Ethnography

Interest, politics and drift in policy implementation: The case of trafficking prevention measures in Brazil

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Abstract
This article scrutinizes the anti-trafficking efforts that the PT Government in Brazil undertook to implement the National Anti-Trafficking Policy in collaboration with different civil society organizations. Focusing on crime prevention measures, the article analyses the perceptions and understandings of trafficking, and the values and norms implicit in those, as well as the relationships developed between pubic officials and members of the civil society in this context. Examining everyday policy work, the article illustrates that policy implementation cannot be considered a mere technical-rational endeavor, in which replaceable officials deliver consistent and replicable outcomes based on unambiguous rules, assigned roles, and specified tasks and procedures. On the one hand, personality, personal motives and interests played a significant role in forging policy implementation focus and approach. On the other hand, the public officials struggled with the activists' attempts to shift policy concerns and implementation into a direction that diverged from their own politics.

Keywords
Brazil, dialogic governance, anthropology of policy, anti-trafficking policy, crime prevention, awareness campaign

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Introduction

This article scrutinizes the anti-trafficking efforts that the Brazilian Government undertook to implement the 2nd National Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons (*II Plano Nacional de Enfrentamento ao Tráfico de Pessoas*) in collaboration with different civil society organizations, focusing on the prevention of the crime. I examined awareness-raising seminars, educational trainings and campaign events, scrutinizing the terminology used, the perceptions and understandings of trafficking transmitted, and the values and norms implicit in those, as well as the relationships developed between pubic officials and members of the civil society in this context. Under President Dilma Rousseff's center-leftist government (2011–2016), the field of human trafficking prevention had undergone a diversification of governance – or 'pluralization of regulatory authorities' (Das and Poole, 2004) – which refers to a process of integration of NGOs, religious congregations and single rights issues networks into the structure of governance. Various civil society networks and organizations became key drivers of trafficking prevention measures in Brazil, carrying out awareness-raising seminars, educational trainings and campaign events, and often doing the bulk work of planning, liaising and advertising. For this study, I conducted ethnographic observations at anti-trafficking seminars[1] in the Brazilian states of Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul and Amazonas in 2014 and 2015, as well as interviews with policy makers from the National Network to Combat Trafficking in Persons, and employees of NGOs that are working to combat trafficking in Brazil. In this article, I will analyze a selection of fieldnotes, and recordings of interviews and presentations at campaign events. Crucial for my analysis is a perspective on public officials and anti-trafficking activists from the civil society as situated actors, whose own experiences, values, beliefs and interests matter to the work they do.

Anthropology of policy's idiosyncratic capacities and wisdoms

This article aims to contribute to the emerging body of literature of anthropology of policy, therefore, in the following, I will present some of its major peculiarities and potentials, and its contributions to policy studies more widely. The dry and dreary topic of policy generation, implementation and evaluation, and related political and administrative processes have long been treated by anthropologists in a stepmotherly way. However, in reality, the inquiry of policy leads us "straight into issues at the heart of anthropology" (Shore and Wright, 1997: 4). The authors (1997) have pointed out that the anthropological scrutiny of policies can work to reveal a cultural system and its underlying elements. Policy processes and outcomes are deeply embroiled with local norms, globally circulating ideologies, with questions of knowledge and power, rhetoric and discourse, the circumscription of meanings and permissible interpretations.

Anthropologists' empirical and ethnographic methods can show how policies actively create new categories individuals to be governed, for instance.

Through policy, persons are labeled as 'citizen', 'foreign national', 'expert', 'professional', 'service user', or 'criminal', and subsequently allocated roles and status. A Foucauldian understanding of governance (elaborated in Burchell, 1993) underlying much of anthropology of policy, allows for a perspective in which subjects are not merely produced through either force or deception, but through the agency and subjectivity of individuals as rational subjects. Rather, policy influences the way people construct themselves, their conduct and their social relations as rational individuals. The anthropology of policy has been able to shed light on changing styles and systems of governance and how these are reconfiguring the relationship between the individual and society (Ferguson 2015; Graeber, 2012; Shore and Wright, 2015; Shore et al., 2011). It has also been able to illuminate processes of how through colonization, international policy harmonization processes and training schemes for policy makers, Western models of the state and patterns of governance have been exported to the global South (Belshaw, 1976; Hull, 2012; Mitchell, 2002).

One of anthropology of policy's greatest contributions has been to challenge instrumentalist views of government that conceptualize policy as mere tool to regulate populations in a top-down way. In conventional policy studies, policies often appear to be mere instruments to solve problems and affect change, promoting efficiency and effectiveness. According to such a Weberian conception (Weber 1968), policy is an intrinsically technical, rational, action-oriented instrument that decision makers use. Responsible policy makers and public officials in charge of implementing a policy, subsequently appear as neutral, entirely replaceable agents who merely fulfil a given task to implement certain policy measures in such perspectives. The anthropology of policy alerts us that policy has a much more diffuse impact. Within policy implementation processes there is ample scope for subjective, ideological and even highly irrational goals, which may be unnoticed by those who believe policy to be a mere rational, collective endeavor with universalized objectives (Shore and Wright, 1997). The policy makers' and practitioners' personal identity, interests, values and beliefs, and the concepts and understandings that underlie those influence their policy making and practice. An anthropological approach to policy analysis aims to uncover the concrete, local and historicized constellations of actors, activities and influences that shape policy formation and implementation.

In his examination of bureaucracy, structural violence, and poverty in India, Akhil Gupta (2012: 45) highlights that an ethnographic focus allows to demonstrate that "the materiality and solidity of the state dissolve under scrutiny". For him, the detailed ethnographic scrutiny is able to produce a depiction of the state as a "highly complex array of institutions with multiple functional specializations, modes of operation, levels, and agendas" (Gupta, 2012: 46). Rather than being a homogenous organization that is able to act with a singular intention, the state constitutes of various levels that pull in different directions. Rather than blaming a monolithic state or the bureaucratic attitudes of certain individuals for adverse policy outcomes, Gupta draws attention to the friction between agendas, bureaus,

levels, and spaces that make up the state, demonstrating how unintended outcomes are systematically produced. His work powerfully builds on earlier anthropological work in which state bureaucracies were considered to be machines for "the social production of indifference" (Herzfeld, 1993), and to which the idea that "bureaucratic responses to social violence intensify suffering" was central (Kleinman et al., 1997: x).

Anthropological policy analysis has unsettled some conventional and widely accepted assertions in both academia and the policy world. Wedel et al. (2005) indicate how contributions from the anthropology of policy have helped counter-act three dominant trends in policy studies. Firstly, to treat policies as an unproblematic given that is analyzed without reference to the social, cultural and historical contexts in which they emerge. This particular pitfall, the authors attribute to the paradigm of positivism that still dominates much of policy studies. An anthropological approach can remedy both shortcomings through a perspective that results from immersion and long-term accompaniment of policy actors and processes. Secondly, by highlighting interactions and interfaces among the different parties involved in the policy process, anthropology can become a counter weight to overly ideological discourses that deny or neglect the complexity of institutions and social relationships, as well as the contingencies that might affect planned policy processes or contradictory actions and outcomes (Kalb et al., 2000). Thirdly, with its peculiar ability to grasp complexity, ambiguity and the messiness of policy processes, anthropology of policy can help policy analysis to move away from flawed dichotomous frameworks (such as state/private, macro/micro, top-down/bottom-up etc.). Thereby, anthropology of policy can provide a critical corrective to the simplified models that conventional policy analysis has worked with for so long.

Researching trafficking prevention efforts

To study the anti-trafficking prevention efforts under Dilma Rousseff's Government (2011–2016),[2] I used the "extended case method" (Van Velsen, 1979), which is particularly well-suited for research of ongoing policy processes. Even though the actors involved in a particular "case" might be working and residing in different geographic locations, the extended case method assumes that they are always connected by the policy process and sometimes also by personal social networks (Shore and Wright, 1997). In the extended case method, the researcher follows those interconnected actors around a particular series of events, to conduct participant observation and/or seeks to establish some form of long-term association with them in their own territories (Agar, 1996). This approach, can provide rich accounts of the actions and choices of real individuals (public officials, policy "users", members of societal pressure groups etc.), and provide detailed analyses of social processes wherein individual strategies and choices reveal the context of everyday life. It has been applied to study other interactive policy processes and campaigns, such as the struggle against forced disappearances

(see Carvalho de Mesquita Ferreira, 2014). Whilst policy research almost always implies "studying up" (Nader, 1974) – i.e. studying those with more power and/or higher social status than ourselves – to some degree, I consider it more accurate for this kind of "event"-focused policy research, to speak of "studying through", which seeks to trace "the ways in which power creates webs and relations between actors, institutions and discourses across time and space" (Shore and Wright, 1997: 11). A close ethnographic lens on policy events and meetings can offer us insights and provocations for "rethinking approaches to bureaucracy, organizational process, and ethos through the ethnographic lens of meeting" (Brown et al., 2017: 10).

In September 2014, I started going to events that were designed to inform and raise the awareness of the general public interested in human trafficking in the states of Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul and Amazonas, where I talked to organizers, the public officials involved and participants. The selection of events was coincidental, and related to finding out about the event in time to register, and having availability and sufficient time to travel to the location on the particular date. Most events appeared on the website traficodepessoas.org, a website that collected news articles, research publications, upcoming events, ongoing campaigns, and video clips about human trafficking in Brazil. Most events took place in the city centers of state capitals, in either government buildings, luxury hotels or the premises of the non-governmental organizations involved. Many had a strong formality about them, for instance, at the beginning sometimes the national anthem was played and flags were displayed in the main auditorium. Generally, at first, a high number of public officials and journalists was present, who then disappeared immediately after the initial presentations and photo shoots. Characteristic for the majority of the anti-trafficking events that I attended was the small number of participants from the policy target group – called "policy users" in policy speak – the "vulnerable", "potential victims" of human trafficking, with policy imaginaries particularly fixated on sex trafficking, generally referring to young, poor and racialized women (Blanchette and Da Silva, 2018, 2012; Blanchette et al., 2013; Piscitelli, 2012; Piscitelli and Lowenkron, 2015). Most participants had professional (here I include researchers, students, social care workers) or religious motives for being there. Often, the venues selected had capacity for over 200 people, whilst actual attendance numbers rarely exceeded 50.

The administrative structure to prevent trafficking in persons in Brazil

In the following, I will outline the state administrative structure that undergirded the measures to prevent trafficking in persons in Brazil at the time when I was doing fieldwork, which had been designed and built under the center-leftist government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003–2010) and was later continued by president Dilma Rousseff (2011–2016). In 2004, Brazil signed the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and

Children (short Palermo Protocol), which was a supplement of the 2000 UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. In October 2006, the National Policy to Combat Trafficking in Persons (*Política Nacional de Enfrentamento ao Tráfico de Pessoas*) – in the following "the National Anti-Trafficking Policy" – was approved, which determined principles, guidelines and actions to prevent and repress trafficking in persons and to assist victims. In January 2008, the *I Plano Nacional de Enfrentamento ao Tráfico de Pessoas* (PNETP I) was ratified, specifying the principles, guidelines and actions to implement the National Policy. A Second National Plan (PNETP II) followed in 2013, which was guiding the actions of the nuclei to Combat Trafficking in Persons (*Núcleos de* Enfrentamento *ao Tráfico de Pessoas*, short NETPs) at the time of my fieldwork in Brazil.

The NETPs were administrative units, co-funded by PRONASCI (*Programa Nacional de Segurança Pública com Cidadania*), which operated in partnership with the state governments, with the purpose of developing measures to combat trafficking in persons. Their role was to organize the implementation of the Cut National Anti-Trafficking Policy politically and technically, and to work towards the creation of policies and plans in the individual states. The nuclei had statewide competencies and acted in collaboration with public agencies and civil organizations involved in combatting trafficking, and supported the Federal and Civil Police by providing information. They also undertook referrals of victims to shelters and psychological support services, helped the victims return to their city of origin, and implemented actions to combat human trafficking together with other government agencies and the civil society. In addition, they had jurisdiction in the development of research on human trafficking, training, capacity building and awareness raising of government agencies and the public on trafficking. In March 2015, there were 16 operating *núcleos,* or NETPs, in Brazil, in the states of Acre, Alagoas, Amapá, Amazonas, Bahia, Ceará, Federal District, Goiás, Maranhão, Minas Gerais, Pará, Paraná, Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul and São Paulo.

One of the National Anti-Trafficking Policy's general guidelines was to build a network infrastructure to counter trafficking in persons, involving all levels of government and organizations of the civil society. The Network to Combat Trafficking in Persons (*Rede de Enfrentamento ao Tráfico de Pessoas*) was established, of which the federal, state and municipal committees (*comités*) constituted an important element. The National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons (*Comitê Nacional de Enfrentamento ao Tráfico de Pessoas*, short CONATRAP), was instituted through decree no. 7,901 from February 2013 (Ministry of Justice, 2013), as the principal democratic instrument for the integration of civil society organizations into the management and monitoring of the implementation of the national anti-trafficking policy and the PNETP II. The state and municipal committees had the objective to act as a channel for dialogue between representatives of society and both state and municipal governments to promote a multisectoral approach in the management of the local network. The committees were set up to

collectively define priorities, construct an agenda for actions, identify partnerships, build a consensus, increase capacities and share knowledge.

The approach to "work in a network (*trabalho em rede*)" became central to the Government's administrative structure for combatting trafficking in persons (Ministry of Justice, 2013: 62). Networks were understood as "not linear (*não linear*)", "nor hierarchical (*nem hierárquico*)", and as emerging from "relationships between people and non-verticalized institutions (*relações entre pessoas e ou instituições não verticalizadas*)"; therefore, they were imagined to operate effectively (Ministry of Justice, 2013: 62). A network structure was envisioned to have the capacity to "expand connections (*expandir vínculos*)" and "to take perceptions to wider dimensions, to make more inclusive and transversal[3] what has vocation to be amplified (*levar percepções para dimensões mais ampliadas, tornar mais inclusive e transversal o que tem vocação para ser amplificado*)" (Ministry of Justice, 2013: 62). The fight against trafficking in persons was considered a transversal issue, which therefore required a response through a network that connected the local with the national level. In this vision, the network with "its horizontality, coordinated without hierarchies and subsidiary actions, and oriented towards a shared purpose (*sua horizontalidade, coordenada sem hierarquias e atuações subsidiárias, e orientada a partir de um propósito compartilhado*)" (Ministry of Justice, 2013: 62). Furthermore, networks were considered as "decentralized systems by definition (*sistemas decentrados por definição*)". According to the Ministry of Justice, it was through the essential qualities inherent to networks, that leadership and coordination gained new dynamics, and that subsequently, "the networked organizational models provoke[d] decentralization of power (*os modelos organizacionais em rede provocam desconcentração de poder*)" (Ministry of Justice, 2013: 62). Despite not contesting the earnest intensions of the anti-trafficking efforts under Dilma Rousseff's government with its impetus to foster cooperation with the civil society, this article challenges whether the claims and characteristics attributed to "working in a network" bear up to close anthropological scrutiny of the day-to-day policy implementation processes.

Intelligence anti-trafficking work: Policy implementation as own project

When I arrived at the city of Goiânia's bus station, the *núcleo* coordinator awaited me there and gave me a ride to the premises of the NETP-Goiás, which was part of the State Secretariat for Women's Policies and the Promotion of Racial Equality (*Secretaria Estadual de Políticas para Mulheres e Promoção da Igualdade Racial-SEMIRA*). We sat down in the coordinator's office, and I began by asking my usual initial questions related to the history and work of the *núcleo*. I indicated my special interest in the trafficking prevention work the *núcleo* had undertaken in the past year. Several times I prompted the interviewee to speak more about the campaigns conducted, the events carried out and the trainings given, however,

the coordinator always came back to speak about the raids they had carried out together with the police. Most in-depth he talked about a raid they had done at a local motel, *Dunas Motel*, about a week ago. Showing me pictures on his computer, he explained,

> This is before the raid. Everyone is just talking. What is our goal here? Our goal is not to arrest anyone. What is it? It is taking certain information to these people, but at the same time, whatever is irregular – in this operation we arrive at the hotels and knock on the door and ask people to pass their documents. [...] What we discussed earlier, first we seek assurance from the police that there will be no violence. Our goal is to see what is wrong, and at the same time also publicize our work. To introduce ourselves, we take information leaflets and give them to people.

In this raid, three minors of 14 and 15 years were discovered on the premises and taken to a local support center. Their parents were informed and the driver who had taken them to the motel got arrested. The coordinator was particularly keen on showing me pictures of *travestis*, of which he had plenty, saying, "we identify everyone, and we talk to everyone". He said that he and his team didn't yet know who "exploited" the *travestis*, because they did not collaborate with the authorities, and until now had not given them any names. The coordinator was aware that the *travestis*' silence might lie in the fact that they had been able to improve their lives through sex work, explaining:

> These *travestis* come from outside, we have a great difficulty in convicting the persons who exploit them. They prefer to be exploited the way they are. They don't report a crime, they don't say anything, because in a certain way they are having a better life than where they were. And here we always try to talk to the *travesti*, talk to him and offer an opportunity for a new job that he may have, a profession, that does not depend on selling his body in order to survive.

The coordinator stated that he had a strong interest in arresting whoever was exploiting the *travestis* in his city, and would spend great efforts in detecting the identity of the "maezinhas" and "cafetinas"[4] involved: "we try to search for all kinds of information to see what is possibly going on, but even so, because as they are adults, we cannot force anything".

After the interview, the coordinator drove me to see a local red-light district (without me having asked for this demonstration), first stopping by an impressive quarter of expensive-looking *condomínios*, with security-guarded streets. He made me look in detail at the houses, walls, and security installations, telling me that this was how affluent people in Goiânia lived – one of his *núcleo* workers, he said, among them. Then we continued to an industrial area, which was located very close to the motorway, and he showed me various discos, show venues, and motels. It was between four and six in the afternoon and a number of *travestis* were working in the rainy streets at the time. I do not remember whether our car had

tinted windows or not, but one of the *travestis* appeared to recognize either the car or the coordinator, got very agitated and annoyed, and started following us and filming us with their[5] mobile phone, making sure we had noticed that they were filming. Many other *travestis* immediately turned away when we turned up, instantly aware that we were not potential clients. While going round in circles in this red-light district, the coordinator told me that despite him trying to build a relationship with the *travestis* of the area, they would throw stones at him and his staff when they turned up. When I asked him why he thought they would do this, he answered: "Because they are so excluded by society in general, and because of the way they are treated by customers: fine with them in the privacy of the motel room, but outside they don't want to recognize them, this is why they reject us". Still riding in the car, the coordinator expressed that he did not like police raids, saying, "arresting people does not work". Realizing that raids do not contribute much to combat or prevent trafficking, he wanted to do something new, change his strategy. His new idea was to establish contact with *travestis* separately from police raids. In the future, he wanted to enter the red-light districts where they work at lunch time and provide food and coffee. His plan was to go together with the social workers from his *núcleo* and begin conversations with them over lunch, carefully collecting all information that came out of these informal conversations. Information gathering should be crucial to his new strategy of anti-trafficking work.

The NETP-Goiás coordinator had invented and begun to employ his own anti-trafficking approach that mixed intelligence gathering and campaigning or out-reach work. A trained law and business administrator, he had clearly a very outcome-focused approach of doing anti-trafficking work. In his efforts, he ensured to document his work extensively, producing immense loads of photos, reports and video material (he had a local TV station accompany the raid), and he regularly participated in radio shows and documentaries, publicizing the *núcleo*'s work. Police raids, as the one described in the vignette above, were initiated by his *núcleo* every semester. I do not know if the raid carried out in *Dunas Motel* had been based on prior intelligence information, but from the videos recorded at the operation, which the coordinator showed me at the visit, I do know that a high rank police officer from the Trafficking in Persons Unit (*Unidade de Repressão ao Tráfico de Pessoas-URTP*) of the Regional Superintendence of Goias (*Superintendência Regional de Goiás*) had led the operation. This officer, I had heard giving talks at anti-trafficking information events about police work related to surveillance operations and monitoring. It is clear, that the NETP-Goiás coordinator highly valued the merits of intelligence work and aimed for more, and more intense collaborations with intelligence personnel in his anti-trafficking work.

Out of the different categories of potential victims that are generally identified as especially vulnerable to human trafficking, such as women, minors, migrants, and poor and racialized people, the coordinator selected *travestis* as the group of his special interest and concern. During our interactions, he appeared very fond of his task of finding out more and intimate details about this 'vulnerable' population

group, having to journey frequently to their workplace, observe their everyday practices and strategize how to effectively apprehend their "exploiters". In a contradictory way, he was fixated on his endeavor to save the *travestis* from their "exploiters", the *mães* (mothers in English), despite being aware that the *mães* charged (50RS per day) as an agent fee, but also provided something in exchange for this, namely local connections and information, as well as food and accommodation.

Within the given lines of operation, prescribed activities and set aims, the anti-trafficking policy left sufficient scope for imagining and undertaking a specific and own project of interest therein. Most NETP coordinators who I visited during my fieldwork focused on issues such researching human trafficking and producing related materials; developing and providing anti-trafficking trainings for selected professionals; campaigning and raising the public's awareness with regard to the issue; and liaising with the civil society and different state agencies to improve services or state legislation.

The coordinator's former focus on raids might have been the result of the rigorous demands for numbers of trafficking cases by journalists and the interested public, as well the semesterly policy implementation reports that had to include the human trafficking cases that were taken care of. Low figures on the forms that document their work, can be understood as insufficient or ineffective policy work. These considerations may have played a role in making the *núcleo* coordinator think of and experiment with new methods, migrating into the spheres of intelligence work. His new approach of implementing the anti-trafficking policy, however, was clearly driven by a deep fascination of the *travestis*, their lives and community. The utilization of intelligence methods that target vulnerable communities, such as those of sexual dissidents, and poor, marginalized, and racialized people are clearly an issue of concern. Surveillance is a means of governance, as it serves to organized social relationships and contributes to patterns of social ordering (Lyon, 2002). In my view, surveillance is a powerful and illegitimate tool that reinforces social difference. Considering that the knowledge gathered about the *travesti* community is unlikely to produce sustained benefits for this community, and that all intimate knowledge generated from intelligence operations possesses the potential to be misused against that same community, it is essential to be critical of and closely scrutinize any such state surveillance practice, especially if they target already stigmatized minority groups.

NETPs 'trabalhando em rede' or policy adrift?

When following the anti-trafficking campaign trail from event to event across different Brazilian states, I was able to get to know and interview 11 of the 16 *núcleo* coordinators. Under the presidency of Dilma Rousseff (2011–2016), remarkably many were young (in their thirties) and dynamic women who had been trained in social sciences or social work. I sometimes had the chance to

chat with them informally over lunch or coffee about their personal views and beliefs, and their assessments regarding the policy implementation process.

Both in the event presentations and interviews I conducted with NETP staff, coordinators and the national coordinator of the Network to Combat Trafficking in Persons, there was a lot of mention of "democracy (*democracia*)", "dialogue (*diálogo*)", and "participation of civil society (*participação da sociedade civil*)" with regard to the implementation of the national anti-trafficking policy. Both federal government officials and NETP staff highlighted that "working together with the civil society (*trabalhar juntos com a sociedade civil*)" was what they were doing, and that it was important to "work in a network (*trabalhar em rede*)". When visiting the coordinator of the National Network to combat Trafficking in Persons in her office in Brasília, she explained the work of the network to me:

> We have our spaces of social participation. Public policies, spaces of social partici-
> pation, committees and conferences have been going for a while in Brazil – mainly
> after the Lula Government entered – and this year the National Committee to
> Combat Trafficking in Persons has been launched. This is the largest instance of
> social participation and policy debate.

Before an event at which she had to speak, I interviewed the coordinator of the NETP-Minas Gerais, asking her about the foundation of the *núcleo* in Belo Horizonte and the selection process of the civil society organizations it collaborates with. She explained the tendering process to me:

> The decree[6] enacts the creation of an assembly, which then selects the civil society
> organizations. This is so that there can be no favoritism or political appointments, so
> that the entry of the civil society [into CONATRAP] is indeed a democratic and
> transparent process. [...] We made a public call, mobilized, made the announcement
> and spent the year 2013 going to civil society organizations, trying to mobilize them
> for this agenda. To the unions, the association of prostitutes, the religious movements,
> we toured around to establish dialogue, converse and present the topic. Always
> putting across the message: 'Look, next year we will do the assembly. You should
> participate, okay? Try to compete.'

Both civil servants placed strong emphasis on how their work was directed towards promoting public participation, that a diverse range of spaces for public engagement existed (conferences, committees, assemblies), and that they had made great efforts to reach out to the public (through public calls, mobilization, rounds of dialogue and talks). However, despite the NETP coordinators' mobilization efforts, the issue of human trafficking did not always resonate with local social movements and their agendas, as the following example demonstrates.

Minas Gerais' NETP coordinator, a woman in her thirties, who had studied gender issues at university and sympathized with social equality and justice movements, told me how she struggled to make the social movements in her state take

the anti-trafficking agenda on board as a topic of chief concern. Despite seven years having passed since the publication of the First National Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons, and a great number of campaigns, information events and trainings of the population having occurred, it seemed that the topic of human trafficking had not become a priority for (non-religious) social movements, such as the workers' movement, the unions, and the women's movement:

> The agenda of trafficking in persons is not an agenda that captivates broader social movements. In fact, we have had to build this agenda with them. It was a movement that we forged and that was meant to result in the establishment of the committee. [...] We as the state were trying to empower and flag this up with the civil society. Even though generally it should be the other way round, right? That the civil society has an understanding of the topic and takes it to the state. With this agenda we had to do the opposite, the state empowering the social movement.

The coordinator's difficulty in motivating the social movements in her state to take an interest in human trafficking and its prevention, shows us that processes of policy implementation can result in contingent or unintended outcomes (Nieto Olivar, 2015). According to their narratives, the NETP coordinators I met spent great efforts in disseminating information and raising awareness about the issue of human trafficking among the population. Some of them made attempts to cover as many municipalities of their constituency as they could, travelling with a special campaign bus from town to town, organizing events and giving talks. Regardless, they seemed to have little control over which population group would take on this topic, how they would interpret and try to remedy it, and the effects of some actors' sustained engagement with the issue. In my experience based on participation in anti-trafficking seminars and campaign events, the anti-trafficking agenda was taken up selectively by particular actors, some of whom were extremely passionate about it, for a variety of reasons linked to either personal values, experiences or convictions, and went to great lengths to do something about it.

   In my interviews with NETP coordinators, I stated my observation that there appears to be an extensive presence and engagement of religious groups, both in trafficking prevention work and within the dialogic governance structures, such as the national and state committees to counter trafficking. I expressed my concerns with this asymmetry, raising the question if they considered this a problem for the endeavor to combat human trafficking, and what they – as *núcleo* – did to establish a more equal balance. Many NETP coordinators made reference to the effects of the *Campanha da Fraternidade*, a campaign against human trafficking initiated by the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (*Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil*) in 2013–2014. They conveyed that the campaign had helped their efforts of reaching the civil society with the intension to raise awareness about human trafficking among the population. They thought it was the "capillarity (*capilaridade*)" of the campaign, achieved by the means of utilizing the Catholic

Church's extensive networks all over the country, which helped their task immensely.

The NETP-Minas Gerais coordinator explained to me more frankly how it happened that the Government came to collaborate so strongly with religious groups in the combat of human trafficking, saying "The religious organizations come with a very elaborate international agenda, they are well-structured and have funding, equipment and training." She described the religious groups that had embarked on the struggle against human trafficking – with a particular focus on "trafficking for purpose of sexual exploitation (*tráfico com fins de exploração sexual*)" – in Brazil as highly proactive and resource-rich. Not only did they possess financial resources and valuable extensive networks, but they also had skills such as articulateness and media skills, including web design, social media, video, and photography. This overlapped with my experience of meeting members from diverse religious groups and congregations in anti-trafficking events. A majority appeared to be from middle-class backgrounds; they were well educated, with degrees in social work, sociology or theology, for instance, they disposed of good levels of writing skills, sometimes spoke several languages, and a considerable number of them were nationals from other countries, such as Spain, Italy, Germany, Argentina, Bolivia, Suriname, and Uruguay, thus possessing intercultural communication skills, providing them with an advantage in negotiations with policy makers across international borders.

The religious groups (most of them Catholic) engaged in trafficking prevention efforts that I met during my fieldwork did not only possess significant financial resources, but (maybe even more significantly) could also draw on social and cultural capital, facilitating their privileged access to government actors. In March 2015, for instance, I attended a five-day training event for community leaders in Manaus, organized by the network *Grito pela Vida*.[7] During the event, members carefully prepared the encounter with the coordinator of the National Network to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Before her arrival, the audience of about 150 people split up in small groups to brainstorm and pool questions and comments, which would challenge the speaker after her talk. In this particular meeting, *Grito pela Vida* members also elaborated a commitment letter (*carta de compromisso*), which was written collectively with single sentences being voted on during the event. The letter analyzed the reality of the anti-trafficking work done by the Amazonas state government, and listed twelve demands for required government action relevant to the implementation of the policy in their region, among them, for instance, "a guarantee of the elaboration, implementation and execution of both the [anti-trafficking] policy and the State Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons in all the states of the Northern Region of Brazil", "the widening of the dialogue about migratory flows between the border countries", "the insertion of the topic of trafficking into the curricular guidelines of school education", and "the creation of a database information system". This brief vignette illustrates that *Grito pela Vida* organizers and members were knowledgeable and skilled enough

to employ the bureaucratic language and forms necessary to interact, negotiate, challenge and hold the Government accountable for its actions or omissions.

In this instance, the *Grito pela Vida* network paid for the airfare of the national coordinator of the Network to Combat Trafficking in Persons, because the federal government had no more funds available for this journey. Hence, it was due to its own resources, the religious community was able to establish a dialogue with a member of the Ministry of Justice in their leadership training meeting and put forward their own questions and demands. This example demonstrates how important financial resources can be to the participation of civil society members in the implementation of a national policy, and the privilege of groups who possess or can mobilize them to make their own views and perspectives heard.

The religious groups' deep concern for the topic of human trafficking, their eagerness to do something about it and their continuous engagement were resources that governments could use to advance own policy work (not always own politics!).[8] Public officials told me that members of religious groups worked tirelessly in trafficking prevention campaigns and events without measuring time, and without claiming any financial remuneration for their work, writing and designing leaflets and posters, preparing PowerPoint presentations and talks, organizing meetings, and doing outreach work in the streets. Visiting the *núcleo* premises, I got to see stacks of campaign materials produced by church groups in several occasions. When asked, the coordinators told me they had received the leaflets, posters or flyers, which they then used after putting Ministry of Justice stickers on, or reprinted with its logo included. Hence, key to the (center-leftist) Government's responsiveness to religious groups in the struggle against human trafficking – despite ideological differences, as I will explore in the following – lay in the particular mix of skills and resources that these groups possessed or had access to.

The public officials I talked to who formed part of the National Network to Combat Trafficking in Persons, were well aware that the religious groups they worked with had a particular agenda. Some of those agendas were biased towards a special interest in the question of prostitution, and motivated by a desire to eradicate the practice (even though this was not always made explicit). The NETP coordinator from Minas Gerais told me that knowing about the religious groups' particular concerns and motives, at collective events, she makes strong efforts to emphasize a human rights perspective and a focus on non-criminalization of sexual markets. She underscored how her *núcleo* placed a focus on migrants' rights, distinguishes prostitution from trafficking and was generally pro-sex work:

> We worked hard with the committee to not confuse [trafficking] with prostitution. Prostitution is one thing, and we are not going to use the trafficking discourse to hinder prostitutes or transsexuals in accessing their immigration rights.

According to the coordinator's perspective, it was the period of the preparations for the World Cup in June 2014, which gave internationally connected religious

groups an unfair advantage in anti-trafficking work in Brazil. Members from religious groups had received anti-trafficking trainings abroad and came back with large amounts of data and information that the Government first had to investigate, in order to be capable of debunking it, and providing alternative interpretations. In the following extract, the coordinator of NETP-Minas Gerais describes the difficulty of dealing with powerful and informed actors who have the capacity to influence public opinion, flooding media space with selected figures and studies, and enforcing a particular perspective.

> These religious institutions already had been guided by international religious institutions, especially in the movements leading up to the World Cups in Germany and South Africa. And how does that reach the World Cup of Brazil? A reality also that we do not know. Where are the 40,000 women trafficked to Germany? Where are these 40,000 women? What was offered in terms of human rights protection for these 40,000 women? Who has these statistics? We need to read more widely. [...] What is the work of the evangelical religious entities in particular, to see how this work has been done in these other countries? They had a much better structured network than the other movements here. For example, Jocum[9] are Youth With a Mission. Jucum had several young people who have been on exchanges in Europe.

This extract shows the importance of knowledge production in the context of trafficking in persons, and its power to direct public opinion, funding streams and policy concerns for both governments and civil society groups. For instance, at the Manaus leadership meeting that I attended, *Grito pela Vida* pronounced research into human trafficking and the study of existing publications on the topic as a new primary focus of their work. Beyond meeting in weekly study groups, they also intended to conduct own empirical research and establish data collection systems that can be harmonized across Brazilian states. Similarly, the International Network of Consecrated Life against Trafficking in Persons *Talitha Kum*, operating in the Americas, Europe, Africa, South Asia and Australia, published already in 2016 the second edition of their anti-trafficking training manual.

   Collaborations between state institutions and civil society organizations are often identified as the most effective way of safeguarding vulnerable populations.[10] However, as we have seen, policy implementation processes are deeply interactive, as well as efficiency driven; therefore, it is not a straight-forward process, as much of the conventional policy literature suggests, but rather one in which significant disturbance and shifts can occur. In addition, we should also caution not to credulously assume that such multi-agency endeavors inevitably are beneficial to the target group (i.e. the intended beneficiaries of the policy) or lead to positive outcomes for them. Processes of networking and collaboration with government institutions don't necessarily end up being horizontal processes. Research on multi-agency work (see for instance Sanders, 2009) has confirmed that it can lead to unintended consequences, such as NGOs becoming drawn into executing

punitive control over the target group, executing of "new social technologies of control".

The tendencies of bureaucracy and professionalism in networked policy work

In the course of the implementation of the national anti-trafficking policy (and in particular through the trafficking prevention efforts), it was notable that multiple actors had acquired the opportunity to become part of dialogic governance structures and were therefore able to influence policy implementation. However, it was also perceivable that the dialogic governance structures were unable to effectively facilitate the integration of actors with less social, cultural and economic capital and population groups that have not established stable, formal, representative forms of collective organization, but whose community formations are more volatile. Members from such groups were sporadically invited to participate in events, especially with the function to provide testimonies which fit the mainstream narrative[11] of trafficking (Cojocaru, 2015). The participation of sex workers, for instance, in trafficking prevention efforts, such as awareness-raising seminars, educational trainings and campaign events at which knowledge about sex trafficking was exchanged and disseminated, and interpretations were forged and consolidated, was rare. During my fieldwork in Brazil, only at one event a practicing sex worker – who was not part of the "rescue industry"[12] (Agustín, 2007) – was invited as speaker.

When visiting different civil society organizations engaged in the struggle against human trafficking across Brazil, several NGO workers highlighted in conversation with me how difficult it was to pass the application for official membership in the State Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons, emphasizing the extensiveness and difficulty of the bureaucratic selection process involved in the competition for participation in this committee. In order to pass the tendering process, a civil society organization had to prove a successful history of work relevant to the struggle against human trafficking and successful national and international funding applications. The availability of experienced staff with advanced levels of social care, psychological, administrative and media skills facilitate the process enormously. To conclude an application, extensive paperwork had to be prepared – numerous forms filled in meticulously and correctly – and required documentation included. Discussing the selection process and participation of civil society organizations, NETP-Minas Gerais coordinator admitted to me that a local sex worker organization, for instance, had not managed to hand in a report of their past work, which was one of the minimum requirements for participation in the state committee.

Critical education scholar John Clarke has indicated that "ordinary people" only become "enrolled" into governance structures under the premise of the perpetuation of particular relationships and practices and specific modes of

interaction (Clarke, 2010). As shown above, many of the anti-trafficking activists I met were well-experienced in interactions with institutional actors and in maintaining relationships with them. They were apt at utilizing bureaucratic language and communication forms and stuck to institutional codes of conduct and address. The fact that they did not challenge existing roles and conventional forms of institutionalized interactions with the Government and government representatives made them convenient to work with. However, we have seen, how the diversified governance through integration of multiple actors into dialogic structures, permitted the policy implementation process to drift towards the (religious) values of actors who were networked, skilled and resource-rich (both educational and financial). Subsequently, it was *their* understandings, identification of the policy problem and strategies for desirable social change that became amplified in society and central for the policy implementation. It is clear that this was not the civil servants' "hidden agenda" or "secret alignment" with the values of the religious groups that led to this drift, but rather an intricate mix of what groups were responsive to the calls for participation, and very pragmatic considerations, such as the concrete pressures to reach out most widely across the population, and most efficiently use available resources to reach policy goals. Through the (inadvertent) integration of resource-rich actors into the dialogic governance structures, the Government was able to make extensive use of the capacities and resources of those involved non-state actors and communities. As shown above, a broad variety of the skills, knowledges and labor of anti-trafficking activists were being harnessed in addition to the material resources (meeting spaces, financial resources etc.) they possessed. Hence, integration and participation in dialogic governance structures privileged *networked actors* (such as the Catholic church with its capacity for capillarization, i.e. extensive reach of their networks within Brazil), and *resource-rich actors* who possess exploitable social, cultural and financial capital.

When policy implementation processes become based on pragmatic or efficiency-based criteria, there is a danger that they will eventually not respond to the complexity of lived realities, as for public policies to become successful, it is of utmost importance that inherent understandings are grounded in the practices and representations of the policy subjects themselves (Sprandel and Mansur Dias, 2010). Even with the help of an "army" of well-meaning civil society professionals and activists, policy solutions can lead to significant misunderstandings of the social changes and needs that are meaningful to the target populations and/or people affected. During my fieldwork, anti-trafficking events were essentially encounters of people with predominantly professional or religious interests, who got together, exchanged information of often very detached 'observations' (e.g. counting the arrivals of minors in the company of a single male adult at bus stations and airports as trafficking), and analyzed human trafficking from particular situated perspectives that reified their own moral values, perception of the problem and conclusion for necessary policy action. Relying primarily on collaborative work with policy interest groups rather than policy target groups in the context of the prevention of trafficking in persons implies the risk of perpetuating

what Hurtado and Iranzo (2015) call a "hegemonic perspective on trafficking".[13] The NETP coordinators had great difficulties bringing actors on board who might be affected by the policy, but who were not organized in the form of individual interest groups, or whose organizational structures were more volatile due to the demands of flexibility dominating their everyday lives.

The scrutiny of the anti-trafficking efforts of the Network to Combat Trafficking in Persons has indicated that the assumption that networks are *per se* non-hierarchical and that they quasi mechanically lead to the "transversal" integration of different societal groups, enabling their democratic participation does not prove accurate. The assumption that networking could automatically lead to the transversal integration and participation of disadvantaged populations into governance structures, overlooks existing differences in power, knowledge and access to resources between groups of people. The dialogic structures of governance that were built to combat trafficking did not work in a transversal way, as envisioned by the policy makers. As laid out above, this is not the result of a lack of political will, indifference towards the target population or corrupted interests of the responsible public officials. The impacts of skewed policy implementation, however, can be serious, as much of the Brazilian anti-trafficking research has confirmed (Blanchette and Da Silva, 2012; Lowenkron, 2019; Nieto Olivar, 2016; Piscitelli and Lowenkron, 2015; Wiecko V. de Castilho, 2008). Wendy Brown (2002: 568) pointed out that drawing on professionals or bureaucratically skilled population groups for policy processes, "invariably entails a turn away from the political world", rather than engendering sustainable solutions for social problems. Jennifer Musto (2010), analyzing multi-professional anti-trafficking work in the Netherlands, indicated that professionals conveniently turn away from challenging political and economic systems towards finding short-term, administrative solutions, thereby highlighting the pitfalls and the limitations of multi-agency work. Most likely, such antipolitical tendencies that accompany professionalism can only be overcome through rigorous scrutiny of the institutionally embedded values and beliefs that form the basis of policy implementation standards and practices. With efficiency at its core value, transversal policy implementation is doomed to fail. Rather, transversal policy implementation would have to adapt to the possible temporality and lived volatility of target groups, and their (sometimes transient) forms of social organization, as well as provide skilling and resources in the course of collaborations. The anthropology of policy, with its focus on actors and the microprocesses and social interaction dynamics involved in policy implementation can contribute to shed light on viable alternatives that help avoid ever more sophisticated techniques in the management of social problems, but rather pay close attention to and cultivate political orientations.

Conclusion

I have outlined that during the time of my fieldwork in Brazil, before President Dilma Rousseff's impeachment in 2016, public officials in charge of implementing

the National Anti-Trafficking Policy demonstrated strong intensions to do so with a great level of public participation, employing dialogic governance structures, ensuring transparency and democratic accountability. However, when looking at everyday policy implementation processes, we realize that the state is not a homogenous entity, able to act with a singular intention (Gupta, 2012), as positivistic understandings of policy implementation processes – generally based on Weber's (1968) rational-legal model of bureaucracy 1968 – suggest. In such a view, modern bureaucracies are seen as capable of delivering replicability and consistency, whereby the person performing the role is considered irrelevant to the outcome. In other words, bureaucratic systems are thought to deliver consistent outcomes based on unambiguous rules, assigned roles, and specified tasks and procedures, no matter *who* occupies an office. Anthropological work has highlighted that in order to understand the "magic of the state" (Taussig, 1997), we need to look at the visceral and emotional. Rather than being mere instrumental mechanisms of governmental power, scholars have pointed out that affects are "the substance of politics" (Reeves and Laszczkowski, 2015; Stoler, 2004).

As we have seen in the case of NETP-Goiás, the affective investedness of state actors can act as impetus to shape and direct policy action. The personality, and personal inclinations, motives and interests played a significant role in forging the coordinator's policy implementation focus and approach. The coordinator was intrigued by the city's *travestis* and their lifeworld, and the national anti-trafficking policy provided him with the chance to access this community as part of the *núcleo*'s crime prevention efforts. He made it his task to inform them of the dangers of trafficking, but simultaneously conducted frequent raids where they worked, checking the IDs of present sex workers, generating an atmosphere of surveillance and distrust. He had reached out to a high rank police officer from the Trafficking in Persons Unit specialized in intelligence work, and was strategizing to conduct own intelligence activities among the *travesti* community with the aim to rescue possible victims of trafficking. His actions – which were not individual, but state actions – were fraught with contradictions: despite having knowledge of the role and the services that the "*mães*" provide within the *travesti* community (which literature confirms, see Ornat, 2009; Silva and Ornat, 2015), he insisted on "safeguarding" the *travestis* from their exploiters.

Furthermore, I have also illustrated how public officials struggled with the activists' attempts to drag policy concerns and implementation into a direction that diverges from their own intentions and values. I argue that under Dilma Rousseff's center-leftist Government, the NETP coordinators collaborated and liaised with actors who intended to divert the policy concerns and actions towards an anti-prostitution stance due to a mixture of convenience and practicality, rather than due to an accordance with the concerns or values of those actors. Working with resource-rich actors allowed the swift demonstration of results of own policy implementation efforts, which corresponded with the immense accountability pressures and tight deadlines that the officials faced in the context of the policy

implementation, obliged to file reports on a six-monthly basis. Largely, the participation of policy target group(s) in the trafficking in persons prevention efforts was missing, not due to the officials' ignorance of their needs, cold-heartedness or discrimination, but rather as a result of the fact that other, policy-responsive population groups were able to provide attractive skills and resources that corresponded with the efficiency demands inherent in policy implementation.

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Notes

1. Most of the seminars and events I attended had been designed to inform and raise awareness among the general public interested in human trafficking.
2. My fieldwork fell into the final period of the presidency of Dilma Rousseff, and hence the federal rule of the Workers' Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores-PT*).
3. Transversality I understand here as the integration of the societal groups relevant to this particular policy, in a way that they are enabled to steer and engender sustainable, positive policy effects for their communities.
4. These are names for "madames" or sex work facilitators who operate within the *travesti* community, generally being older or more experienced *travestis* themselves.
5. Considering that I don't know which pronoun the persons described in this vignette would prefer, I use the gender neutral "they".
6. She refers to the decree no. 46,439 from February 2014, which instituted the Interinstitutional Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons in Minas Gerais (*Comitê Interinstitucional de Enfrentamento ao Tráfico de Pessoas de Minas Gerais*, short CIETP-MG).

7. *Grito pela Vida* is an intercongregational network, consisting of about 150 religious congregations. On their website (gritopelavida.blogspot.com) they describe themselves as 'a space of articulation and prophetic-solidarity action of the Consecrated Religious Life of Brazil' (accessed on 12th May 2021). Through a network structure *Grito pela Vida* seeks to protect life that has been threatened or injured, trafficked or abused people and their rights, and they aim to generate new social, political and theological spaces.

8. Here I mean that the collaboration with resource-rich actors is a relatively effortless and cost saving way to fill in the 6-monthly evaluation form, demonstrating that policy implementation tasks have been completed.

9. Jocum or "Youth With A Mission" describe themselves on their website jocum.org.br as "an international and interdenominational movement, committed to mobilizing young people from all nations to missionary work." (last accessed on 12th May 2021) Founded in 1960 by Loren and Darlene Cunningham, it became active in Brazil in 1975, initiated by the couple Jim and Pamela Stier, in Contagem-Minas Gerais. Today the organization has a decentralized structure with 66 offices and missionary training centers spread all over the country.

10. In English the most commonly used corresponding term for these kinds of collaborations is "multi-agency partnerships".

11. Da Silva et al. (2013) speak of a "mythical narrative" that has become central to discourses about trafficking used to guide policy-makers and educate civil society in Brazil. What the authors call the "Myth of María" (Blanchette et al., 2013) is the story of an exemplary trafficking victim, a woman/victim without agency in need of state-initiated interventions to rescue her from the all-powerful globalized mafias. The authors suggest that in essence, this myth transmits ultimately a conservative or even reactionary understanding of the problems brought up by the entanglement of global mobility and sex work.

12. With the term rescue industry, Agustín refers to the conglomerate of governmental institutions, private corporations and civil society organizations that work to "rescue" women from the sex industry. The term rescue industry highlights the generation and professionalization of rescue work as an own income-generating sector based on the category of "victims of sexual exploitation" in need of rescue.

13. Hurtado and Iranzo denote a hegemonic perspective on trafficking as one that reflects the social, cultural and ideological influence of dominant societal groups in the understanding, analysis and combat of human trafficking. The hegemonic perspective is (1.) fabricated around prejudiced presuppositions of the (sexualized) survival strategies of lower-income groups; (2.) essentially conservative, resistant to a change of the current social contract or status quo; (3.) essentially moral, characterized by an abolitionist agenda according to which no one should exchange sex on the market; (4.) essentially reductive, shrinking an extremely complicated set of social relations and actions to a victim-agent dichotomy. The hegemonic perspective distorts reality highlighting some aspects (e.g. the power of organized crime organization, the vulnerability of the victim), whereas diminishing or ignoring others (e.g. grey areas of victimhood and agency, the role of xenophobic immigration laws).

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