially constructs prostitutes as a "special class" of victims. Much of the campaign's framing and reframing work is devoted to defining all prostitutes as victims of sexual exploitation by arguing that they are forced into sexual activity, are abused, and are victims of multiple forms of violence. Descriptions of victimization highlight the assumption that prostitutes do not control their work or their money, which are instead controlled by a pimp or some other trafficker. But by reframing the challenge that "sex trafficking is not the predominant form of trafficking" to "sex trafficking is rare," the campaign has eliminated any comparison between differing forms of trafficking, and thus, different types of trafficked individuals. They make no concession that forced labor is also an issue; they just key in on the "sex trafficking is rare" element to imply that it is all around us.

Soderlund (2005, 2008) and Stolz (2005) both observed a reluctance among abolitionists to treat labor trafficking as an important part of the broader trafficking problem. Further, Anderson and Andrijasevic (2008) suggest that labor trafficking is omitted from this discourse because laborers as victims are a harder sell because they

182

don't resonate as thoroughly with the discourse of victimization. They suggest that with migrant laborers, who have long been demonized as illegal aliens who compete for jobs with U.S. workers and who place a burden on American taxpayers, a vilification that has increased after the terrorist attacks in September 2001, it is harder to convince policymakers and other relevant audiences of their absolute innocence. In the case of smuggling, for instance, individuals will pay someone (a *coyote* in popular vernacular) to illegally transport them across the border. With migrant laborers, it is easy to dismiss the social import of their victimization with "well, they knew what they were getting into," (Jordan, 2002). To include them would complicate the process of constructing a category of "blameless victims," for whom government assistance is warranted. Feingold (2010) suggests that governments demand a clear line between illegal, economic migrants (smuggled migrants), on the one hand, and innocent trafficking victims on the other hand.

While abolitionists are quick to point out that a woman's economic, political, and cultural circumstances may "force women into choosing" sex work, this benefit of the doubt is not extended to potential victims of labor trafficking, specifically male migrant workers who "voluntarily" cross the border. The "exploited worker" image is one that is far more difficult to align with audiences, as the typical image of adult men is that they are autonomous agents in charge of their own destinies. As Tiano (2012a: 8) suggests, "When migrant men are found en mass at a U.S. worksite or appearing as though they might be in transit to one, they are more likely to be seen as undocumented workers (or "illegal aliens") who are willingly taking (scarce) U.S. jobs to which they are not entitled, than as coerced or enslaved victims of human trafficking."

The label of "illegal immigrant" essentially defines them as being outside the purview of trafficking intervention, and denies them the compassion and empathy that are the emotional capital of the AHT campaign. Instead of being associated with victimization, they are framed as violators of immigration laws who stay in the country without legal permission, evade official border crossings, and obtain fraudulent documents (Demleitner, 2001).

In addition to veiling contradictions in the campaign's primary claims, reframing is used to discourage further scrutiny of their claims by suggesting claims of victimization must not be challenged, because to do so would be akin to blaming the victim. A key tenet of the victimization ideology is that the public must be taught to recognize victimization in others and in themselves. This assumes that victims often do not recognize their own victimization until advocates point it out. It also implies that when sex workers themselves make statements about their affirmative consent to participate in sex work, it is because they do not recognize their own victimization. Abolitionists further claim that if economic, political, and social forces limit women's life choices "so tightly" that their only option is to sell their bodies, that is not agency at all. To think that it is, is an expression of false consciousness. By engaging this line of rhetoric, abolitionist activists are able to dodge potential pitfalls and contradictions in their own intervention strategies in what Soderlund (2005: 79) calls a "paradigm-saving" technique. Mustos (2009) also contents that by using terms such as sex slavery, claimsmakers decree that women are universal victims of patriarchal oppression and that "No woman, lest she fall prey to false consciousness, could or should voluntarily enter prostitution" (Musto, 2009: 285). Many feminist scholars have long criticized this "false

consciousness" thesis, which is strongly associated with the shift in perception of prostitutes from being criminals to being victims (Soderlund, 2005; Weeks, 1997). This challenges the collective identity of any representative of the sex workers' rights segment of the AHT campaign as inherently unreliable because it shows they are unable to recognize their "consent" as a coping strategy to survive the exploitation (Levy, 2014).

However, the false consciousness model is not applied equally to all objects of human trafficking. Migrant workers, who are also susceptible to the difficult or oppressive economic and political structures of their home countries, often consider these conditions in their calculus to move toward more lucrative employment, or safer political conditions (or both), even if the move involves risk. However, that benefit of the doubt is not afforded to them. For women, it is argued that the economic hardship, political oppression, or lack of opportunity available to them amounts to the "withdrawal of the option of a choice" in whether to engage in illegal migration or sex work. In AHT discourse in the United States, the language used by campaign claimsmakers neatly divides "violated innocents" from "illegal immigrants" along the lines of sex and gender (Chapkis, 2005). Trafficking victims, described as vulnerable women and children forced from the safety of their home or homelands into gross sexual exploitation, are discursively distinguished from economic migrants who are understood to be men who have willfully violated national borders for individual gain.

Another way to discourage further scrutiny is to increase the focus on children for who voluntary consent is a moot point. As Feingold (2010) suggests, children contain a "legally designated innocence" that eliminates the vexing questions of agency, motivation, consent, and the nature and extent of exploitation that frequently complicate

185

adult victim identification. The general shift to focus on children is to be expected by claimsmakers whose claims rely upon the victim image, and bridging the problem of human trafficking with other recognized problems such as runaways and the sexual exploitation of minors, allows the anti-human trafficking campaign to charge on. The resonance of these claims is demonstrated by the lack of criticism over the interpretation of trafficked people as primarily women and children, and the lack of criticism over the interpretation of trafficked people as primarily "homegrown victims." The change in victimization attribution is possible because victim assignments are always open ended (Holstein & Miller, 1997: 37). Consistent with the idea that victim is a interactional status, portrayals of victims and the causes of victimization become topics of open dispute and negotiation.

It is possible, as subsequent chapters will suggest, that perhaps this shift in victim portrayal is in response to difficulty in finding and identifying victims more broadly, or finding sex trafficked victims who cannot demonstrate force, fraud or coercion. By focusing on a well-established category of victims -- minors vulnerable to sexual abuse -- the discussions of consent and coercion are settled to the advantage of the AHT claimsmakers

In the next chapter, we unpack the claims and counterclaims regarding the empirical credibility of claimsmakers and evidence they use to support their claims about human trafficking. In Chapter 6, we will continue to see reframing strategies being employed to veil contradictions and discourage further scrutiny of the AHT campaign's claims.

Chapter 6 Where are the victims of trafficking?

Constructing images of victims is a necessary part of constructing social problems, but the images alone are not sufficient to convince audiences that action must be taken. Many "social problems in-the-making" are "problems in search of victims" in the sense that the problem itself is not fully constituted until its victims are made apparent (Holstein & Miller, 1997: 41). The previous chapter unpacked one way that victims are revealed, which is to make claims about their characteristics and experiences. Another way of uncovering victims is by making claims about the prevalence of victims and the frequency with which human trafficking occurs. To make claims about the quantity of trafficked victims, especially if these are huge quantities, does the work of motivational framing: it encourages audiences to take action by emphasizing the problem's urgency, severity, and scope, and the moral imperative to respond (Silver, 1997).

Social movement theorists have found that in order to increase the likelihood of being perceived as true, or at least "true enough," it is more important for frames to be consistent than to be objectively verifiable (Benford, 1993). Frames that are inconsistent or appear to contradict previously-stated claims can have negative effects on the campaign's ability to mobilize supporters and keep the attention of the public because they are perceived by audiences as less credible. Snow (1993) found that frame disputes often concern credibility, whether the empirical credibility of the frame itself, or the credibility of the claimsmaker's character.

This chapter unpacks the ongoing frame dispute regarding the empirical credibility of the statistical and anecdotal evidence that is advanced in support of the

campaign's claims. The "size" and scope of a social problem matters in attracting media coverage, donor funding, and attention from policy makers. The announcement of an impressive sounding number of victims can generate substantial media attention, which stimulates its circulation and in so doing, further legitimates the number even though the original source of the number is often lost as the media accounts repeat one another's claims (Andreas & Greenhill, 2010: 26). The impressive number only needs to be exactly that: impressive. Claims about social problems do not have to be demonstrably "true" in the sense that they correspond with some verifiable reality. Rather, they only have to be "perceived" to be true by the targeted audiences (Best, 1990), and referring to the same impressive number repeatedly can increase the public's acceptance of a claim as accurate and true.

As we would expect, human trafficking statistics, specifically the estimates of how many victims are trafficked each year, are empirically problematic because human trafficking is so hard to measure. The most relevant populations to study, such as sex workers, traffickers, undocumented migrants, and trafficked individuals are hidden populations, who live on the margins of society, and who Tyldum and Brunokvis (2005: 18) describe as groups of individuals for "whom the size and boundaries are unknown." While various worthwhile and valuable attempts have been made to quantify the prevalence of human trafficking (IOM, 2001; 2003; ILO 2001, 2012; Belser & Cock, 2005), it is incredibly difficult to estimate the quantity of people who are trafficked around the world each year. However, the lack of reliable data does not impede the AHT campaign's claimsmaking activity in this regard. For the purposes of campaign claims,

the statistical estimates need not be verifiable; they just need to be "big" or substantial enough to capture the public imagination.

In this chapter, we will see how oppositional framing techniques are used to portray victimization as something widespread and ubiquitous, but yet difficult to recognize. In fact, the lack of evidence is portrayed as being not an obstacle but rather a mandate for further campaign action and intervention. We will see campaign actors reframe challenges to their empirical and collective credibility in ways that veil contradictions, justify further intervention, and discourage further scrutiny. I have organized the frame dispute into two dimensions, each pertaining directly to claims regarding the statistical prevalence of human trafficking.

The first dimension focuses on quantitative estimates of human trafficking around the world and into and within the United States. These estimates were primarily responsible for the "discovery" of human trafficking and its integration into the international and national public policy agendas. The second dimension corresponds closely to claims made about the prevalence of human trafficking at the state level. Claims about "local" trafficking play an important role in the campaign's mobilization of policy makers and other audiences because they symbolically bring an issue with which very few people have any real experience into the daily lives of the general public. A successful way of making an abstract and international-level social problem like human trafficking relevant to the American public is to demonstrate that it is an insidious global problem that is gradually seeping its way into the cities and small communities of the United States. These claims are important because they directly assert that human trafficking and its victims are "in our own backyard."

I divide the claims I coded into these two dimensions to better show nuance in the articulation of the official frame in regards to the types of evidence that are used to substantiate campaign claims. For example, the global and national estimates are used to establish the problem's existence and magnitude and the local estimates are used as evidence that human trafficking happening is "all around us."

The Role of Numbers and Empirical Credibility in Social Movements and Reform Campaign

Empirical credibility refers to the apparent fit between collective action frames (claims) and known events (observed or observable cases). However, in claimsmaking, empirical credibility is not achieved simply by demonstrating a corresponding connection between claims and reality. Credibility is not a result of whether or not the diagnostic and prognostic frames are factually or empirically accurate, but rather whether their evidence or measures lend themselves to being read as the "real indicators" of the diagnostic claims (Snow & Benford, 1988). In other words, can the claims be empirically verified? Is there something "out there" in the real world that can be used as evidence of the claims? The second type of credibility concerns the credibility of the claimsmaker-- the individual or organization that is making the claim. "The status and prestige of the communicators have a direct bearing on the perceived plausibility of claims" (Snow, 1993: 693; Snow & Benford, 2000: 621; see Spector & Kitsuse, 1073: 151).

In a 2007 assessment of the field of human trafficking research, the International Organization of Migration (IOM) wrote,

> [T]oo few data collection efforts employ standardized methodologies and
> comparable indicators. Even in the rare cases where national data

collection efforts look to adopt standardized methodologies, subsequent analyses are often not comparable to other studies and their usefulness is limited.

The field of human trafficking research is characteristically plagued by unreliable data and incomparable studies, which prevents researchers from accurately quantifying the prevalence of human trafficking and making comparisons across countries and regions. Further, the lack of primary and accurate datasets impedes effective monitoring and evaluation of international anti-trafficking programs. Anti-trafficking actors cannot know what is working and what is failing if they do not have access to accurate data to help understand the phenomenon and track its incidence over time. In a situation where accurate evidence is lacking, the "true picture" can be portrayed by claimsmakers in ways that reflect their biases or are prone to misinterpretation (IOM 2007 Global Human Trafficking Database). The lack of reliable data hampers policy assessment and evaluation efforts, leaving room for claimsmakers to construct the problem without empirical verification or scrutiny. Yet the daunting obstacles that frustrate accurate data collection and meaningful comparative research have not stopped campaign actors from publically announcing and repeating empirical estimates of human trafficking. As Feingold succinctly described this situation, "Over the years, what we have found in the trafficking field could be called numerical certainty and statistical doubt" (Feingold, 2010: 53). In other words, unverifiable and inaccurate information is shared widely and consistently as if it were established fact.

Statistical estimates of human trafficking are an imperative part of the diagnostic framing process. Diagnostic frames inform the public about the causes and scope of the

problem, which often includes an assessment of how widespread the problem is (Snow et al., 1986).

Identifying the Official Frames, Counterframes, and Reframes

At the center of this frame dispute is disagreement over the evidence, both aggregate statistical and anecdotal, of the existence, frequency, and distribution of human trafficking. The dispute is an ongoing disagreement over empirical questions such as how many people are trafficked each year and the kind evidence we have to support these empirical claims. To identify the constituent elements of this frame dispute, I began by categorizing several open codes. A major code category was "empirical estimates of HT" which included statements made by campaign actors and journalists in regards to the statistical prevalence of human trafficking, both around the world and within the United States. Over 90% of the articles included in this study contained a claim about the prevalence of human trafficking. I sorted these statements into claims about the prevalence of human trafficking globally and claims about its prevalence at the state and local levels within the United States. I used these codes to measure how the numerical estimates in the mass media had changed over time. To capture claims about the prevalence of trafficking more locally, I included statements that I had coded as *"provides local evidence"* and *"shows trafficking occurs here."*

To identify the counterframes, I started with all the statements I had coded as *"criticisms and critiques"* and sorted by the statements that addressed claims about the statistical prevalence of human trafficking and observable evidence of human trafficking. The critical statements that were most relevant to this frame dispute were those that criticized the campaign's low number of identified victims, indicated by these open

codes:*"States little to no victims identified;" "Criticizes low number of prosecutions."*

Challenges to statistical claims were primarily made by either investigative journalists who looked into the source of official human trafficking data or government officials who questioned the continued expenditure of federal funds to support AHT initiatives that were not resulting in identifying victims or securing prosecutions.

The official frame of the AHT campaign, in regards to identifying and locating actual trafficked individuals, is comprised of two dimensions. First is a collection of claims about the prevalence of human trafficking around the world and the second involves claims about the prevalence of trafficking at the local level. While the first dimension is primarily concerned with establishing the problem of human trafficking as a global concern, the second dimension is focused on "bringing trafficking home."

Official Frame: Global and National Estimates of Human Trafficking

In the first Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, which was published in 2001, the U.S. government made one of the first public statements that attached a number to the problem of human trafficking. In reference to the TIP, one journalist wrote:

> The report is the first of what will be annual examinations of a problem that experts say is exploding around the world. Experts say that there are now 2 million to 3 million women and girls who have been snared by traffickers, or sold to them, and forced into prostitution. Their number has soared since the collapse of the Soviet Union a decade ago, which opened borders across Eastern Europe. An estimated 40,000-50,000 women and girls, many from the former Soviet Union, are brought to the USA each year ("More needed to stop human trafficking," 2001).

This quote is representative of many claims made about human trafficking in the early 2000s. It focuses on women and girls who were forced into the sex trade and makes the claim that the number is "soaring." The claim also includes what we would call "elastic"

figures, which are vague and wide-ranging. The data were associated with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), whose initial estimates became the most widely distributed and publically stated estimates of human trafficking around the world and into the United States.

> The Central Intelligence Agency estimates that at least 700,000 people are trafficked each year, including 45,000 to 50,000 who are trafficked to the United States (Strobel, 2001).

Feingold's (2010: 53) characterization of the campaign's series of claims about the quantitative prevalence, "numerical certainty and statistical doubt," is supported by the newspaper article data. He stated that the campaign regularly, widely, and consistently shared unverifiable and inaccurate data as if it were established fact. A qualitative analysis supported his characterization -- we can characterize the official frame regarding the statistical prevalence of human trafficking in three ways that embody numerical certainty and statistical doubt: 1) The numbers changed dramatically in the span of just a few years with little explanation; 2) There is a tendency for "double-speak," where claimsmakers say that reliable estimates are impossible, but then give an estimate with a relatively high level of specificity or false precision; and 3) Neither data sources nor information on how estimates are calculated are provided.

To illustrate the distribution of official estimates of human trafficking over the study period, and how they change over time, Figure 6.1 tracks the five most commonly cited global and national estimates of human trafficking, as published in U.S. newspapers from 2000 to 2012. The estimates presented here are not comparable to each other as valid or accurate estimates of human trafficking. The sources of data, methods used to calculate the estimates, and the populations the estimates cover are not consistent across

estimates. For instance, some estimates refer to "trafficked victims" and others refer to only children. Yet even though they are not "objectively" meaningful, these estimates are "symbolically" significant because they are presented as if they were accurate and thus they lend empirical credibility to the AHT campaign actors. Regardless of their quality, these estimates have been used as empirical indicators of human trafficking in mass media articles. The first four of these estimates were published in the Department of State's TIP reports, which were widely distributed and served as a primary data source for journalists.

Figure 6.1: Official Statistical Estimates of Human Trafficking
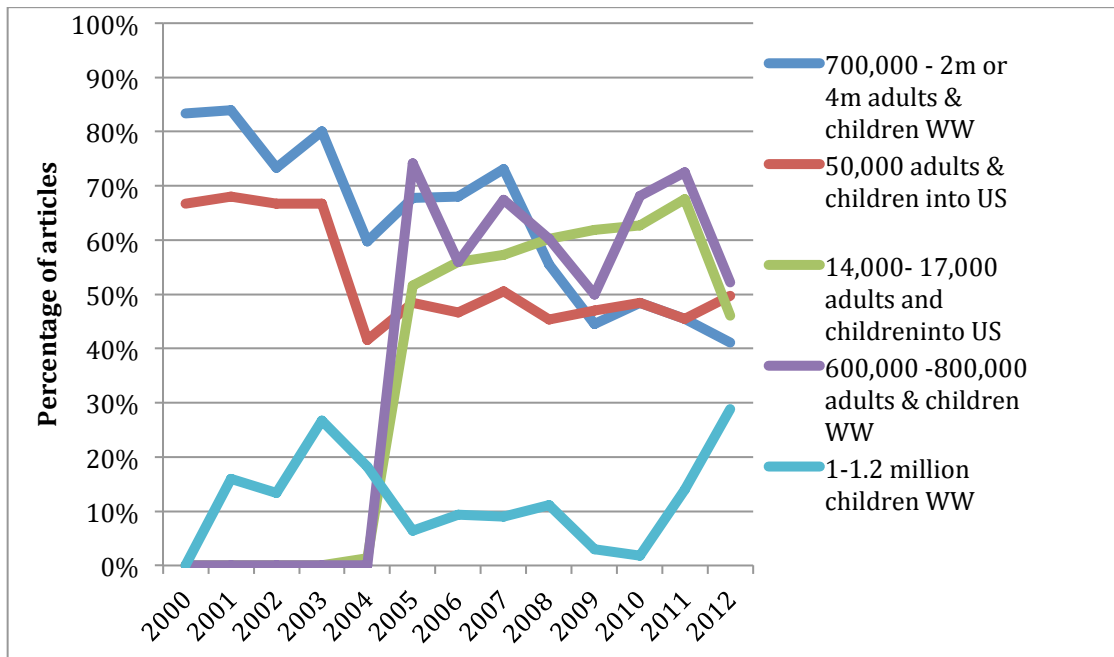
The official frame regarding the empirical scope of human trafficking is characterized by changing estimates. Between 2000 and 2002, the TIP Report estimated that between 700,000 and 2 million adults and children were being trafficked around the world each year, with the majority coming from Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia. In

2003, the State Department's maximum figure had grown to 4 million (TIP, 2003) worldwide, but two years later, the agency decreased its number to 600,000 to 800,000 worldwide (TIP, 2005). During this same time period, 2000-2002, government officials estimated that between 45,000 and 50,000 individuals were being trafficked into the United States. In 2003, this number was modified to 18,000 to 20,000 people and it was reduced again in 2004 to 14,500 to 17,000. When called upon to account for the huge yearly variations in their estimates of human trafficking globally and into the United States, officials could not provide convincing explanations for the huge fluctuations from year to year (Feingold, 2010: 55), but they remained the most widely published estimates.

The second characteristic of the official frame is a common tendency for "double-speak," (Chapkis, 2005) where the claimsmaker warns that it is difficult or impossible to get reliable estimates but then proceeds to offer numerical estimates which are thereafter repeatedly cited by others (McDonald, 2007). Of course, reliable numbers are hard to come by, but that does not prevent claimants from providing estimates anyway, often prefacing them with the innocuous disclaimer, "the numbers are fuzzy but." In the 2001 TIP report, where the U.S. government makes its first claims regarding the prevalence of human trafficking, it states: "[N]o one US or international agency is compiling accurate statistics," but continues by saying that "700,000 to 2 million women and children are trafficked each year" (TIP, 2001). This statistic was picked up by the International Office of Migration (IOM), which included it in their major 2001 report on forced labor (Miko & Park, 2001). After that it became "the IOM figure" and was widely circulated even though its provenance was largely unknown. As estimates circulate, they acquire a kind of consensus that grants them a degree of legitimacy. Given that nobody knows the true

magnitude of the problem, those estimates that come to be accepted are more of a reflection of the credibility, status, and power of the estimator, than the "rigor of the estimator's methodology" (McDonald, 2004: 147).

Part of the double-speak that is so prevalent in newspaper accounts of human trafficking is the juxtaposition of a disclaimer such as "estimates are hard to come by" and a specific claim, like the quote above. Data are hard to come by, but it is apparently still possible to make a credible statement about the age of the victims, as shown in the excerpt below:

> Although reliable data is hard to come by, experts estimate that more than 1-2 million victims - some as young as 6 - are smuggled worldwide yearly, oftentimes with the blessing of corrupt officials. Experts say 50,000 victims make it into the United States each year (de la Garza, 2001).

The double-speak that is so common to these empirical claims allows for some room in disclosing the source of the data. Since there are no reliable data, the estimates that are announced are not attributed to any specific source.

The third way the official frame is characterized is that in almost none of the statements given by government officials, were references made to the source of their data, or how the estimates were calculated.[11] The top four estimates that are included in Figure 6.1 are those made by agencies of the U.S. federal government. However, NGOs were also responsible for disseminating claims about the prevalence of human trafficking. International and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were also offering their own estimates:

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[11] The closest description to a data source was a reference to "CIA researchers."

> Human rights groups estimate that each year hundreds of thousands, and perhaps millions, of women and children are forced into lives of sexual exploitation. Many are transported across international borders by criminal organizations (Shenon, 2000).

No mention is made of the source of the estimates or the specific human rights groups that present them. In the previous chapter, we observed a shift in the image of the "typical" trafficking victim from foreign women and children to local children. This shift parallels the changing assertions of numerical estimates as well. The following two quotes, taken from articles published in 2012, include claims made by activists who used global data to make a claim about localized sex trafficking of children. The first quote associates the U.S. government with a faith-based NGO, Shared Hope International:

> A 2007 report sponsored by the U.S. Justice Department and written by the non-profit organization Shared Hope International claims 300,000 girls a year between the ages of 11 and 17 are trapped into sex work. Popular destinations for traffickers and their victims are the Sundance Film Festival, the Ultimate Fighting Championships and the Super Bowl, according to Shared Hope's 2009 report. During sports events or conventions, children have had as many as 45 "buyers" a night, up from the more usual quotas of 10 to 15 ("Slowing the Flesh Trade," 2012).

Activists' claims about the magnitude of trafficking have been given the U.S. government's stamp of approval. The next quote uses national estimates of 16,000 and 18,000 children being trafficked within the United States, which is almost the same as the U.S. TIP estimate of 14,000 to 15,000 *adults and children* being trafficked into the United States.

The official frame about the statistical prevalence of human trafficking is characterized by the loose use of estimates without mention of their provenance and without mention of how they were calculated. Although the estimates were modified each

year and although there was an acknowledgement of limited reliable data, human trafficking is always perceived to be on the rise.

Counterframes: Global and National Estimates of Human Trafficking

One way counterframes challenge official frames is by denying that the problem exists. While the criticisms that I identified in the newspaper articles do not outright deny the existence of human trafficking, they do suggest that the problem may not be anywhere near as common or widespread as it is portrayed to be. The emergent counterframes that challenged the global and national estimates expressed criticism and skepticism of the methodologies used to calculate these estimates, and thereby questioned the prevalence of human trafficking globally and in the United States. The estimates of global human trafficking that were widely circulated by national media outlets did not provide information about the source of the data or the methodologies used to construct their estimates. In fact, of the 1,489 newspaper articles that contained a statistical estimate of the prevalence of human trafficking, only 146 of them attributed the data to a source other than the government agency that announced it. Only in 10% of the 1,489 articles was there some indication as to how the data were acquired or how the estimates were calculated, and most of these statements were making reference to a study or data source that was measuring the prevalence of homeless teenagers or some other non-human trafficking occurrence. The lack of detail as to the source of the data was the basis of the primary counterframes and provides fuel for an ongoing critique of the campaign's "evidence." Beginning in 2006, with article titles like, "How Widespread is Human Trafficking? U.S. Estimates Fall Short" and "Crime Effort Lacks Clarity," an increasing

number of articles were published that included more critical discussions of the data and their methodology for acquiring it.

The counterframes I describe below critique the global and national estimates on two grounds. First, investigative journalists and members of the federal government interrogated the source of the human trafficking estimates, which have been associated with the CIA. Second, researchers and other critics compare the popular statistical estimates to three verifiable observations that would one would expect to correlate with these estimates, specifically the number of victims identified, the number of successful prosecutions of traffickers, and the number of T-Visas issued.

The empirical credibility of the AHT campaign's claims was challenged when investigative journalists and critics of the campaign (through letters to the editor and opinion pieces) exposed the sources of trafficking data and critiqued the ways the popular estimates were developed. As part on an ongoing investigative project, Jerry Markon, a journalist with *The Washington Post,* interviewed a number of key officials with the U.S. State Department. In the following excerpt, they were discussing how the estimate of 50,000 people trafficked into the United States had come to be:

> Although there have been several estimates over the years, the number that helped fuel the congressional response -- 50,000 victims a year -- was an unscientific estimate by a CIA analyst who relied mainly on clippings from foreign newspapers, according to government sources who requested anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the agency's methods.

Markon explained that when the federal government returned to the CIA for improved estimates, the CIA, in collaboration with graduate students from Mercyhurst College in Pennsylvania, again used mainly press clips from foreign media to estimate the number of trafficking victims, along with reports from government agencies and anti-

human trafficking groups. The CIA again ran their data through a simulation program. According to Markon's informant, "It spat out estimates of destination countries for trafficking victims worldwide. The new number of victims trafficked into the United States: 14,500 to 17,500 each year" (Markon, 2007).

As part of his investigation, Jerry Markon took this estimate and information about the data sources to statisticians for them to review and provide an opinion. As one expert from Duke University gave his assessment:

> The [CIA] simulation is considered a valid way to measure [the prevalence of human trafficking] only if the underlying data are reliable. 'It seems incredibly unlikely that this was a robust, sound analysis,' said David Banks, a statistics professor at Duke University.

In reference to the reliability of the data, another respected researcher gave a similar opinion:

> 'The numbers were totally unreliable,' said David Osborne, head of research for the [Library of Congress's] federal research division. 'If it was reported that 15 women were trafficked from Romania into France, French media might pick it up and say 32 women and someone else would say 45.'

Years before Markon sought the input of these researchers, two federal agencies, the General Accounting Office (GAO) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), had already requested further inquiry to these figures, and both the GAO and OMB had expressed doubt over these estimates. The GAO issued a report that characterizes the U.S. State Department estimates as having major "methodological weaknesses, gaps in data, and numerical discrepancies." While this report was largely out of the public view, a letter written by a GAO official did make the news. The following

quote cites a letter from the GAO to the Department of Justice, in which they warn

against the wide circulation of problematic data:

> The House legislation cites the government's current estimate of up to 17,500 victims a year, but the Justice Department, in a Nov. 9 letter to congressional leaders, 'questions the reliability' of the numbers. 'Such findings, without a full body of evidence, are counter-productive,' the letter says.

The second way that campaign antagonists challenged campaign claims was by

comparing the estimates to other measures, such as the number of identified victims, the

number of times traffickers were successfully prosecuted, and the number of T-Visas that

were issued. In 2007, the Bush Administration released data on its AHT activities in the

2007 TIP report, which prompted a wave of criticism regarding the campaign's

effectiveness. As an investigative journalist with *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* wrote:

> 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. In addition, 148 federal cases have been brought nationwide, some by the Justice task forces, which are composed of prosecutors, agents from the FBI and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and local law enforcement officials in areas thought to be hubs of trafficking.

While no challenger outright denies the existence of human trafficking, they often make

the accusation, whether implicitly or explicitly, that the figures have been highly

exaggerated. Several politicians who were previously strong supporters of the campaign,

began to question the ongoing distribution of federal funds to support AHT activities. As

one journalist wrote:

> As part of the fight [against human trafficking], 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.

Soon after Bush took office, a network of anti-trafficking nonprofit agencies arose, spurred in part by an infusion of federal dollars. HHS officials were determined to raise public awareness and encourage victims to come forward. For help, they turned to Ketchum in 2003. Legal experts said they hadn't heard of hiring a public relations firm to fight a crime problem (Markon, 2007).

It was the expenditure of these dollars and the lack of "return" that stimulated much of

the counterframing activity.

[T]he [Bush] administration has doled out millions of dollars to faith-based and social service providers to serve trafficking victims, never realizing the difficulties they would have in getting victims to come forward. Last year, the government spent $10 million to help 230 people, or roughly $1 million for every 22 victims served, a federal report said ("Bush's Anti-Slavery Initiative Falters In Quest For Freedom," 2006).

Below, a U.S. Senator reconsiders his support of the campaign and its interventions

because he is concerned about the resources being spent, and suggests that perhaps there

has not been an efficacious use of resources:

Those numbers are proof that the fight against human trafficking has gone wrong, U.S. Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, said in a November 2011 report on a bid to reauthorize the trafficking law. While he supported it, he sought more accountability. "Either the government is doing an unconscionably poor job of finding victims or there are not that many total victims in the first place," Grassley wrote. And if the number of foreigners is inflated, the government may be spending money on the wrong programs (Mariano, 2012).

Similar to the previous quote about the government's "unconscionably poor job of

finding victims," one victim advocate expressed frustration at the government's inability

to find victims that had been assumed to be everywhere.

It should not be extremely difficult to identify a large section of these women and girls, whose availability for prostitution is often seen in camouflaged advertisements in the Yellow Pages and various magazine

and Internet sites, and use the them to get information about the numerous criminal rings that are involved in trafficking operations in the United States and their countries of origin so that appropriate actions can be taken to prevent trafficking (Nag, 2007).

In a particular damning quote, the former head of the U.S. Health and Human Services Department, which facilitated the distribution of federal funds to non-profit organizations to do the work of finding human trafficking victims, suggested that the money had been wasted:

> Steven Wagner, who helped HHS distribute millions of dollars in grants to community groups to find and assist victims, said 'Those funds were wasted. Many of the organizations that received grants didn't really have to do anything,' said Wagner, former head of HHS's anti-trafficking program. 'They were available to help victims. There weren't any victims.'

Another indicator that was used to compare to popular estimates was the number of successful prosecutions. In 2007, Alberto Gonzales created a new federal agency that was tasked specifically to prosecute cases of human trafficking. However, critics directed attention to the discrepancies between the large estimates and the relatively low number of successful prosecutions. Ronald Weitzer, a scholar whose work is cited throughout this dissertation, offered an explanation for the discrepancy between estimates and successful prosecutions in which he suggests the possibility that the prevalence of human trafficking is being overstated:

> Ronald Weitzer, a criminologist at George Washington University and an expert on sex trafficking, said that trafficking is a hidden crime whose victims often fear coming forward. He said that might account for some of the disparity in the numbers, but only a small amount. 'The discrepancy between the alleged number of victims per year and the number of cases they've been able to make is so huge that it's got to raise major questions,' Weitzer said. 'It suggests that this problem is being blown way out of proportion.'

A third indicator that counterclaimants used to challenge the validity of the campaign's claims was the number of T-Visas issued to human trafficking victims. A major component of the TVPA was to allow the issuance of T-Visas for foreign nationals who were victims of trafficking. The visa was to allow trafficking victims to remain in the United States, and perhaps receive permanent residency, in exchange for testimony against their traffickers. Below, a recognized human trafficking expert questions the discrepancy between the estimated number of victims and the actual number of visas issued:

> 'We are told by the State Department that every year 15,000 people are trafficked into the U.S. But then, where are they?' said Elzbieta Gozdziak, research director of the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University. If the problem were pervasive, more victims might have applied for special visas created by the 2000 anti-trafficking law. But between fiscal year 2002 and June 2010, the U.S. issued fewer than 1,900 of the visas, which allow victims to stay in the U.S., the Congressional Research Service found in a December 2010 report. 'Why are the numbers so small? Is it because the scope of the problem is not as big as they say? Or is it small because we don't know how to find them?' Gozdziak asked (Mariano, 2012).

The challenges to the statistical estimates of global and national human trafficking pose a threat to the campaign's frame consistency and credibility. They direct attention to the discrepancy between the campaign's claims and what has been observed empirically. A later section analyzes how campaign actors responded to these criticisms, but first I show how the campaign's official frame substantiated their claims of human trafficking happening "in our communities."

Official Frame: State and Local Estimates of Trafficking

The previous sections looked at how statistical estimates that were used as evidence of the existence and widespread prevalence of trafficking were challenged on

the basis of their reliability and validity. This section looks at how official claims were made to demonstrate the occurrence of human trafficking at the state and local levels. Making links to the everyday lives of audience members is important to maintaining frame credibility. Social movement theorists call this "experiential commensurability," which refers to the degree to which movement frames are congruent with the personal, everyday lives of the public. If the frames are too abstract or too different from the lives and experiences of the targeted audience, they are unlikely to be persuasive (Benford & Snow, 2000).

Chapter 5 demonstrated an increasing focus on the trafficking of children within the United States, and so we must look at what evidence, besides the global statistics, can be used to substantiate the claims about the existence of human trafficking in the United States. As the AHT campaign progressed, media depictions of human trafficking victims shifted from foreign women and children being transported across oceans and national boundaries to be exploited in far away lands, to depictions of "homegrown" victims being recruited from their schoolyards. In addition to the "statistics" that government officials provided about trafficking at the international and national levels, more localized campaigners also gave their own estimates of trafficking activity in their local areas. Further, much of the policy discussions, which are unpacked in Chapter 7, became more localized as state legislatures and allied non-governmental organizations (NGOs) continually worked to craft and pass anti-human trafficking legislation in their home jurisdictions. This is indicated in the data by an increase in articles discussing new local policy initiatives. Embedded in this more localized focus are claims of trafficking "in our own back yard."

Every day, in Florida and around the world, victims are compelled into sexual servitude and forced labor through acts of violence, coercion, and deception by traffickers preying on society's most vulnerable citizens (Kim & Perez, 2006).

Campaigners made three types of claims that were intended to function as evidence of localized human trafficking. The first and most common type of claim embedded descriptions of localized trafficking within the context of the global and national statistics and then made a direct link, usually unsupported, to the local area. For example, a sheriff from a rural Texas county explained:

Between 800,000 and 900,000 victims are trafficked annually around the world, and between 18,000 and 20,000 are trafficked into the United States every year, according to Kinney. More than half of the victims trafficked into the United States are children. 'It's hugely underreported,' Kinney said. 'And while victims come from all over the world to the United States, a lot of them come from within. There are kids from our towns.'

Another Texan public official estimated that one-fifth of human trafficking cases in the United States go through Texas and associated these cases with the 300,000 runaway children in the United States each year:

Texas is a hub for human sex trafficking, said Kathleen Murray, the Fort Worth Police Department's trafficking coordinator. She estimated that 20 percent of all human trafficking in the United States comes through Texas at some point. 'These cases are within our reach,' she said. 'That's a huge responsibility for Texas.' The State Department estimates that 300,000 children, mostly runaways, are exploited in the United States each year, Murray said.

In the following quote from a Kentucky newspaper, we see the familiar estimate of 17,000 people trafficked into the United States. with the additional claim that the average age of these victims is 13.

Closer to home, 138 victims of human trafficking have been served by another awareness group, KY Rescue and Restore, a Louisville-based

organization, he said. 'A large majority of human trafficking cases go unreported,' he said of the estimated $32 billion annual industry worldwide. It is estimated that 17,500 people are brought into the U.S. yearly with the average age of 13. 'Here, in our own state, we have encountered victims as young as 5,' he said.

A U.S. Attorney based in Los Angeles, California used a similar estimate of 15,000 to 18,000 people trafficked into the United States, and suggested that half of them were trafficked into Los Angeles and its pornography industry.

> An estimated 15,000 to 18,000 people are brought into the United States annually as slaves, mostly coerced into physical and sexual labor. Authorities estimate half of those in Los Angeles are exploited for sex and many are funneled into the San Fernando Valley's pornography industry.

The second most common type of claim to substantiate local trafficking is that the local area (state, county, or city) is a "hotbed" or "hub" of human trafficking activity. Rather than providing empirical evidence, however, claimsmakers suggest that it is the features of the geographical area, such as proximity to international borders, major highways, or other large cities, that make the area ripe for trafficking. Atlanta, Georgia, for example, was identified by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as a trafficking hub:

> Experts believe that metro Atlanta is an ideal setting for human trafficking because of its recent and growing immigrant population. With Atlanta becoming a melting pot, it's easier to hide people within a larger group of immigrants. Easy accessibility to Georgia through Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, the world's busiest passenger airport and a major point of entry into the country, also contributes to the problem here, said Wade Horn, who heads the administration for children and families for the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services in Washington (Pascual, 2004).

Even smaller towns, like Medford, Oregon, were alleged hotbeds because of its proximity

to a major highway:

> And Medford's location on the interstate provides pimps with an easy way
> to transport a steady stream of victims from Los Angeles to Seattle, said
> Alston. 'The pimps call I-5 the 'Kiddie Track,'' said Alston (Specht, 2012).

What is common among these quotes is the "double-speak" I described in previous

sections, namely the tendency to say "the numbers are unclear" and then proceed to offer

numbers and rankings. For example:

> Though state officials don't know how many sex trafficking victims flow
> through the state yearly, the N.C. Coalition to Combat Human Trafficking
> ranks North Carolina in the top 10 states for the problem. North Carolina's
> major highways connect much of the East Coast, and the state has a large
> transient military population, agricultural roots and ports - all attractive
> environments for traffickers, Roberson said (Reaves, 2012).

Steven Wagner, who at the time of the following quote was head of the U.S. Department

of Health and Human Services AHT initiatives, said that although "exact counts" are

impossible, there is "no doubt" that human trafficking is a major problem in New York:

> While exact counts of slaves - commonly defined as victims being forced
> to work against their will - are impossible, Mr. Wagner said he believes
> there are more than 50,000 in America. 'There is no doubt in my mind
> New York is one of the major trafficking places,' he said. The
> phenomenon can be found throughout the country, he said, but victims
> tend to be concentrated in immigrant destinations with large ethnic
> enclaves. 'New York City certainly fits that profile,' he said (Gerson,
> 2005).

The third most common type of frame to support claims about localized

trafficking was to "bridge" human trafficking with other social problems for which data

are available, such as runaways and low-income children. For instance, in the following

claim, a law enforcement officer uses data on homeless children to suggest that sex

traffickers would be attracted to the area.

> Graves said about 177 students in Cleburne [Independent School District] are registered as homeless. One in three children who become homeless is at risk for getting kidnapped and forced into sex slavery within 48 hours, Graves said. Smaller towns like Cleburne could start to see more problems as sex traffickers are attracted to lesser-known cities where law enforcement has not yet dealt with an epidemic. 'It's very easy for a child to be tricked,' Graves said.

In another reference to the small community of Medford, Oregon, a public official used similar data to make the claim that the region of southern Oregon is a trafficking hotbed:

> 'There are 1,289 students in the Medford School District identified as homeless because they lack a fixed, regular or adequate nighttime home. Of that number, 197 of are not in the physical custody of a parent or a guardian,' Ferrell said. 'Many of these homeless youths have already engaged in survival sex,' Ferrell said. Having traded their bodies for someone they believe to be safer than a random stranger they might encounter if out on the streets, Ferrell said it can be a slippery slope for a homeless teen, male or female, who finds themselves trapped by an adult who now has them enmeshed in the secretive and highly controlled world. 'Southern Oregon is fast becoming a major hub of human sex trafficking.'

Again, in reference to estimates of homeless children or runaways, government officials and local service providers may use them as a stand-in for estimates of child sex trafficking in their states. The director of a Utah advocacy organization is the focus of the following excerpt:

> Monnica Manuel, head of Operation 61, a Salt Lake-based group formed in 2008 against trafficking, afterward said her group was aware of a study that counted 200 human trafficking cases in Utah in the past decade. The study was linked to statistics from the national Center for Missing and Exploited Children, which she said, counts as many as 300,000 trafficking cases a year across the U.S.

This section described has described three ways that "evidence" was used to substantiate claims of localized human trafficking. In most cases, these localized claims had to do with children, reflecting a trend we observed earlier, that as the campaign progressed more attention was being focused on children. Campaigners embedded their

210

claims that human trafficking was occurring locally within the context of national

statistics, asserted that features of their local communities made them a hotbed for human

trafficking, and used data on proxy phenomena like juvenile runaways as stand-ins for

estimates of local human trafficking.

Counterframes: State and Local Estimates of Human Trafficking

The counterframes to claims about localized human trafficking are similar to the

challenges lodged against the global and national estimates in that they involve making

comparisons between the estimates of trafficking and the number of identified cases and

successful prosecutions. The challenges to these claims became apparent after 2006 and

were again associated with questioning the ongoing expenditures of federal funds. For

instance, the Clearwater Police Department in Clearwater, Florida won a $450,000

federal grant to create a local task force devoted to rescuing victims of human trafficking

and arresting traffickers (Fries, 2006). In another example, $900,000 was awarded to

police and social service organizations in New York to establish a task force to help law

enforcement agencies identify trafficking operations and to prosecute those running them

(Warner, 2006). After millions of federal dollars were distributed to police departments,

social service organizations, and task forces, investigative journalists and policy makers

began to pay closer attention to the activities and expenditures of grantees.

As the previous section suggests, despite the considerable expenditure of

resources, very few victims were actually found. Following up on claims that Atlanta,

Georgia was a hotbed of trafficking, an investigative journalist looked at the reporting

data from the Atlanta police department, which claimed to have identified 200 victims,

and its subsequent audit by the Department of Justice.

But this count was later revealed to be grossly inaccurate. Auditors for the Justice Department's Office of the Inspector General could find documentation for only four victims, a July 2008 report said. Perhaps, then, it's little wonder that the program had such poor results that it drew scrutiny from the U.S. Department of Justice (Mariano, 2012).

In a similar example, an investigative journalist reported finding little evidence for claims that Washington DC is a trafficking hub, worthy of the millions of dollars in federal grants that the city received:

Since it was created in 2004, the task force has prosecuted four cases in federal court in the District and about 25 cases in D.C. Superior Court. All have involved U.S. citizens forced into prostitution, including children (Markon, 2007).

The counterframes against claims of localized human trafficking are very similar to the counterframes against the statistical estimates of global trafficking. They were primarily based on comparisons of the estimates to other observable variables and directed attention to the discrepancies. They were different, however, in that there were no significant challenges to the data sources or the way some data were used, appropriately or otherwise, to indicate the existence of trafficking. Critics instead challenged the more general claims about certain cities being "hotbeds" of trafficking, arguing that claims of "we are a trafficking hub" did not stand up empirically. Interestingly, much of the challenges to "local evidence" were focused on cities and states that received large amounts of federal funds, such as Clearwater, Florida, Salt Lake City Utah, Atlanta, Georgia, and Washington DC. My analysis shows that these challenges were not present for communities like Medford, Oregon, that did not receive federal funding for a task force or other anti-human trafficking initiative.

Reframing Challenges to the Campaign's Evidence

Throughout I have argued that the key to understanding how AHT campaign actors have exercised control over the campaign's focus on sex trafficking lies in their reframing activity. The previous sections outlined fairly damning challenges to the quantitative prevalence provided by AHT claimsmakers to support their claims that suggested that the problem of human trafficking is overinflated and that the U.S. government is squandering funds on searching for victims that cannot be found in the quantities projected by the campaign. The response of campaign actors to these challenges was to offer explanations for the discrepancies between their estimates and the low numbers of identified victims and prosecutions. They use reframes to explain their position that even though the numerical estimates are problematic and there is a low rate of success in identifying victims and traffickers, these discrepancies are evidence that human trafficking is a truly hidden crime that requires sustained law enforcement activity, public awareness programming, and ongoing financial investment. To limit the damage resulting from challengers, the reframes needed to address two kinds of issues: challenges to the empirical credibility of their claims and challenges to the credibility of the claimsmakers themselves.

The most common way of responding to challenges was to acknowledge them as valid criticisms, and then suggest that the observed discrepancies were in fact an expression of the nature of trafficking and victimization. Benford and Hunt (2003) found that protagonists often combine embracing and keying techniques by first acknowledging the validity of selected antagonist claims and then taking them a step further to transform the original meaning.

Campaign actors often acknowledged that there were discrepancies between their claims and the actual number of identified victims and prosecuted cases, but then they presented reframes offering explanations for why these discrepancies exist and using the discrepancies to justify further action. These reframes make assertions that are consistent with the victimization ideology and work to veil contradictions in their claims while legitimating further interventions. The reframing strategies of "embracing and keying" were used to offer three explanations for these discrepancies. The first is that the discrepancy is an indicator of our collective inability to "recognize victims," and that further training and public awareness campaigns would be a reasonable next step to facilitate this recognition. The second explanation suggests that the experience of force and coercion on the part of trafficked individuals keeps them hidden and silent, thus resulting in a low number of identified victims. Since victims will not come to them, perhaps police should "go find them," implying the need for more prostitution raids and stings. The third explanation problematizes the use of quantitative indicators by suggesting that interventions should not be dependent on numerically-based "success" because even "one victim is too many."

"We don't know how to identify victims"

The most frequently cited reason for the observed discrepancies was that human trafficking is a clandestine activity, which makes it inherently difficult to identify. These statements suggest that law enforcement professionals and other service providers do not know how to recognize trafficking when they see it. If human trafficking is as prevalent in our neighborhoods and schools as campaigners claim, then the lack of identified victims must result from the inability of first responders such as police to recognize

human trafficking as it is occurring. As one service provider suggests, it is the lack of

police training on the TVPA and their tendency to view prostitutes as criminals, that is

keeping them from recognizing trafficked victims.

> Human trafficking crimes are underreported for a variety of reasons. Many police investigators are not aware of the federal anti-trafficking law and how to use it. Many view women involved in the sex industry as deserving of their fate and feel that law enforcement officials have more important crimes to pursue. And how many police officers know that a minor working in the sex industry is by definition a trafficking victim?

Training for law enforcement and other first responders is a major component of

AHT initiatives funded by the federal and state governments. In their view, the lack of

identified victims is the result of our inability to recognize them, a condition that can be

addressed by training.

> Law enforcement agencies will also need to be educated about how to identify and investigate human trafficking, and Delahanty said there are federal dollars available for state and local agencies to become better prepared (Covinton, 2007).

This quote implies that perhaps we can be "taught" to recognize trafficking and that

police officers are the ones who need to take that training. Some also suggest the need for

training among the general public. The following quote suggests that, as a public, we are

unable to recognize trafficking without being trained "how to see" it.

> Identifying victims of human trafficking isn't difficult, unless you're not looking. And that, Columbus police Detective Ken Lawson said, is precisely the problem: 'How do you detect it if the populace has never been trained to see it?' (Erb, 2007).

Maybe it is not a lack of training alone that prevents us from seeing victims everywhere,

but rather our perception that human trafficking is not that serious of an issue. In the

following quote, a service provider suggests that people who do not think trafficking is a major concern are misguided and in the need of education.

> 'Right now, one of our biggest obstacles is to educate law enforcement about what to look for because many people in Western Pennsylvania don't think that we have any problems, which isn't the case' (Roebuck & Wereschagin, 2006).

This reframe takes the discrepancy between the widely distributed claims about the prevalence of human trafficking and the number of identified victims and uses it as evidence of a collective inability to recognize human trafficking, refuting the accusation that their estimates were inflated.

"The victims are too scared to come forward."

The second most common explanation for the observed discrepancies between popular estimates and the low number of identified victims and prosecuted cases is that trafficked victims are too afraid, either of their traffickers or of police, to come forward. In this reframe, zero identified victims does not indicate an absence of human trafficking, but rather the presence of hidden trafficking.

> We haven't cracked many human trafficking cases in Austin in recent years because most victims are too scared to seek help, said Kathi West, the victim witness coordinator at the attorney's office (Kreytak, 2004).

> No one has ever been charged with human trafficking in Vigo County, Moore said, but that does not mean it does not occur. It is just tough to identify, in part because some of the victims do not identify themselves as victims (Trigg, 2012).

Victims' failure to come forward is often attributed to their fear of law enforcement officers, as expressed by a local district attorney in the following excerpt:

> Criminal cases can't be made without victims coming forward and that's not happening because victims are 'paralyzed with fear of law enforcement,' a federal review concludes. People smuggled into the country are generally viewed as lawbreakers, not victims, and so they don't regard the police as their friends (Protect Trafficking Victims First, Criminal Cases Will Follow, 2006).

The victims' presumed fear of law enforcement is not only an explanation for why they are not seeking help, but also a justification for further action on the part of law enforcement. The following quote suggests that it is not enough to wait for victims to appear, but rather it is the job of law enforcement to go out and find them.

> 'We know they are out there, they are just waiting for us. We need to conduct more stings in order to look for and rescue the victims,' said Capt. Steven Skrynecki (Mead, 2006).

Attributing the discrepancy to a fear of police sets claimsmakers up to justify further action on the part of the campaign. Since, as the claimsmakers suggest, we cannot identify victims because they are too afraid to come forward, then law enforcement officers must seek them out. As one police sergeant stated, human trafficking victims will not make themselves easy to find and training is required to learn how to invite them to step forward:

> Human trafficking victims, they don't see a police car pull up and run out saying, 'Save me! Save me!' It takes a lot of work and training of your investigators to develop interview and interrogation skills to break through those barriers (Rice, 2006).

In response to criticisms about the low number of identified victims compared to the claims of widespread trafficking, campaign actors reframe the criticism by first acknowledging the discrepancy and then suggesting that the discrepancy is the result of victims being too afraid to seek help. This explanation also justifies further action, such as extensive training efforts and increased "raids" to seek out and rescue hidden victims.

217

"Low numbers do not mean that human trafficking is not happening."

The third way campaign actors responded to the discrepancies was to first acknowledge that they exist, then suggest that even low numbers imply that human trafficking is present in local areas. We can see this explanation in the following excerpt quoting a police sergeant in Florida:

> Sgt. Katy Connor-Dubina of the domestic and personal violence unit also is unaware of specific incidents. 'We have had, as far as I know, no cases where an individual has come forward where a person has been brought to St. Petersburg under a ruse to perform sexual favors,' she said. 'That doesn't mean it's not happening. It just means they are not bringing the cases to the police department. Here in St. Petersburg, we understand the problem' (Moore, 2003).

A representative of the federal government, Mark Lagon, made a similar statement using the double-speak that has become so familiar in human trafficking claims, saying "the numbers are murky" and following up with an elastic estimate of the number of victims in the United States.

> Mark P. Lagon, director of the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, said that such problems make the numbers "naturally murky. This is an underground phenomenon . . . . 'There are vigorous U.S. government efforts to find and help victims in the United States, not because there is some magic number that we have a gut instinct is out there. Any estimate we're citing, we've always said, is an estimate.' But Lagon said he is convinced that 'thousands upon thousands of people are subject to gross exploitation' in the United States.

Even the Bush White House, which was originally a major promoter of widespread human trafficking estimates, did an about-face by saying "it's not about the numbers:"

> Administration officials acknowledge that they have found fewer victims than anticipated. But Tony Fratto, deputy White House press secretary, said that the issue is "not about the numbers. It's really about the crime and how horrific it is.'

218

The reframes discussed in this chapter attempt to explain away the discrepancies between the large estimates of widespread human trafficking and the number of observed cases of trafficking and prosecutions. Campaign leaders have reframed the critique by suggesting that the observed discrepancies are actually indicators of the "clandestine" nature of trafficking. Instead of reflecting a lack of human trafficking, these discrepancies instead suggest that human trafficking is indeed widespread, it is just hidden in plain site. The reframes also justify further intervention by suggesting that more training and expanded law enforcement activity will find the victims that they know are there, waiting to be rescued.

Discussion and Conclusion

Researchers have criticized the national, regional and international statistics that are offered by both activists and governments, among others, for their lack of methodological transparency and source documentation, for being extrapolated from a few cases of identified victims (who are typically unrepresented of the victim population) and for the lack of a standard definition of "victims" (see Kelly, 2005). The GAO ultimately concluded that the "U.S. government has not yet established an effective mechanism for estimating the number of victims," and that the same is true for NGOs and other groups working in the trafficking area" (GAO, 2006).

Feingold (2010) suggests that global estimates of trafficking do not serve any serious policy purposes, but rather are designed to overpower critical thought with the sheer magnitude of the problem. "Regardless of the upward or downward adjustment of figures, the problem is always rapidly increasing" (Feingold, 2010: 55). However, such estimates do serve a sociopolitical purpose: to advocate for and justify the expenditure of

219

resources.   When it comes to mobilizing resources and competing in the social problems marketplace, the specific numbers may not matter; what matters is that the numbers are big and appear in need of serious and sustained policy attention (Andreas & Greenhill, 2010).

This dissertation seeks to explain how the AHT campaign in the United States has maintained its focus on sex trafficking and sex trafficking victims in spite of continuous challenges to its claims. This chapter explored a frame dispute in which the statistical estimates of human trafficking that have been widely distributed by campaign actors have come under scrutiny. These challenges suggest that the data that the estimates are based on are flawed and that the number of people who are trafficked inflated. At the crux of this dispute is the credibility of the campaign's claims.

Collectively, the AHT campaign is comprised of claims that are congruent with the victimization ideology described in previous chapters. Included in this ideology are assumptions that victimization is widespread and ubiquitous, although we may not be able to recognize or perceive it. This chapter has shown that the lack of empirical evidence does not hamper the campaign's claimsmaking or attempts to legitimate their effort, but rather serves as a further call to arms. They reframe challenges to their claims by emphasizing elements of the victimization ideology.

In Chapter 2, I described the victimization ideology in detail so here I will only describe the elements that are most relevant to this frame dispute. The primary tenet of the victimization ideology is that victimization is widespread. Attempts to draw attention to social problems often emphasize the large numbers of people who are affected and

claim that it is occurring "all around us." Large numbers suggest the severity of the problem and the need for an urgent response. We saw the seemingly haphazard way in which unreliable data were bandied about by government officials and journalists until they became generally accepted, with little to no information about the reliability of the data.

The second tenet of the victimization ideology that is underscored in this chapter is the idea that victimization **often goes unrecognized.** If victimization is common, consequential, and clear cut, it should be a visible, prominent part of social life, but it remains invisible because victimization often goes unrecognized and unacknowledged, not only by the larger society but even by the victims themselves (Best 1997: 11). A related ideological tenet is that since victimization is ubiquitous but invisible, we can be taught to recognize it. We saw that much of the reframing attributed the lack of identified victims to an inability to recognize victims and suggested training as an appropriate solution. Low numbers implied not a paucity of victims but a need for more training in order to find them.

The reframes in this chapter protect the claimsmakers and their victimization ideology by arguing that the discrepancies between estimates and observed cases and prosecutions are a result of our collective inability to perceive the victimization around us. As such, human trafficking is hidden in plain sight. The reason why so few victims have been identified and so few legal cases pursued is that first responders are ill-equipped to recognize victims, implying the need for on-going training and public awareness.

Contradictions in claimsmaking are a threat to claims' credibility. Frame consistency refers to the congruency between a social movement organization's (SMO) articulated beliefs, claims, and actions. The campaign has juggled the reality of the lack of reliable data and the need to provide numbers as a way of substantiating their claims about human trafficking and its victims. When presented with challenges that their estimates are being inflated, campaigners respond by saying that numbers are problematic due to the clandestine nature of trafficking and the experiences of victims that keep them hidden away.

It appears that the campaign is attempting to have it both ways. They want to tout large numbers of victims as a way of substantiating their claims about human trafficking and justifying their receipt of resources to combat it, but when challenged suggest that numerical indicators are not appropriate to measure either the scope of the problem or the success of the campaign, because they are inherently flawed due to the nature of trafficking and victims' unwillingness to come forward. Further, they also claim that the focus on these numbers is inappropriate because "even one is too many." The point is that the mere mention of "human trafficking" and "sex slavery" seems to dull critical sensibility; people are so appalled by the enormity of the crime that they do not question whether it is occurring - or if so, whether it is occurring on the scale that it is alleged (Feingold, 2010).

The next chapter is analysis of the third and final frame dispute included in this study, which is in regards to policy solutions to trafficking.

Chapter 7 How can we use policy to combat human trafficking?

The push to develop and enact new local-level legislation is one of the primary approaches used by anti-human trafficking (AHT) campaign actors to eradicate human trafficking in the United States. In social movements more generally, the creation of new policy represents a major achievement by movement actors because it represents the ultimate institutionalization of movement claims (Weitzer, 2007). Following the interactionist paradigm, we can conceptualize public policy as the result of collective interaction among several interest groups, where claims of some groups were codified into policy whereas others may not have been (Stolz, 2005). In the social movements and social problems literatures, scholars decry a lack of analytical attention to these interactions, arguing that the interpretive and symbolic aspects of interaction are key to understanding how they construct meaning associated with social problems and, more significantly, the collective identities of other movement actors (Snow & Hunt, 2003; Benford & Snow, 2000).

A frame dispute is a specific type of interaction in which movement actors from within the same movement disagree about the cause of a particular problem (diagnostic frame), the most appropriate solution (prognostic frame), or both. The previous two chapters have analyzed two diagnostic frame disputes. Chapter 5 showed how campaign actors had made opposing claims about the characteristics and experiences of typical trafficking victims. Chapter 6 demonstrated oppositional claimsmaking over the statistical estimates of human trafficking that were used to substantiate claims of widespread human trafficking within the United States. In this chapter, I unpack a frame dispute regarding the need for human trafficking policy at the level of individual U.S.

states. I focus on state-level policy initiatives because the data contain over 1,200 claims advocating for new policy, most of which are at the state level. As state policy is being developed, campaigners are advancing claims about the need for and content of appropriate human trafficking policy. Given the problematized interpretations of who trafficking victims are and how many there are, it is interesting to study how dominant campaign actors frame the need for new public policy to eradicate trafficking and how they reframe this need in response to challenges. First, however, I briefly review the United States flagship legislation, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), which emerged as a result of collective interactions among AHT campaign actors.

The different institutional actors that were involved in the development of the TVPA can be categorized into two basic groups. First, the anti-prostitution sphere has advanced the idea that there is not only an empirical link between prostitution and sex trafficking, but they are actually the same thing. They argue that prostitutes, by definition, are victims of sex trafficking because prostitution, by definition, is an exploitative act and is a form of sexual slavery. They also argue that no person would voluntarily choose sex work as a legitimate occupational activity because no person would choose to be enslaved. Their goal is to abolish prostitution, so they are typically referred to as "abolitionists." Their disdain for prostitution has called them to prioritize sex trafficking above all other forms of forced labor in their claimsmaking against human trafficking (McDonald, 2004; Stolz, 2005; Weitzer, 2007). The abolitionist interpretation of human trafficking is the foundation for the U.S. government's "official frame" and has characterized the U.S. campaign against human trafficking more broadly. The

abolitionists support public policies that minimize definitional differences between sex

trafficking and prostitution and institute harsher penalties and longer prison sentences for

human traffickers, whom they consider to be any person who facilitates exchanging sex

for money (see U.S. Department of State, *The Link Between Prostitution and Sex*

Trafficking, 2004). To illustrate how the anti-prostitution sphere's prognostic frames are

represented in national policy, Weitzer (2007) directs our attention to the 2005

reauthorization of the TVPA, which incorporated many of the claims regarding "domestic

human trafficking" (i.e., prostitution).

> … [T]he TVPA 2005 Reauthorization contains a section on Combating
> Domestic Trafficking in Persons that repeatedly refers to the need to
> investigate and combat "trafficking in persons and demand for commercial
> sex acts in the United States" (section 201(a)). This blurs the line between
> trafficking and commercial sex. The statute authorizes $25 million per
> year for increased prosecution of those who purchase commercial sex acts
> (204[1b]), and funds for Johns schools (204[1c]), which consist of day-
> long series of lectures designed to educate arrested customers on the
> harms of prostitution (Weitzer, 2007: 461).

The second major branch of campaign actors comprises the anti-labor exploitation

sphere, which considers sex trafficking to be one form of exploitation among many. The

anti-labor exploitation constituency views human trafficking as a problem of forced labor

and exploitation associated with unfair labor and working conditions which they do not

consider to be associated primarily with only one form of work. They view sex workers

as laborers, similar to those who work in the agricultural and industrial sectors and

assume some of both groups are coerced and some are not, depending on their

recruitment experiences and working conditions. They are ideologically distinct from the

anti-prostitution sphere because they do not assume that all prostitution is forced, and

hold and that it is possible for some individuals to rationally and voluntarily choose sex

work as a form of employment. The policy goals of the anti-labor exploitation camp are usually associated with labor protections such as regulating working conditions and wages and promoting honesty in recruiting practices.

We can consider calls for the enactment of policy to be prognostic frames, which are statements that articulate possible solutions to the problem, or at least outline a plan of action for reaching appropriate ameliorative strategies (Benford & Snow, 2000). Within the public problems marketplace, prognostic framing activity is heavily contested as actors within the campaign can and do often disagree about the proposed solutions (Benford 1993b). When actors offer counterclaims to prognostic frames (counterprognoses), they often put the official claimants on the defensive, or at the very least, force them to elaborate their prognosis more clearly than might otherwise be the case (Benford & Snow, 2000). Counterprognoses typically attempt to redirect public attention from the targets of change identified by the original claimants and simultaneously provide alternative interpretations of the best ways to solve the problem. In most cases (although certainly not all cases), AHT campaigners would agree that a new anti-trafficking law would be an appropriate intervention, although there may be disagreement about the focus or content of any new policy -- for instance, whether a policy should focus on apprehending and prosecuting traffickers, or instead focus on mandatory provision of support services to victims.

The frame dispute over the need for AHT legislation, like the previously described disputes, are based on a victimization ideology. A victimization ideology is a collection of assumptions and beliefs about what it means to be unjustly harmed. Theorists have argued that how we understand victims and the processes by which they

226

become victims is an important element of understanding the construction of a social problem. Leisenring (2006) and Clark (1997) explain that for victims to be worthy of support, or help, their innocence must be universally assured so they cannot be blamed for their situations. To be blameless, victims must exhibit little or no agency or responsibility for their victimization.

When it comes to formulating public policy, upholding this ideology is important. In his study of the AHT campaign, McDonald (2004) suggested that lawmakers do not want ambiguous legal areas. Instead there should be clear distinctions between trafficking victims and other victim types, such as "illegal, economic migrants," even though they may in fact be the same people. Public officials generally want to establish policies whose beneficiaries are deserving and helpless dependents (Schneider & Ingram, 1993) because policies said to address unquestionably deserving victims, like children, are more likely to be passed in the first place and are sheltered from critical evaluation (Feingold, 2010). To encourage policy development, then, it is logical for claimsmakers to emphasize clear, easily recognizable victims, such as women and children, who are more easily portrayed as having no control over their circumstances and requiring state intervention. The victim-images that would not be conducive to the ready development of policy would be those in which their blamelessness is murky, such as "illegal immigrants," whose initial circumstances may have been difficult or deleterious but who exercised free will to make rational choices to break the law and enter the country without documents.

What the following analysis shows is that the prognostic policy frame is predicated on the idea that trafficking victims are blameless and therefore deserving of

227

support. To maintain the integrity of the portrayal of blamelessness, claimsmakers focus on victim characteristics that I discussed in Chapter 5, namely their lack of agency and total coercion into forced prostitution. When these images are challenged, it jeopardizes the political will to pursue policy formation, so the reframers are quick to veil contradictions in their claimsmaking and discourage further scrutiny of their claims.

Identifying the Official Frame, Counterframe, and Reframes

Of the 1,655 articles analyzed for this study, 1,241 (75%) contained prognostic language encouraging the development of new public policy initiatives for combatting human trafficking. I coded statements and claims made by policy makers, victim's advocates, law enforcement officials, U.S. Attorneys, and representatives of federal government agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security (among others) that described policy change as a potential solution to the problem of human trafficking in the United States. To identify articles that contained these frames, I sorted statements by the open codes "suggests new policy," "advocates new policy," "expresses criticism of new policy," "explains objectives of policy," "compares policy to others." At the federal level, this included statements about the TVPA's reauthorization, executive orders issued by the U.S. President, and statements made by members of the House of Representatives and the Senate. At the state level, where the bulk of this frame dispute occurred, I coded articles that contained codes identifying statements made by local policymakers (generally state legislators, governors, and mayors), law enforcement officials, and victim advocates.

The Official Public Policy Frame

In 2005, U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales sent a letter to the governors of all 50 states encouraging them to develop appropriate state-level anti-human trafficking policies. He argued that state resources would be more effective than federal resources at combating human trafficking because it was local law enforcement officials and local social service providers who would be most likely to encounter victims of trafficking and most able to provide them appropriate support. Over time, the range of frame articulators expanded to include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), state officials, religious organizations, and sometimes survivors of trafficking. Since 2005, state legislatures have made over 400 provisions to their state criminal codes and other procedural documents in regards to human trafficking.

To provide a general idea of how prevalent policy frames are in the newspaper data, Figure 7.1 shows the proportion of each year's articles in which a claimsmaker articulated a need for public policy specifically related to human trafficking. In the early 2000s, these claims were primarily made by federal officials including U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft in support of the newly approved TVPA. The figure shows that the push for policy rose quickly in the early 2000s, but then took a sudden dip as the public agenda was drastically re-prioritized in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States. However, after 2001, human trafficking re-emerged as a national public policy priority. The obvious increase in prognostic policy frames is attributable to a top-down mandate from the U.S. Department of Justice. As mentioned earlier, in 2005 Alberto Gonzales led an effort by the Department of Justice to encourage

states to develop their own trafficking policies and provided model legislation from which to work.

Figure 7.1: Percent of articles with policy prognostic frame
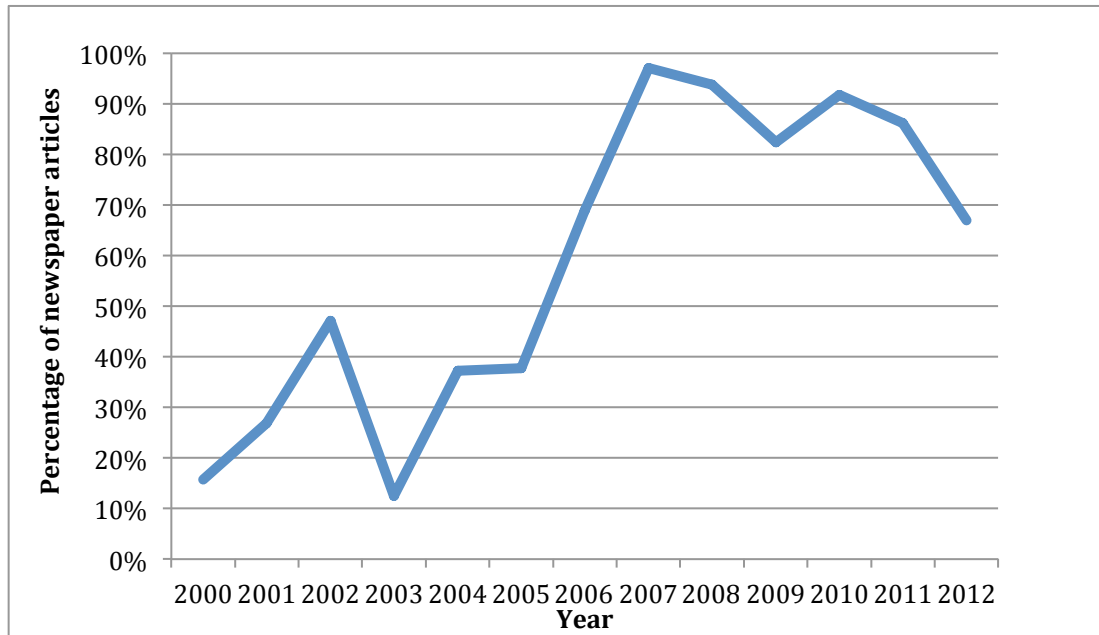
After 2005, there was a surge of activity in the policy-making arena as policy efforts enjoyed seemingly universal support. The following statements made by state-level policymakers and representatives of a major advocacy organization implied a high level of cooperation and collaboration among campaign actors, seemingly without any contention or opposition.

> It had overwhelming support in the [New York] Assembly, which is not surprising. Other than the johns and the pimps, who's out there championing forced prostitution? (Herbert, 2006)
>
> 'There's huge political momentum, because this is a no-brainer issue, said Derek Ellerman, co-founder of the Polaris Project. 'No one is going to stand up and oppose fighting modern-day slavery' (Markon, 2007).
>
> 'I would anticipate it being almost a unanimous vote,' Boswell said of his anticipated approval by the full House. 'Obviously it's a recognition of the

problem that's out there. It speaks well that [Kentucky] is moving forward with this to nip this thing in the bud.'

What is similar across these examples is that they suggest an almost universal willingness to pass policy, a relative absence of opposition, and a general consensus that a policy initiative is an appropriate intervention. Supporting a policy allows policy makers and others to demonstrate to voters that they are on the "right side" of a major social problem and are active in pursuing a solution. In fact, in cases where a state legislator criticized or challenged the need for or content of anti-human trafficking policy (as was the case in New York and California), campaign actors were quick to criticize them for putting politics before protecting the world's most vulnerable people. Campaign protagonists readily pointed out that politicking by legislators put the "movement" at risk because it jeopardized the important work of protecting trafficking victims. In a *The New York Times* editorial, New York Assemblyman Bob Herbert blasted other lawmakers for missing the chance to take important legislative action against human trafficking, referring to them as "The pimps' friends in Albany."

> Neither house of the Legislature gave the other house's bill serious consideration. Last week the Assembly and the Senate adjourned without making any genuine attempt to actually enact a law against sex trafficking. It was a big win for the pimps and the madams. The state's effort to combat trafficking in New York could hardly have been more ineffective.

The excerpts from the data that I have discussed thus far showed have shown that the support for anti-human trafficking policy was very strong, and that most claimsmakers of the campaign were supportive of policy efforts and maligned those were not immediately on board. However, if we delve more deeply into the AHT discourse and systematically examine the "justifications for policy" as articulated by campaign protagonists, it

becomes clear that the policies that were so popular were specific to a particular kind of victim and a particular kind of trafficking.

In response to pressure from the U.S. Attorney General for states to develop locally specific policy, state legislators and other campaign protagonists advanced several frames for justifying new policy. These justifications can best be described in four thematic categories that emerged from the analysis of the media data. Of course, the categories are not mutually exclusive, but each one can be seen to represent the "priority" or the frame that articulators emphasized as the most important. The first, and most often stated justification is that local jurisdictions can be best served by local legislative action. The second justification argued that existing laws, such as those against kidnapping, sexual abuse, and prostitution, are inadequate for prosecuting traffickers and protecting victims. Third, claimsmakers suggested that policy was urgently needed because without it, existing and future victims who are dependent on the campaign for help and are waiting for rescue will continue to wait. The fourth justification for an AHT policy intervention is a familiar one: that is that the local community is "hotbed" or "hub" of human trafficking. The prevalence of the 4 themes for justifying anti-human trafficking policy and their trends over time are depicted in Figure 7.2 below.

Figure 7.2: Justifications given for state-level policy
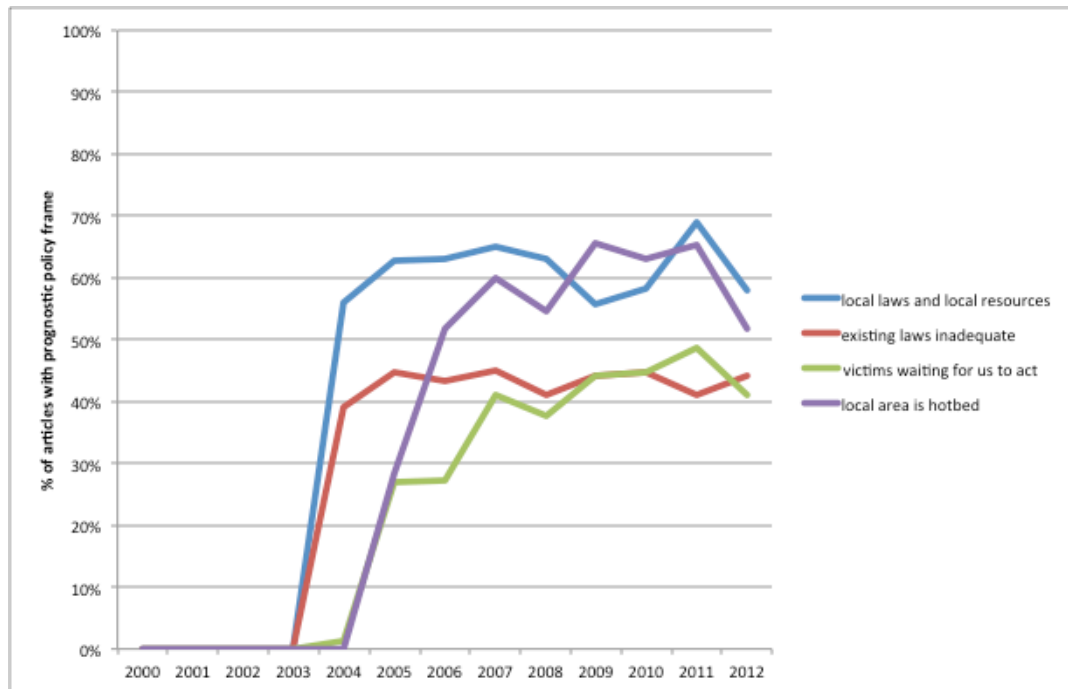
The first two types of policy justification are programmatic and practical; they are

associated with some assessment (loosely interpreted) of the local policy climate. They

both refer to a perceived situation where the existing policy infrastructure is inadequate.

More significant for the construction of the protagonists' collective identity as being the

ones with the necessary expertise to suggest legislation, these frames represent the

protagonists' consciousness (Hunt et al., 1994) or awareness about the problem. In

constructing collective identity, prognostic frames help situate the claimsmakers within

the context of other movement actors by demonstrating their relatively superior

knowledge and awareness of the trafficking problem. In contrast, the second two are

motivational in nature; they use vocabularies of motive (Mills, 1934; Benford 1993b) to

prompt immediate action by appealing to the audience's sense of urgency, immediacy,

and propriety.

The most common justification for a policy response to human trafficking is the assumption that "human trafficking in our communities is best handled by local authorities." While the TVPA had already named human trafficking as a federal offense, the most common justification for state laws was that a state law would empower local law enforcement and social service agents to address a local problem, echoing Gonzales' claim that local law enforcement agencies and social service organizations are best positioned to identify possible victims. As lawmakers expressed in editorial pieces from papers in Kentucky and New York:

> Trafficking in human beings is already against the law in the United States. It's been that way since 2000 when it was made a federal crime. However, investigating and prosecuting violators has been limited primarily to federal officers, which aren't all that plentiful in Kentucky. What Kentucky has needed is a state law mirroring the federal law, which would allow every police officer from sheriff's deputies and city police officers to state troopers to fight a problem that is growing ("Editorial: Kentucky needs human trafficking law," 2007).

> New York badly needs its own anti-trafficking law. Although human trafficking is already a federal crime, the Justice Department lacks the time and resources to prosecute smaller-scale operations, involving, say, a single pimp or victim ("Getting Serious About Sex Trafficking," 2007).

While related to the idea that local laws are needed for a local problem, the second most common justification for policy focused more specifically on the content of existing laws, arguing that existing laws are inadequate for targeting traffickers and protecting victims. These claims suggested that existing laws cannot address the complexities of human trafficking, would have the perverse effect of punishing the victims, or do not carry severe enough punishments for traffickers.

Much of these claims were articulated by policy-oriented advocacy groups, such as The Polaris Project and the Women's Policy Studies Center, which assessed existing

state laws and issued "report cards" that assigned a letter grade reflecting the strength or

appropriateness of each state's anti-human trafficking policy positions. These

organizations often pushed for specific policy contents such as allowing trafficked

victims to sue their traffickers in civil court or leving heavier penalties for those who

traffic children. In 2006, Polaris was working with the Ohio state legislature on model

legislation, arguing that existing laws were inadequate,

> As it stands now, a person who pimps a teenager, for example, can be charged under Ohio law with related crimes: kidnapping, promoting prostitution, or sexual conduct with a minor. But that's putting together a case "piecemeal" and it might miss many of the players in the crime, said Bradley Myles, national program coordinator for The Polaris Project in Washington (Erb, 2006).

The statements below were made by legislators from Connecticut and New York,

respectively, who justified policy initiatives by implying that the existing laws work in

favor of traffickers and at the expense of victims:

> 'What is so frustrating,' said Rep. Sam Gejdenson (D-Conn.), a co-sponsor of the bill, 'is that often the laws we have punish only the victims.' He said the women often end up getting arrested or deported while those who force them into the sex industry go free (Malone, 2000).

> State laws covering crimes like rape and kidnapping are inadequate to address the range of coercive techniques traffickers use to enslave women, men and children in the sex industry or various forms of cheap labor. New York has many such victims. ("Getting Serious About Sex Trafficking," 2007)

Thus far, the excerpts I have included are characterized by a narrow focus on sex

trafficking, sexual slavery, and sex traffickers (pimps), which is not coincidental. In fact,

very few statements were made by public officials or other campaign protagonists to

suggest that existing laws are inadequate to protect victims of labor trafficking or that

existing labor laws did little to keep "employers" from exploiting people in factories,

fields, home, or restaurants. Whenever reference was made to non-sexual forms of

trafficking and the need for legislation, the reference was made in passing or was

secondary to sex trafficking or was alluded to vaguely in terms such as "various forms of

cheap labor," as illustrated in the above quote from a New York legislator.

The third type of justification is a motivational justification, which emphasizes a

sense of immediate urgency for a solution and the idea that it is within our moral

responsibility to take action (Benford, 1993). Unlike the previous two justifications,

which are based on some assessment of existing legislative tools, this justification

invokes the image that a large number of trafficking victims, vulnerable and dependent,

are "waiting for us" to take action on their behalf. Statements in this category evoke

images associated with the most symbolically significant victims: they are vulnerable,

desperate, and helpless. We have seen these victim characterizations before, in Chapter 5

where I demonstrated that victim attributes such as lack of agency and helplessness help

contribute to their "blamelessness" and as the victimization literature suggests, blameless

victims are worthy of help (Dunn 2001; Leisenring, 2006; Loseke, 2001). The

implication of course is that without legislative action, the victims will continue to suffer.

The language of the frames in this category contributes to a sense of urgency or alludes to

a "ticking clock." One state legislator chastised her colleagues for delaying the enactment

of a trafficking law:

> 'Any delay in implementing the law would likely result in more injured,
> exploited and even dead women and children,' said the letter, written by
> state senator Williks.

Similarly, in an opinion piece published in *The St. Paul Pioneer Press*, two county

commissioners from Minnesota urged members of their communities to write to the

governor to demand that he waste no time in signing the anti-human trafficking bill into

law,

> To do any less is to turn our backs on kids who desperately need our help on our own doorsteps (Ortega & McDonough, 2012)

The fourth most common justification for the development of AHT policy was the

alarming claim that states, counties, and even some neighborhoods are "hotbeds of

trafficking." We explored this theme in Chapter 6, where I showed that these claims were

often used as evidence to substantiate claims about the ubiquity of human trafficking.

This collection of claims suggest that certain communities are "hotbeds" of trafficking

because they are located on a major interstate, highways, or have a large tourism

industry, or have other qualities that incline them to trafficking destinations. By implying

that trafficking is major problem for local communities, campaign protagonists can

justify moving forward on new legislation. The following excerpts reflect how

claimsmakers suggest that even small communities in North Texas have integral roles in

trafficking networks. Again, most of these claims bring attention to the plight of victims

who are women and children at the hands of human traffickers.

> Burnam said the new state law was needed because North Texas has become a major center of human trafficking and enforcement of a three-year-old federal anti-trafficking statute did not appear to be a high priority (McGonigle, 2003).

In Chapter 6, I included several excerpts that exhibited this theme in the context of

providing evidence to substantiate diagnostic claims. Here, the quotes below echo the

claim that some communities are "hubs" but in this case they are made in direct reference

to the prognostic need for policy. The following excerpt makes the assertion that children

are being sold for sex in Pennsylvania, which is used to support the claim that

Pennsylania is a hub, and thus there is need for a law.

> But children are being sold for sex in Pennsylvania, said Diane Moyer, legal director of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, and proposed legislation sponsored by Rep. Brian Ellis, R-Lyndora, is a "good first start" to dealing with the problem. 'You don't think of Pennsylvania as a hub for trafficking,' Moyer said. 'Actually, we find it in the rural areas in Pennsylvania, with immigrant victims, with runaway youths. It really can be a huge problem' (Rittmeyer, 2012).

The following quote suggests that without a law, a seemingly small town like Cleburne,

Washington could become a hub precisely because there is no adequate policy in place.

> Smaller towns like Cleburne could start to see more problems as sex traffickers are attracted to lesser-known cities where law enforcement has not yet dealt with an epidemic (Washington, 2012).

The hotbed frame was especially prevalent in media stories about large public events

such as the Superbowl, the Formula One Racing Championship, or national political

conventions. In the context of these events, movement actors would often claim that sex

trafficking would increase in the places where these large public events would take place

and that policymakers had a duty to push through policy initiatives. In the months and

weeks leading up to the 2012 Superbowl, which was held in Indianapolis, Indiana:

> Governor Mitch Daniels specifically called on lawmakers in his state of the state address to tighten the state's law on human trafficking before the Super Bowl. 'We should --- no, we must --- strengthen our laws against the horrid practice of human trafficking,' Daniels said. 'And we must do it in time for the Super Bowl, the kind of event at which the exploitation of young women is rampant in the absence of such a tough law' (Clark, 2012).

The governor's request was granted. The Indiana state legislature convened an

emergency session specifically to address the looming threat of human trafficking, which

was perceived to be exacerbated by the alleged increase in the demand for sex with

women and girls brought about by the Superbowl. Subsequently, an anti-trafficking bill unanimously passed both the Senate and the House and the governor quickly signed it.[12]

Of course, whether or not a jurisdiction is in fact a hotbed of trafficking is an empirical question, albeit one that is difficult to answer. The use of numerical estimates and quantitative assessments of the level and scope of human trafficking, including the number of victims that are assumed to exist in a geographic region, are of paramount importance to the AHT campaign, as they are to any social movement. Chapter 6 concluded that the presentation of a large number was sufficient to garner attention from policymakers and other audiences and was more important than the objective validity of such claims.

The quotations reflecting each of the four dimensions of the AHT movement's official prognostic frame should make clear that many of these statements can fit into more than one of the four categories I describe. In fact, a defining quality of frames is that they can be simultaneously prognostic and motivational or in the terms of Snow and Bedford (1986), they can simultaneously accomplish a multitude of the core framing tasks. As an example, the following excerpt highlights the inadequacy of existing law, questions whether the law will alleviate the plight of helpless child victims, critiques the existing laws lack of from a national anti-human trafficking organization, and makes reference to the immediacy posed by a large public event.

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[12] Claims about "increases in demand" for commercial sex associated with large evens were common in newspaper articles and the claims of campaign actors. A key 2007 IOM study that investigated the so-called "demand effect" found no evidence of an increase in sex trafficking in conjunction with the Superbowl. Further, similar studies conducted in response to claims about the World Cup, Formula One, and other major events consistently found no evidence to support the "demand effect" hypothesis.

In Indiana's case, there was an existing law on the books before preparations for the Super Bowl began. Under the previous law, traffickers who forced adults into sex work or forced labor could be prosecuted, but when it came to child victims, the law only allowed prosecution when the trafficker was the parent, guardian, or custodian of the child forced into prostitution or labor. Indiana's human trafficking provisions earned a ranking of "6" on a scale of 0 to 10 in a 50-state analysis conducted by the Polaris Project (Clark, 2012).

Excerpts like these make it difficult for challengers within the campaign to make critical statements about the justification for policy, or to question the objectives the policies' content should accomplish.

Prognostic framing serves a key function in constructing the collective identities of the claimsmakers themselves as well as other actors. In the context of AHT policy, the protagonists use framing strategies to situate themselves among the other actors in two ways. First, they are saying something about their consciousness, or awareness, of the problem of trafficking. The framing strategies used by articulators of the official frames depict themselves as being knowledgeable of the situation, and well situated to understand what needs to be done. They claim to know the characteristics of the victim population and the limitations of existing policy tools to address their needs. They also appear knowledgeable about the existing bureaucratic and legal obstacles to protecting victims and prosecuting traffickers. To the general (newspaper reading) public, the campaign protagonists appear to be the legitimate experts on human trafficking.

They use prognostic framing not simply to position themselves as the most knowledgeable advocates, but also to situate themselves as the righteous heroes who act upon a moral imperative to solve a pressing social problem and as the ones willing to take a stand on behalf of the powerless victims. They publically portray their individual and

collective actions as manifestations of particular affective or moral dispositions and propensities (Hunt et al., 1994: 196). Further, they typically point to their framings as evidence of their own moral character. Specifically, policy is an opportunity for protagonists to be seen as being on the right side of an issue, of taking action against a major form of exploitation, and as working to protect their community's most vulnerable people (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). An apt example of this is presented below, where a Pennsylvania lawmaker situates his policy proposal in the context of helping innocent and the moral responsibility of lawmakers to take action.

> Ellis said he hopes his legislation 'would deter predators in [Pennsylvania] from putting innocent children in harm's way. No child deserves to be exposed to heinous acts, such as sex trafficking,' he said. 'The children being exposed to this behavior can't protect themselves, and that's why we must provide laws that better protect them. We have a moral responsibility, and the opportunity, to help save these kids' (Clark, 2012).

Counterframes to the Official Policy Prognostic Frame

Prognostic frames, and especially those that involve policy (and hence the marshaling of public resources) are ready targets for criticism. The counterframes associated with trafficking policy typically criticize the assumptions about human trafficking and trafficking victims that are articulated by policymakers and other carriers of the official frame. Further, and more theoretically relevant, counterframes challenge the collective identities that the protagonists have established for themselves and have associated with other actors.

At the most general level, counterframes were advanced that wholly questioned the necessity for new legislation, arguing that little is actually known about trafficking and that the public should be weary of any new legislation that is based on limited

241

information. Hunt et al. (1994) state that a common type of counterframe is simple

denial, where antagonists deny the existence of a problem. While I encountered no

evidence that any claimsmaker completely denied that human trafficking is a major

concern and worthy of intervention, some challengers called for a pause in the rush to

legislation. As a renowned expert on sex workers and the framing of sex workers

asserted,

> 'You have to raise big questions on whether policies are appropriate in the
> first place,' said Ronald Weitzer, a George Washington University
> professor and expert on human trafficking. 'More resources spent on sex
> trafficking means they're lost elsewhere.'

In another example, the American Civil Liberties Union took issue with a municipal

ordinance being considered by the City Council in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The

proposed ordinance would have increased surveillance and mandatory reporting practices

of adult-themed businesses, specifically strip clubs and their employees, in an effort to

combat human trafficking. Council members directly asserted, as if it were common

knowledge, that strip clubs were fronts for sex trafficking and the dancers who worked in

these establishments were likely victims of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. In

response to the Council's deliberations, the ACLU argued in an op-ed piece in *The*

Albuquerque Journal:

> If Albuquerque's strip clubs are indeed havens for human trafficking,
> prostitution and other illegal activity, then it's important the City Council
> craft specific legislation targeting such crimes, because sponsors of the
> proposed 17-page ordinance haven't given any examples for why their
> legislation is needed.

The two quotes above reflect a general skepticism about the need for new anti-trafficking

legislation. However, policy serves several symbolic functions and an empirical need is

not necessarily a reason for policy development. More nuanced counterframes that

emerged in response to the movement's official prognosis frame involve two major criticisms:

1. The policies' focus on sex trafficking and sex trafficking victims is misguided and will have punitive effects on people (women) engaging in voluntary prostitution and will have no benefit for the majority of trafficked victims, who are exploited in non-sexual labor. In other words, the policies' targets are too narrow.

2. The behaviors outlined in much of the new anti-human trafficking legislation are defined with overly vague language, or the proposed policy will allow for the easy expansion in the range of activities that will constitute being a trafficker or a trafficked victim.

Both of these criticisms are direct challenges to the abolitionist conflation of human trafficking with prostitution and the related overly broad interpretation of who constitutes victims (not just prostitutes, but also exotic dancers) which consider any person involved in the facilitation of commercial sex to be "traffickers," including clients or "johns." The counterframes attempt to de-link prostitution and sex trafficking and expand the policy focus to a wider range of types of victimization. In Chapter 3, I outlined empirical works on human trafficking conducted by major research organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Labor Organization (ILO), which found that sex trafficking (defined as forced prostitution) is only one aspect of the much larger system of global labor exploitation. In terms of the AHT campaign it would seem that sex trafficking had become the tail that wags the dog.

In 2006, sex worker advocates criticized a California policy proposal, and others like it, which justified harsher penalties for men who solicit prostitutes by defining them

as "sex traffickers." These types of policies, challengers argued, would do nothing for

victims of non-sex trafficking, which comprise the majority of trafficked victims. Further,

they could perpetuate the discrimination and violence endured by sex workers.

> Such an approach can only fail in every way: it will not halt human
> trafficking, which is in fact chiefly for other kinds of labor and it will do
> nothing to improve the lives of the millions of sex workers who now
> struggle against discrimination and violence that go unpunished (Thukral,
> 2004).

In a similar fashion, an advocate for labor rights criticized the movement's focus on sex

trafficking and offered as a possible solution a wider consideration of workplace

exploitation:

> One of [labor's] leaders, Laura Germino, said the government could
> undermine trafficking by cracking down on all types of abusive workplace
> practices. 'You can't view trafficking in a vacuum,' Germino said. 'If you
> bring an end to sweatshops, you would curb trafficking' ("Human
> trafficking becomes an elusive target in the U.S.," 2005).

The second major counterframe is the notion that any new policies centered

around faulty understandings of trafficking and trafficked victims are a slippery slope,

because they would make it too easy for an expanding range people and behaviors to fall

under the purview of human trafficking. The media data contained several examples of

movement actors who were concerned that a law could possibly widen the net to include

women who were voluntarily engaged in sex work. The following excerpt is

representative of these statements, where the claimsmaker makes a distinction between

victims of trafficking and those voluntarily engaged in sex work.

> The nonprofit Erotic Service Provider Legal Education and Research
> Project - which provides legal advice to those in various erotic industries,
> including prostitution and pornography and works to protect sexual
> privacy - opposes the measure as well, saying: 'If implemented, it will
> prove harmful to the victims of trafficking rather than helping them.

244

Moreover, it expands the definition of trafficking to ensnare innocent people such as those who are voluntarily engaged in sex work' (Abram, 2012).

But it wasn't only the sex industry lobby that was critical of this focus on sex workers. Labor advocates, although barely visible in the media data, were concerned that policies that focused on sex trafficking would be implemented at the expense of all trafficked victims.

Cindy Lious, staff attorney at the Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach, a Northern California-based project that has worked with hundreds of survivors of human trafficking, is advocating for Californians to vote no on this proposition. 'It redefines trafficking in a way that's incorrect, confusing, and terrible. It's highly problematic because it does it at the expense of all trafficking victims – it ignores labor trafficking victims' (Grant, 2012).

One newspaper editor took issue with California's proposal to expand the definition of trafficking to include creating and distributing child pornography, using a legislative research body as an authoritative source:

The nonpartisan Legislative Analyst says Prop. 35 will expand the definition of human trafficking to include 'the creation and distribution of obscene materials depicting minors,' even if the offender had no contact with the minor depicted. Creating such material is, without a doubt, despicable, but there are already laws against it. Selling and creating such images, while shameful, is a crime simply not on the same scale as human trafficking ("Prop. 35: Yes," 2012).

In another example of domain expansion, the ACLU took issue with the expansion of surveillance activities against all registered sex offenders, including those who were convicted of crimes other than human trafficking. In another California proposal, the bill called for mandating all registered sex offenders to regularly submit their Internet access data, including logins and passwords. The ACLU argued that this was too far-reaching:

245

The [ACLU is] challenging only the disclosure requirement, which they claim infringes on their free-speech right to express their views on law reform and other topics anonymously. The measure requires that registrants provide online screen names and information about their Internet service providers to law enforcement - even if their convictions are very old and have nothing to do with trafficking ("Judge temporarily blocks Internet disclosure requirement contained in human trafficking proposition," 2012).

Becker (1980), Best (1990), and Weitzer (2007) have all demonstrated that over time, social movements often turn their sights on other moral atrocities that were not originally targeted but have come to be associated with the foundational problems. As previously noted, frame expansion is a framing strategy used to widen the base of potential movement supporters. Frame expansion allows movement actors to appeal to a greater number of individuals by reaching out to members of the public who are concerned with other problems (domestic violence, sexual assault, teen dating violence, illegal immigration, etc). These additional behaviors or actions may be linked to the established problems, but they are not the same thing. Nevertheless, claimsmakers seeking to employ frame expansion may view them as identical and present the new peripheral issues as "another form of," "essentially the same as," or "the moral equivalent of," the original core problem (Best ,1990; Snow & Benford, 1986). The AHT campaign has targeted not just forced prostitution, but all sectors of the sex industry.

Further evidence of this domain expansion can be found in the growing crackdown on domestic prostitution facilitated by the 2005 TVPA, the requirement that those seeking government funding for their research or interventions regarding trafficking sign an anti-prostitution oath, and the Justice Department's increasing prosecution of producers and distributors of adult pornography under the obscenity clauses embedded in the TVPA (Weitzer 2007: 466; McDonald 2004).

As described in the previous section, framing activity contributes to the construction of the collective identities of other movement actors by addressing both their awareness of the issue and their moral character. In this section, I have highlighted two major counterframes articulated by actors who challenged the assumptions of the movement's primary protagonists. While they are technically part of the same movement, these actors can be considered antagonists because of the challenges they pose to policy development. I discussed the two concerns, policy efficacy and domain expansion, as critiques of the policy frame. However, as the critics advanced these claims, they were also challenging collective identity traits that protagonists have affirmed for themselves.

First, they attempted to characterize the claimsmakers and their organizations as not having the appropriate knowledge about human trafficking, arguing that they did not understand it well enough to make any informed decisions about it. One critic described policymakers and their supporters as having more "heart than head," and as supporting legislation without having a clear idea about the negative implications it could have for victims. Further, she claimed, they were excluding those who were more knowledgeable from any meaningful discussions. She, and others like her, challenged popular claims that existing legislation was inadequate and did little to protect victims:

> She called the bill do-gooder legislation that may do more harm than expected. The state law is good enough, Lee said. 'AB 231 looks good on the surface, but anyone supporting this proposition have likely never seen a victim that was not a prostitute and that's the least of it (Abram, 2012).

Similarly, another policy critic argued that by supporting ambitious legislation against sex trafficking, protagonists would inadvertently impair the campaign's "true" objective of eliminating labor exploitation in all its forms.

> Proposition 35 includes provisions for fines that would benefit service providers, but that would likely mean less money is then available to the victims themselves through restitution, wages owed and damages. Further, Proposition 35 would broaden the definition of trafficking, thus diverting and diluting the key component of human trafficking, which is labor exploitation. (Abram, 2012).

Secondly, counterclaims make attributions about the protagonists' moral character. I described how movement protagonists have used their calls for policy as evidence of their moral character and their willingness to take action to protect vulnerable victims. Counterframes have challenged this identity attribution by suggesting that some protagonists, especially elected officials, use human trafficking policy as a way of advancing their own political positions. In one example, one elected official accused her state's governor of publically endorsing an AHT measure but not giving actual support of any to the other efforts associated with the measure.

> A key author of the legislation, state Rep. Anne Gannon, D-Delray Beach, accused the governor [Jeb Bush] of … using [the law] for political purposes. 'What they're saying is not true. They have not, in fact, supported these programs.' Gannon said she called the governor's office repeatedly to ask when he would sign the bill, to no avail. Neither she nor another key author, state Sen. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Weston, was at the invitation-only event (Silvestrini, 2004).

Other challengers attempted to attribute negative moral characteristics to movement protagonists by making claims about the biases against particular populations that were inherent in proposed policies, especially those that called for heavier penalties and risked domain expansion.

The California Coalition for Women Prisoners paints Prop. 35 as having a 'law enforcement, pro-prison, anti-woman, anti-trans agenda,' and says that 'Human trafficking is a real problem but it cannot be solved by harsher laws and more police crackdowns' (Sforza, 2012).

In one of the more pointed counterframes found in an op-ed piece, a sex worker advocate accused many of the high profile campaign protagonists that were pushing legislators into action as "hijacking" policy to pursue vested interests with no consideration of the campaign's larger goals. These organizations were also implicated in the intentional limiting of meaningful discussions about the "very real" concerns over the safety of sex workers. Interestingly, this claimant made reference to the White-slavery scare of the early 1900s when social crusaders organized against a presumably widespread "social problem" through which innocent women were kidnapped and forced into sexual slavery. By 1912, the epidemic prevalence of white slavery was widely debunked by investigative journalists, leading to the ultimate demise of the crusade, which by that point had lost all credibility.

Moral panic evoked by groups with vested interests has been hijacking government policy around the world, as did the white-slavery crusade of the late 19th century. This not only diverts resources but stifles rational debate about the very real problems regarding the safety, health and welfare of those in the sex industry (Goodyear, 2007).

Reframing: The Official Policy Frame Responds to Challenges

According to Hunt et al. (1994), criticisms of the prognostic policy frame should force antagonists to come up with a clearer plan of action in order to preserve their privileged position in the public problems marketplace. The counterframes against actual policy or policy recommendations directed critical attention to the almost exclusive targeting of sex trafficking at the expense of intervening against other forms of trafficking, and the expressed concern about the probability that vague language could

result in expanding the definition of human trafficking too broadly. Given these counterframes, we would expect that protagonists would respond to challenges by being clearer about how particular policies could translate into a higher number of prosecutions or a greater number of victims identified, or make some reference to how their policies are beneficial for all victims.

Protagonists might have advanced more nuanced prognostic frames, in an attempt to maintain their roles as experts on trafficking and heroes to trafficking victims. However, what emerged is something very different. My analyses of reframes in the media articles revealed an all-out attack on the character and the credibility of those who would criticize or question their claims concerning the development of anti-human trafficking policy.

Instead of responding to counterclaims with more detailed and nuanced plans of action, they advanced reframes that affirmed their own position as the advocates and dismissed the challengers as irrelevant, morally questionable contrarians bent on inhibiting the movement's important policy work. Movement theorists call this type of reframe "malignment" (Hunt et al., 2003), which occurs when movement protagonists respond to challenges by criticizing the ideological or moral bias of the challengers in order to impugn their credibility.

In response to criticisms that the proposed sex-trafficking-focused policies would do little to help those in non-sex trafficking situations, a high profile supporter responded:

> [Chris] Kelly, who ran for state attorney general in 2010, said it's 'borderline laughable' to suggest the measure could hurt efforts to stop trafficking (Melvin, 2012).

Another campaign actor, responding to claims that the laws don't do enough for labor trafficking victims, accused the challenger of putting politics over people:

> Those who want to get in the way of policy and are nit-picking the words we use are endangering our ability to act and are further risking the lives of the women and children being exploited everyday.

The "words we use," is in reference to making distinctions between labor and sex trafficking. Another counterframe directed attention to the difference between forced prostitution and voluntary prostitution and suggested that anti-human-trafficking policy would ensnare innocent "voluntary sex workers." The following quote is an excerpt from an op-ed piece in which the editor dismisses the credibility of the challenger by virtue of her association with and support of sex workers.

> The leading opponent and co-author of the official ballot argument against the proposition is Maxine Doogan, president of the Erotic Service Providers Legal Education and Research Project. Enough said. ("*Mercury News* editorial: Vote yes on Proposition 35 to fight human trafficking," 2012)

This quote implies that if the primary challenge to a policy is from an organization that supports the legalization of prostitution, then there really is no legitimate challenge at all. In Arizona, a similar reframe was advanced in response to the idea that some prostitutes do not want to be rescued and the policy proposals thus far would "entrap" them. In response, a representative of a faith-based AHT organization stated that:

> These people are using the trafficking crisis to promote their own agenda to legalize prostitution. What they are missing is that prostitutes always want to get out of the life, so how can this law hurt them? They don't want to risk being killed. We know that [prostitutes] are victims and not criminals, that has already been established. Again, how can this law hurt them?

In an editorial in a California newspaper, the editor suggested that if the law

unintentionally affects people who are not involved in trafficking per se, but whom are

still involved in dubious behavior, that this is a small price to pay:

> Critics such as Doogan worry that the new definition of human traffickers is so vague that it could include people caught distributing child pornography, even if they had no personal contact with the young victims. We'd prefer the language were tighter, but the possibility that some aggressive prosecutors will overreach and throw the book at some child porn distributor -- well, that's a risk we're somehow willing to take. Vote "yes" on Proposition 35. ("*Mercury News* editorial: Vote yes on Proposition 35 to fight human trafficking," 2012).

One significant counterframe had no corresponding reframe. Social movement

theorists call this "ignoring," which is when movement protagonists make no effort to

respond to a particular criticism and do little to acknowledge that it was even offered.

There was no evidence of campaign protagonists responding to the criticism that AHT

policies would "leave labor victims behind." We saw in Chapter 5 how reframes

eliminated any comparison between the types of trafficking that "typical victims" are

involved in, and we see this repeated vis-à-vis prognostic frames as well: there was no

response to claims about the needs of labor victims. When AHT protagonists fail to

respond to a particular criticism, the concerns for labor trafficking victims essentially

whither on the vine. It would take sustained critical attention to the needs of labor victims

to keep these concerns relevant in the public discourse. This absence is partially

attributable to the clear lack of significant labor interests in the AHT campaign. Tichenor

(2007) noted this absence, as did Ruwanpura and Rai (2004), who expressed concern that

the labor-related elements of trafficking are largely ignored because there are few

organizations that are specifically pushing to attend to the needs of labor victims.

Discussion

In the AHT campaign, oppositional framing tactics have been used to maintain a narrow focus on sex trafficking as the primary problem, as opposed to human trafficking more generally, and on sex trafficking victims primarily or exclusively, to the neglect of other types of victims. Specifically, protagonists have used reframing strategies to veil contradictions in their own frames, justify further intervention, and discourage further scrutiny of their claims. In Chapter 5, we saw campaign antagonists challenge the claims that most victims are sex trafficked and that all prostitutes are forced into the sex trade. In response, protagonist campaigners "keyed" counterframes by re-stating them in ways that were different from what the challengers had originally intended. Protagonists keyed the criticism that "most victims are trafficked into exploitative labor conditions," into a different criticism, "sex trafficking is rare." Protagonists then responded to the "sex trafficking is rare" counterframe by illustrating all the ways sexual exploitation of children is ubiquitous in the United States, thereby eliminating any comparison between labor and sex trafficking. In Chapter 6, we saw how protagonists played fast and loose with their distribution of unreliable statistics and questionable evidence to substantiate their claims of widespread trafficking in the United States and its local cities and communities. When antagonist criticisms were advanced about the reliability of the data their lack of success in uncovering victims, movement actors acknowledged and "embraced" the challenges but then suggested that the lack of reliable "numbers" was both a result of the nature of human trafficking and a justification for further intervention.

This brings us to the idea that the proposed policy initiative, as a framing tool, can be symbolic. It may have technical issues, or be impossible to implement, but the real

value is in the symbolic way it is used (Stolz, 2005, 2007). It is important to understand

the symbolic role of policy, where the substance of the policy is less important than the

audience's (in this case, perhaps, the general public's) acceptance or belief in its efficacy.

In terms of the AHT campaign in the United States, whether or not legislation is logical,

enforceable, or even implemented, may be less important than the fact that the legislation

has been introduced, debated, or enacted (Edelman, 1964; Stolz, 2007).

Chapter 8 Conclusion

This dissertation has described and documented the various reframing strategies used by dominant actors of the U.S. anti-human trafficking (AHT) campaign in their responses to a series challenges made to their claims. By unpacking three major frame disputes, this study has demonstrated the various combinations of reframing strategies used to protect the credibility of both the campaign claimsmakers and their claims. By using the strategies in combination with each other, the campaign has worked to control damage to their claims by: 1) Veiling and obscuring contradictions in their claims; 2) Protecting their claims from further scrutiny; and 3) Justifying the continuation of campaign efforts and activities.

How has the U.S. AHT campaign used oppositional framing strategies in response to ongoing challenges against their claims and credibility? To answer, I conducted a qualitative frame analysis of the human trafficking discourse in the United States, as it has appeared in 12 years of newspaper articles, and on this basis identified three major frame disputes. Each frame dispute, which is a disagreement over interpretations of reality, is an oppositional framing process with three stages. The first stage is the articulation of the "official" frame by campaign actors, which establishes a particular social condition as harmful and identifies possible causes and solutions (Snow & Benford, 1988). The second stage is the formulation of a counterframe, through which other campaign actors challenge or criticize the official claims and often offer their own alternative interpretation of reality (Benford & Hunt, 2003). The third stage is the presentation of a reframe, through which actors respond to the counterframes posed by

challengers in ways intended to ward off, contain, limit, or reverse potential damage to the movement's previous claims or attributes(Benford & Hunt, 2003: 169).

Since the 1990s, the abolitionist segment of the campaign has exercised symbolic control (Bourdieu, 1977) over the discourse (Stolz, 2005) and has effectively diagnosed human trafficking as the result of the market for commercial sex and the sex industry that arises to meet this demand, as well as a culture of impunity that allows traffickers to sexually exploit women and girls without fear of punishment. Their prognosis, or solution, has been to encourage the development of legislative tools that mandate harsher punishments for traffickers, expanded "awareness training" for law enforcement officials and other first responders, and broadened definitions of victims and traffickers. In this construction, little to no attention is given to non-sexual forms of trafficking and this excludes them from being considered in the development of appropriate solutions.

The legitimacy that underpins the AHT campaign is drawn from an ideology of victimization (Best, 1997; Holstein & Miller, 1997) -- a collection of assumptions about the nature of victimization and the characteristics that are indicative of victimhood. In social movements that are associated with a victimization ideology, movement activists work to identify large numbers of people who are being harmed by prejudice and discrimination (or in more politicized language by oppression and exploitation), describe the processes of their victimization, and advocate for reforms to correct the inequities (Best 1997: 10). Briefly, the ideological assumptions are: victimization is widespread, victimization is often unrecognized, we must be taught to recognize victimization, victimization is consequential, and claims of victimization must not be challenged. All of

these tenets appear within the "official" frames and are again invoked in the reframes of the AHT campaign, as the previous chapters have shown.

Drawing from this ideology, the campaign's rhetorical foundation is comprised of claims about human trafficking victims. The frames expressed by claimsmakers draw on "formula narratives" and "stock characters" (Loseke, 2001), of which victims are particularly important as emotion-evoking representations of the social problem of human trafficking. "Because the behavioral expression of sympathy is help, this is the strategic emotion for manipulation, and victims are the tool at hand" (Dunn, 2004: 239).[13]

However, the abolitionist interpretation of human trafficking victimization has been repeatedly challenged by antagonist claimsmakers. In the first frame dispute (Chapter 5), counterframers challenged the abolitionist interpretation of "typical" trafficking victims and their experiences by arguing that most victims are trafficked into non-sexual labor markets and that some who do work in the sex industry do so consensually and willingly and do not consider themselves victims. In the second counterframe (Chapter 6), antagonists questioned the empirical credibility of claims about the quantitative prevalence of trafficking by highlighting the inaccuracy and weaknesses of the campaign's numbers, and directing attention to the gap between the

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[13] In addition to the discursive efforts of the campaign, it is also important to consider the effects of the hundreds of millions of dollars in grants and contracts that have been distributed by the U.S. federal government to support local governments, law enforcement agencies, local social service providers, and religious organizations in their efforts to identify and service human trafficking victims and to bring their traffickers to justice. The AHT campaign supports a victim industry (Best, 1997), which is a set of societal arrangements that have institutionalized the ideology of victimization and work to identify large numbers of victims and address their needs. These institutions include the law, law enforcement agencies, the courts, therapists, social workers, and other experts. In the case of the U.S. AHT campaign, the abolitionist constituency and the victim industry dovetail nicely to create somewhat of an "anti-trafficking establishment."

very large estimates provided by claimsmakers and the comparatively minuscule number of victims that had been identified even though hundreds of millions of dollars in contracts and grants had been distributed for that purpose. In the third dispute (Chapter 7), they challenged the need for local-level anti-human trafficking policy by questioning the scope of laws and the obvious ways in which they prioritize the plight of sex trafficking victims over that of labor trafficking victims, and thus institutionalize a hierarchy of victims. Through the analysis of the three major frame disputes, I have shown that dominant campaign actors have used reframing strategies such as keying, embracing, ignoring, and malignment to veil contradictions in their claims, insulate their claims from further scrutiny, and to justify their interventions.

Reframing Strategies and "Damage Control Functions"

The primary contribution of this dissertation is an exposition of how specific reframing strategies can be used in concert to accomplish discursive tasks more broadly. We know that the purpose of reframes is to "ward off, contain, limit, or reverse potential damage" (Benford & Hunt, 2003: 169) to the credibility of the campaign's previous claims. The theoretical literature in the fields of social problems and social movements has provided the conceptual classification of reframing strategies, such as keying, ignoring, embracing, and malignment (Hunt et al., 1994). Research in this area has illuminated the purpose of reframing and its role in frame disputes (Benford, 1993).

To contribute to the further conceptual development of reframing strategies, this analysis shows that they can be used in concert to accomplish three major discursive damage control functions: 1) to veil contradictions and inconsistencies in their claims, 2) to insulate their claims from further scrutiny, and 3) to justify the ongoing efforts and

258

activities of the campaign. The following paragraphs describe the specific reframing techniques that were used for each damage control function.

To veil contradictions and inconsistencies in their claims.

Framing activity that appears to contain dissonant elements or seems to contradict earlier movement claims can negatively influence the movement's ability to mobilize constituents and (Benford 1993: 692) and negatively impact the resonance of their messages. To effectively obscure contradictions or inconsistencies, campaign actors used keying and malignment in response to criticisms that called attention to them. Keying occurs when movement participants restate claims made by antagonists in such a way as to give them new meanings that subvert or stand in opposition to the ones originally conveyed. In other words, dominant campaign actors re-state or re-phrase the counterframe into a different criticism and subsequently respond to this new, "keyed" criticism as if were the original criticism. It is like "putting words into the mouths" of campaign challengers. Two examples illustrate this point.

In Chapter 5, I described how campaign claimsmakers most often described human trafficking victims as being involved in the sex trade, or described them as sex slaves. Challengers took issue with the assertion that most trafficking victims are involved in sex trafficking and argued that the typical trafficking victim was more likely to be exploited in a non-sex situation. In response, the campaign keyed this criticism into a new one: "Sex trafficking is rare." This was not the original criticism, but it was the criticism that was "put into the mouths" of movement challengers. The criticism

originally offered by the challengers did not suggest that sex trafficking is rare but rather that *labor trafficking is more common than sex trafficking*. The transformed criticism, sex trafficking is rare, does not address the perceived discrepancy between the portrayals of typical human trafficking victims as involved in labor trafficking instead of sex trafficking. This may appear to be a minor difference but it is an important discursive shift because it eliminates the comparison between sex trafficking and labor trafficking. To this new "keyed" criticism, campaign actors responded by describing the "evidence" that sex trafficking was not rare, but rather a common occurrence. To compound the problem, the data they used to demonstrate the commonality of human trafficking measured the number of runaway children in the United States, a situation which may be linked to human trafficking but is certainly not equivalent to it. Nor did they compare it to the estimates of labor trafficking victims. In fact, they made no comparison to labor trafficking whatsoever, thereby precluding discussions of non-sex trafficking.

In concert with keying, campaign actors used malignment to discredit the collective character of the challengers who brought attention to perhaps misguided focus on sex trafficking. In several pointed editorials, members of faith-based organizations and other groups lambasted challengers who suggested that "sex trafficking is rare," again referring to the keyed challenge. Members of these groups disparaged the challengers as not caring about children and being emotionally distanced from the problem, and suggested that they would likely have another opinion if they experienced the victimization of their own children. Again, when campaign actors maligned the challengers, they avoided making a comparison between sex and labor trafficking.

To insulate campaign claims from further scrutiny

Social movements and reform campaigns are most successful when they portray victims that are "unambiguously innocent" and in no way contribute to their own victimization. In Chapter 4, I described how challengers took issue with the campaign's interpretation that all prostitutes are forced into the sex trade and are therefore, victims of human trafficking. Challengers, in their counterframes, argued that "not all prostitutes are forced" and to assume so "minimizes the agency and decision making of consenting sex workers." In response, campaign actors maligned the challengers by accusing them of "blaming the victim," and argued that challengers, by emphasizing choice and consent, were suggesting that victims participated in and contributed to their own victimization. This reframe attempted to insulate their claims from further scrutiny by vilifying challengers with a "rhetorical trump" card (Best, 1997), and emphasizing that claims of victimization must not be challenged. They argued that by challenging claims of victimization, or to suggest that prostitutes are not victims, is likely to re-victimize the already traumatized individuals and thus made these types of challenges off-limits.

Another strategy for using malignment to keep future criticisms at a distance happened when some campaign claimsmakers discredited members of the sex industry who were taking a political stand against the campaign. In one clear example, a lawyer who represented sex workers and erotic dancers argued that to assume that all prostitutes are coerced could have negative impacts on consenting sex workers. She argued that any policies or interventions that were based on this assumption were problematic. In response, several campaign actors made statements suggesting that the only people to be critical of AHT efforts would be those who stood to profit from trafficking activities, such as pimps, traffickers, and other members of the "pro-prostitution mafia." As one

261

writer said, "The only person who is against [these efforts] is a lawyer for the Sex Workers Project. Enough said." The AHT vilified those who criticized the abolitionist interpretation that all prostitutes are victims of human trafficking by saying they are either blaming the victim or possibly profiting from the sex trade, making difficult for others to lodge legitimate criticisms of the campaign's claims.

In addition to malignment, campaign actors used keying to help keep future challenges "off limits." In response to the counterframe, "not all prostitutes are forced," campaign actors asserted that sexually exploited children cannot consent to prostitution because they are under 18 and by definition, cannot voluntarily consent to commercial sexual activity. Actors replaced the conceptual category of "prostitute," which encompasses sex workers of all ages, many or most of whom are adults, with the conceptual category of "sexually exploited children," who are below a certain age. Replacing prostitutes with children is a strategic move because with children, consent and choice are moot points; children cannot consent so, by definition, if they end up in commercial sex situations its is because they were forced into it. Campaign challengers have suggested that it was problematic to assume that sex trafficking and prostitution were the same thing because some prostitutes did engage in sex work consensually; but protagonists responded by saying "children cannot consent." By keying the counterframe in this way, campaign actors made consent an irrelevant point, and not one that could be used in a legitimate criticism.

A victimization ideology asserts that claims of victimization must not be challenged. A victim's claim of harm, or another's claims of harm on a victim's behalf, must not be scrutinized because to do so is akin to "re-traumatizing" or "blaming" the

victim (Best, 1997). Campaign actors used malignment and keying to reframe challenges in ways that highlighted the presumed inappropriateness of criticizing claims of victimization. In sum, campaign actors made further criticism of campaign claims about the experiences of human trafficking victims "off-limits" by discrediting the character of the challengers.

To justify further intervention.

A key element of the victimization ideology is that victimization is consequential: that is even a single, brief incident can have consequences that extend throughout a person's life. These consequences can be psychological: victims experience anxiety, doubt, or fear. The consequences can also be physical in that they can be physically abused, contract HIV, etc. In any case, the idea of victimization being consequential invites the "medicalization of victimization" since physicians and therapists presumably have the appropriate knowledge and skills for treating these problems (Best, 1997:11). The victimization ideology is supported by what Best (1997: 9) calls the victimization industry, which is a set of social arrangements that supports the identification of large numbers of victims. Since victimization is presumed to be widespread, but at the same time hidden, the victim industry does the work of identifying the victims and offering them appropriate interventions. As I described in Chapter 1, the federal government has channeled hundreds of millions of dollars to organizations outside and inside the United States. A prime directive for these organizations was to identify human trafficking victims. By 2012, relatively few victims had been identified. The campaign used reframing to justify further activities in spite of minimal evidence that these efforts had been effective.

Chapter 6 explored the oppositional claimsmaking activities around the campaign's use of quantitative estimates of human trafficking and other forms of evidence to substantiate their claims about the "widespread" and "ubiquitous" nature of human trafficking. When challenged, they employed a combination of embracing and keying to the effect of suggesting that low numbers of identified victims and low numbers of prosecutions are evidence that further action must be taken to uncover human trafficking as opposed to the suggestion that human trafficking is not as prevalent as previously claimed. Campaign actors responded to challengers by embracing their criticisms, saying that "Yes, the numbers are problematic," but instead of these numbers indicating a low prevalence of trafficking, they indicate its "hidden nature" and the need to "look harder" to find victims. The ultimate effect of these reframing techniques allowed campaigners to have it both ways: They could tout large numbers of victims as a way of substantiating their claims about human trafficking and justifying their receipt of resources while simultaneously suggesting that numerical indicators are not appropriate to measure either the scope of the problem or the success of the campaign.

Chapter 7 focused on disagreements about the need for local-level policy development. At the outset, there seemed to be universal support for taking action to punish traffickers and protect victims. Yet, when challengers argued that policies based on stereotypical victim-images ran the risk of leaving out certain categories of victims such as migrant workers in forced labor, or ensnaring people who had done nothing wrong or were involved in non-trafficking crimes such as child pornography, claimsmakers maligned the claimsmakers as "playing politics." If other non-human trafficking crimes were unintentionally caught up in AHT activity, it was an unavoidable

264

but acceptable side effect. Campaign actors dismissed challenges by suggesting that any

unanticipated outcomes were an acceptable side effect of fighting human trafficking.

Victimization Discourse and Damage Control

Generally, the AHT campaign endorses and perpetuates public portrayals of

human trafficking victims that emphasize their helplessness and vulnerability to coercion

that is successful in constructing a class of sympathy-worthy individuals and effectively

mobilizes lawmakers and the general public into action (Clark, 1997). However, the

portrayals can also diminish the public's perception of trafficked individuals' ability to

control their own lives (Holstein & Miller, 1997). The interpretations of trafficking

victims that have been advanced in abolitionist discourse emphasize the absence of

consent on the part of victims and instead assume a uniformity in coercion and force,

leaving no conceptual or analytical space to explore consent or resistance.

The substantive significance of such a social construction is far-reaching. The

enduring dichotomization of agency and victimization is problematic because it can have

far-reaching implications on three levels. First, at the societal level, this dichotomization

is integrated into and reifies a general belief system that is characterized by a hierarchy of

victims, where some victims are more important than others – a hierarchy supported by

key social institutions. As a result, the belief system becomes "common sense," which is

an unquestioned normative standard where the primacy of the dichotomization is a given,

or a "natural" arrangement, further legitimizing any interventions taken by institutions

based on this understanding. As a society, we only recognize the most helpless and

"blameless" as worthy. By limiting our perceptions of victimization to an ideal type, we allow ourselves to dismiss or not recognize more nuanced forms of victimization.

Second, at the interpersonal level, the way we interact and confer victimization status is based on this dichotomous image. We question the role the "alleged victim" had in her own harm and thus, the responsibility she holds in perpetuating her problematic circumstances. Before conferring this status we expect harmed individuals to explicitly or implicitly prove themselves by demonstrating their blamelessness. We dismiss the statements and testimony of sex workers when they say they chose to sell sex when we say they mistakenly believe they had some agency because they are unable to see their own victimization. Their lack of agency is so insidious, that they were deluded into thinking that they had agency.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, the responses of other people may affect people's perceptions of themselves in such a way as to become a self-fulfilling prophecy: they are told they have no agency so they come to see themselves in such terms, and as a result, make no further effort to improve their circumstances or adopt a self-identity that allows for purposive action or agency. The label of "victim" becomes internalized in such a way that they actually become powerless. An ideology that dichotomizes agency and victimization and is supported by interpersonal interactions can be internalized by individuals in a way that limits their ability to take control over their lives. As a result, sex-trafficked individuals will perceive themselves as helpless victims who are without agency and completely dependent on others for help and perhaps exploited workers from other industries will not consider their experiences a form of victimization at all. Perhaps, as Hills (1977: 426) writes, "herein lies the real tragedy of the mystification of

social deviance" where people will become to understand themselves as victims as fail to recognize the agency and will that they have thus far been exercising.

Existing cultural narratives about victims exist as resources from which trafficked individuals can draw upon in their attempts to understand themselves, either as a deserving victim or as someone unworthy of support and sympathy. In her research on identity construction in battered women, Leisenring (2006: 314) found that the tension between victimization and agency inherent in victimization discourses influences battered women's identity claims and contributes to their struggles with self-construction and representation. Trafficked individuals who do not fit the stereotypical profile, such as workers being exploited in non-sex industries, also draw from the cultural narratives about agency to understand themselves as "deserving" of the harm that has come to them since they are not completely helpless. Individuals involved in other forms of trafficking may never consider themselves unjustly harmed, but rather think that they "got what they deserved."

The AHT campaign, as it operates in the United States, is a form of moralizing. Inherent in the claims about trafficking victims, their experiences, and how best to serve them are claims that these victims are only worthy of sympathy by virtue of being blameless. Biased portrayals of the problem have encouraged action to be taken against the abuses of "sexual slavery" while leaving in place policies that punish and fail to protect abused and exploited non-sexual laborers. In fact, the TVPA "further cements the division between victims deemed deserving of sympathy and support and those eligible only for detention and deportation … 'Innocent victims,' in other words, are much more

likely to be depicted as objects of exchange than as exploited workers. As such, they are not even guilty of ambition" (Chapkis, 2005: 59- 60).

As described in Chapter 6, efforts by non-governmental organizations have assisted relatively few victims compared to estimates of the vast numbers of trafficked victims. Even so, many (Soderlund, 2005; McDonald, 2004; Weitzer, 2007) suggest that this assistance is problematic because in many cases victims will often disappear and opt to return to the life from which they were "rescued." Further, the criminal prosecution of traffickers has implicated very few cases and the protections and benefits associated with the T-Visa, such as permanent residency, have been restricted to an "infinitesimal" proportion of the estimated number of victims (McDonald, 2004: 168).

However, the campaign's effectiveness of the AHT campaign is hardly the most important consideration for many claimsmakers. The campaign has managed to have its norms and value orientations designated as the official policies of the U.S. government, nationally and in most local jurisdictions. Thus it perpetuates their "moral monopoly," which is a "reality-constricting" arrangement where the dominant group's interpretations of social life are the only "real, proper, and natural ways of acting, thinking, and feeling and that they constitute the full extent of human freedom" (Hills, 1977: 423). Part of the campaign's power comes from its ability to braid together U.S. society's deep-seated beliefs about victimization, gender, migration, and sexuality. The campaign serves as a focus for "coalescing feminist energies regarding violence, abuse, domination, sexual exploitation, discrimination, and gender inequality, all in one (McDonald, 2004: 169). Both liberals and conservatives can find it easy to support the AHT campaign and even easier for them to claim that through it they are doing something important for women.

Resolving the victim-agent dichotomy

Anti-trafficking rhetoric makes a priori assumptions about women's victimization. Nineteenth century conceits about women's purity and innate sexual innocence have been revived in this effort to combat the exploitation of women (Doezema, 2005). This women-as-victim motif can result in punitive legislation passed off in the guise of protecting women (Saunders & Soderlund, 2008: 17). For victims to be effective symbols of a social problem and worthy (deserving) targets of campaign intervention, they must not be responsible for or contribute to, their own victimization (Best, 1997; Dunn, 2004), so that they can be considered blameless (Clark, 1997). The campaign took great efforts to reformulate the stock character of prostitute from a criminal or nuisance to a victim. By highlighting their lack of agency, their coercion into the sex trade, their desire to leave the profession and their likelihood of being abused or murdered, the campaign has created a situation where prostitutes, willing and unwilling, are the primary victims and necessary focus for anti-human trafficking intervention. Since victims are defined as those who are in need of help (by the state, by NGOs, or police), they are not seen as political subjects, but rather as objects of intervention. Victims cannot engage in the realm of the political, but instead depend on others to act on their behalf (Scheider & Ingram, 1993; Holstein & Miller, 1997; Doezema, 2005).

However, this re-formulation was not extended to other trafficked individuals, migrant workers for instance. Their decisions to cross borders to find work were not attributed to the political and economic conditions that may have left them little to no choice, but were instead seen as rational decisions that reflected an exercise of their free will. Therefore, they are not considered blameless. While critics and challengers to the

campaign have decried the lack of agency attributed to people involved in sex trafficking and the lack of victimization attributed to people involved in labor trafficking, it is not enough to recognize agency among sex- trafficked individuals, nor is it enough to recognize coercion and victimization among objects of forced labor. Martha Mahoney (1994), a sociologist of gender, has succinctly described this definitional dilemma:

> In our society, agency and victimization are each known by the absence of the other; you are an agent if you are not a victim, and you are a victim if you are in no way an agent. In this concept, agency does not mean acting for oneself under conditions of oppression; it means being without oppression, either having ended oppression or never having experienced it at all. This all-agent or all-victim conceptual dichotomy will not be easy to escape or transform.

For a more nuanced and accurate diagnosis and prognosis of human trafficking, we need to revisit the ideology of victimization and problematize the relationship between agency and coercion. Victim discourses need to be broadened to recognize trafficked individuals' experiences as both victims and as agents, as individuals who may be hurt, traumatized, or in need of assistance, but who can also resist, fight back, and endure in whatever ways they are able.

Legal scholar Elizabeth Schneider argues, that our societal understanding of agency is also limited and problematic. Traditional views of agency are based on notions of individual choice and responsibility, individual will and action: "Perceptions of a world composed of atomized individuals, acting alone, unconstrained by social forces, unmediated by social structures and systematic hardship. Women's victimization and agency are easily understood to exist as the absence of the other - as if one must be either pure victim or pure agent…" This dichotomous conceptualization does not reflect the nuance in victimization experiences, where victimization and agency can occur

simultaneously and in changing degrees relative to each other. For example, a trafficked person can be forcibly stolen from his/her school, restrained in a truck, and taken to another location where he/she will be forced into labor or clear-cut sexual servitude. In this situation, the person never had any agency and their coercion was complete. However, it is not always that simple. A trafficked individual could express personal agency in their willingness to take a calculated risk and move to another country for economic gain, but could subsequently lose that agency when it turns out their labor is unpaid and instead compelled through force and coercion. In this case, the person started with some agency and then subsequently lost it through the trafficking process. It is incomplete to assume that a trafficked individual has a static and consistent "lack of agency," because such a characterization overlooks the agency, in the form of resistance perhaps, the person may have expressed at the beginning and at other points during their trafficking experience.

These nuances are lacking in the public discourse on human trafficking in the United States. Without meaningful consideration of the complexities associated with human trafficking and victimization, our interventions will continue to fall flat and squander valuable resources. By relying on such an unarticulated discourse, the campaign perpetuates the belief that sex workers are passive figures, with no agency at all, who need the support of the campaign, further legitimizing their anti-prostitution agenda. Meanwhile, these women who may not consider themselves victims are faced with a victimization industry that assumes they have no real understanding of their circumstances, while other trafficked individuals are served by no victimization industry

at all. This perpetuates a discriminatory mechanism for serving some victims and neglecting others who are equally or more in need of support or remediation.

Thus far, I have been focusing on how the construction of victimization intersects with women and girls, but the negative implications of victimization and agency claims are problematic are particularly profound in the area of gender more broadly. This dissertation has clearly shown how gender is used as an "inclusion criterion" for victimization. "Victims claims for women trigger deep stereotypical assumptions of passivity, purity, and protectiveness" (Schneider, 1993: 75), because their gendered plight evokes paternalistic responses and allows interveners to be the saviors of helpless victims. However, gender is also used as an "exclusion criteria" in that it can serve as a demarcation between innocent victims and everyone else. Men, and to a lesser extent boys, are largely absent from the discourse on human trafficking and victimization, likely because they are a "harder sell" as innocent victims to target audiences. The social problems literature is in agreement that for a social problem to gain traction, a class of unambiguously innocent injured persons must be a central component of claimsmaking. In other words, the victim must in no way be perceived, or be able to be perceived, as contributing to their own victimization. McDonald (2004) rightly said that the global AHT campaign has been capitalizing on one of the most powerful symbols to exist: the image of innocent women and girls being dragged away from home to satiate the unspeakable desires of wanton men. The issue, as I have suggested throughout this dissertation, is that this image does not coincide with what human trafficking victims actually experience. This discrepancy has major implications for men.

Aronowitz identified the consequences of this discrepancy when she described how policymakers conflated human trafficking with other types of irregular migration such as smuggling by policymakers. She recognizes that consent is a problematic way to evaluate victimization for human trafficking victims because they may have willingly entered into a situation to illegally enter a country, but still end up in exploitative conditions – a theoretically common occurrence regularly recognized by other scholars (Kelly & Reagin, 2001; Demleitner, 2001). She argues that consent of the victims to willingly leave their home countries and illegally enter the destination country diffuses the issue of victimization (Aronowitz, 2004: 13), and thus, it is not uncommon for immigration and law enforcement officials to view these trafficked people as willing participants and accomplices in smuggling schemes and illegal immigration.

This bias is compounded for men, who are not considered sympathetic victims because of their gender and because men who willfully and illegally cross the border have been heavily criminalized, both literally and figuratively, in the United States over the last three decades. In her analysis of the Palermo Protocol and Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) proceedings, Stolz (2005, 2007) found that claimsmakers, as a way to obtain support from policymakers, took painstaking efforts to distinguish "deserving" human trafficking victims from "undeserving" illegal immigrants by highlighting and emphasizing the coercion and lack of agency on the part of human trafficking victims. The problem, of course, is that this is a false dichotomy based on meanings associated with gender and victimization.

Limitations of the current study and avenues for further research

The data used in this study, newspaper articles, can be easily thought of as the "official discourse" on human trafficking and thus, have inherent bias. As I have presented it in this dissertation, the anti-human trafficking discourse as mediated through major newspaper outlets in the United States represents the "official" discourse in that it is primarily based on the statements of government officials and other actors whose claims are aligned with government officials. Best (1990) calls these "insider" claimsmakers because they are those that have the greatest access to both the polity (or they are the polity) and the media. Alternatively, the "outsider" claimsmakers are those who have less access to the polity and the media, usually because their interpretive claims are not aligned with the official discourse. Another way to think about the official discourse is that it is comprised of the "owners" (Gusfeld, 1981) of the social problem of human trafficking. The owners are considered by the public to be the legitimate and authoritative sources of information about the problem and the most appropriate solution. When journalists seek information about what human trafficking is, how it is caused, and information about the most promising solutions, they seek the most credible sources – the insider claimsmakers.

It is common for government officials, social service providers, and any other major claimsmaker to use the media not only to distribute their claims, but also to justify their own existence – especially in the face of challenges that criticize the ongoing and perhaps unjustified use of resources. They have to "justify their existence," so they call press-conferences and use their access to the media as way to influence the information and public discourse. It is precisely these actions that make up the bulk of human

trafficking media coverage. That being said, the official discourse is the most appropriate data source for this study because it serves as a comprehensive record of claimsmaking activities of the dominant campaign actors, who are the most influential and "credible" contributors to the ongoing discussion.

Much of the dissenting voices in trafficking discourses are likely found in other media outlets, like websites, blogs, and of course, social media. However, as Gamson (1985) suggested, in any collective effort, different communication strategies are associated with different audiences. As I was collecting data, I noted that stronger criticisms of the U.S. AHT campaign came from publications published outside the United States, such as *The Guardian*, a London-based publication. Further, interviews with sex workers' rights organizers and labor rights organizers were published in newsletters and smaller-scale magazines that were not likely to reach the magnitude of circulation of that of major newspaper corporations.

Avenues for future research

This study used an interpretive orientation, which helped to uncover the ways that oppositional framing is used to disadvantage and exclude individuals, by way of hegemony, racism, sexism and other systems of unequal power relations, from the public discourse (Creswell, 2007). Interpretive scholarship has a lot to offer the human trafficking research agenda. While those with a more positivist orientation can serve a valuable purpose by quantifying the prevalence of human trafficking with increasingly reliable data and centralized operationalizations, interpretive scholars can benefit

scholarship and policy-making by continuing to question the assumptions that are often taken for granted and work to uncover and address hidden biases.

This study did not explore the social construction of the human trafficker. A key tenet of the victimization ideology is that there is a clear and unambiguous relationship between the trafficker and the victim. The trafficker, like the victim, is a stock character who plays an important role in the AHT narrative. The limitless cruelty attributed to the traffickers is one of the factors that motivates policymakers to act in order to "bring them to justice." The trafficker is constructed in opposition to the victim -- that is, his identity as the greed-driven monster who profits off the misery of others is constructed in opposition to the blameless and innocent female victim. A critical analysis could examine how the framing of the trafficker as an individual who must be apprehended diverts attention from the structural causes of human trafficking, such as economic systems that rely on the exploitation of cheap labor. With sex trafficking, it's easy to describe (in general terms at least), who the bad guys are: not just the pimp but also the johns who purchase commercial sex. But in labor trafficking, the victims and victimizers are less clear. Recognizing other forms of trafficking and traffickers is often avoided because this could lead to uncomfortable conversations about our use of labor that could easily point to the conclusion that low-waged migrant labor is permitted, and sought by employers, precisely because it can be easily exploited, particularly when workers are undocumented (Rai & Ruwnapura, 2004). As Susan Tiano (2012a: 8) writes, "[T]he U.S. public is so accustomed to enjoying a steady stream of migrant labor to staff their fields, farms and households that they have no need to assume that the machinations of human traffickers would be required to ensure a sufficient supply of suitable migrant labor power."

Considering the content of official frames, counterframes, and reframes, it is clear that the messages inherent in the counterframes more closely resemble the empirical record. A substantial and growing number of empirical studies have shown that most trafficking is non-sexual and that consent was largely "not totally absent" for many individuals who were exploited in coercive labor situations. These two findings were the basis for much of the counterframing activity and directly challenged the official frames, but were largely dismissed or discredited through reframing techniques that worked to mystify the specifics of human trafficking.

Media images and reports that focus primarily on sex trafficking need to be questioned to uncover the implicit biases in the construction of victimization that have significant implications for the perpetuation of stereotypical beliefs and assumptions about victims and their worthiness, in how we interpersonally process individuals through moralizing processes to assess their blamelessness, and how victims can internalize these implicit biases in constructing their own identities. A shift in focus away from sex work is important to ensure that all types of unsafe working conditions are addressed.

A labor rights perspective, which focuses on the human rights of workers, incorporates all of these elements to broaden the approach to trafficking. The existence, and adequate enforcement, of laws guaranteeing workers' rights to organize, work in a safe environment and to be paid at or above a minimum wage level is vital to project workers from enslavement and other workplace abuses. Protective legislation must be in place for all workers, including sex workers (Murphy-Aguilar & Tiano, 2012: 247). By including all forms of labor, and by defining sex work as an economic activity that is often used in combination with other types of work (Mellon, 1999), migrants and sex

workers will not be stigmatized and marginalized due to the associations of being labeled

as a prostitute (Desyllas, 2007). This is important for individuals involved in trafficking,

but also for the campaign writ large. As Blumer (1971: 301) suggests, the process of

collective definition determines the career and fate of social problems, from the initial

point of their appearance to whatever may be the terminal point in their course (Blumer

1971: 301).

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