

Sex* Positive

**The Effect of Narrative on the Creation of
Anti-trafficking Policy in the United States**

Introduction

“The current politics reflect and reproduce the long-standing, persistent ‘agent/victim’ debate about prostitution (and sex work in general).”

Depth:

- Legislation
- Rollback
- Narrative

Surface:

- Criticism
- Information
- Frameworks

— — —

**By understanding the
current narrative
applied to sex work we
can aim to change the
narrative and improve
anti-trafficking policy.**

Anti-trafficking Policy in the U.S.

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We have the data — "End-Demand" policies increase violence. "It's not a question mark anymore. This is willfully valuing an opinion over someone's life." [@KateDAdamo](#)
[rollingstone.com/culture/cultur](https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/cultur) ... [#sexwork](#)



Ashley Judd Confronted at Women's Event for Anti-Prostitution Beliefs

The actress supports a model that sex-worker activists say that will only put them more at risk.

[rollingstone.com](https://www.rollingstone.com)

**Sex Workers as Victims
(Victim-based) versus
Sex Workers as
Workers (Rights-based)**

Theoretical Framework

**the existing narrative
reinforces power
within the subsystem**

1. Narrative Policy Framework

**sex workers cannot
be reduced to a
single characteristic**

2. Intersectional Framework

FOSTA

Allow States and Victims
to Fight Online Sex
Trafficking Act of 2017

- ‘End demand’ approach
- Platform liability
- Information access
- Censorship & safety



Stop SESTA/FOSTA

Sex Workers And Survivors Raising The Alarm About
SESTA: It Will Literally Put Their Lives In Danger

from the [granstanding-putting-people's-lives-at-risk](#) dept

repeal fosta and decriminalize sex work

by crystal a. jackson and jenny heineman

**Real World Effects of
FOSTA**

Activists and advocacy organizations alike take issue with FOSTA-SESTA, but with two very different points of focus.

~~Free Speech~~ versus Sex Worker Rights

A 'rights-based' frame acknowledges sex works as workers who are not victims, but consensual, knowledgeable actors.



Sex work in the U.S.

Sex work

The importance of understanding the definitions & differences

- Sex work
- Sex workers
- Prostitutes
- Human trafficking
- Sex trafficking



Coalitions, Narratives, and the Problem with “Domestic Trafficking”

The Role of Narrative Policy Framework and Intersectional Framework

Research Design

Archival

- The Mann Act (1910)
- FOSTA-SESTA
- Woodhull v FOSTA



Interviews

- Melissa Gira Grant
- Phoenix
- Crystal Jackson
- Norman Shamas



Expected Findings

**Historical context for the
existing victim-based frame
and a pathway towards
developing a more accepted
rights-based frame.**

Conclusion

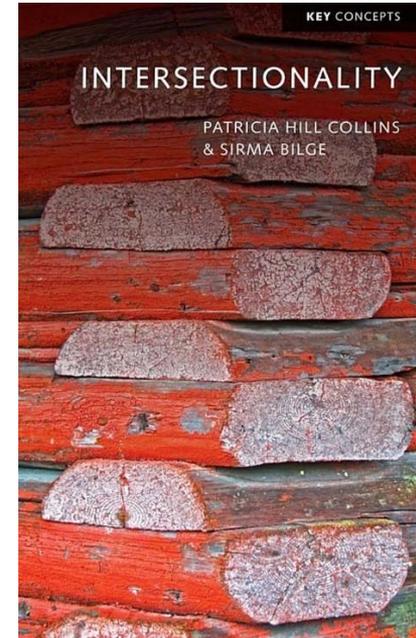
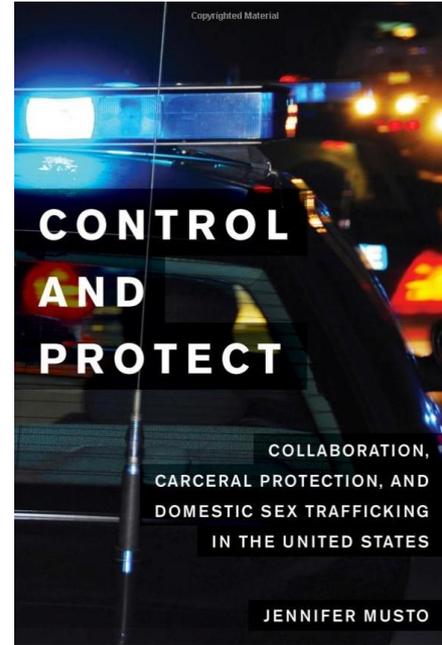
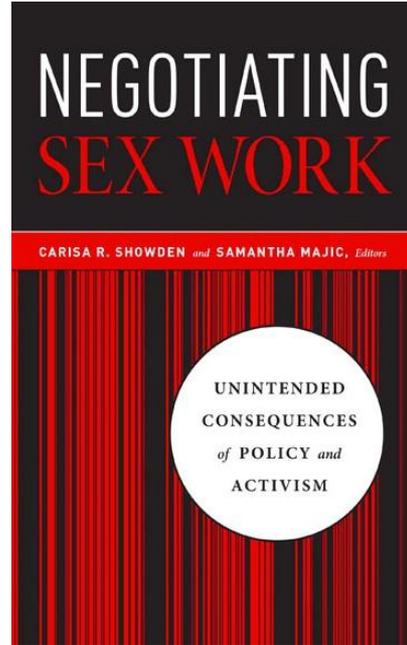
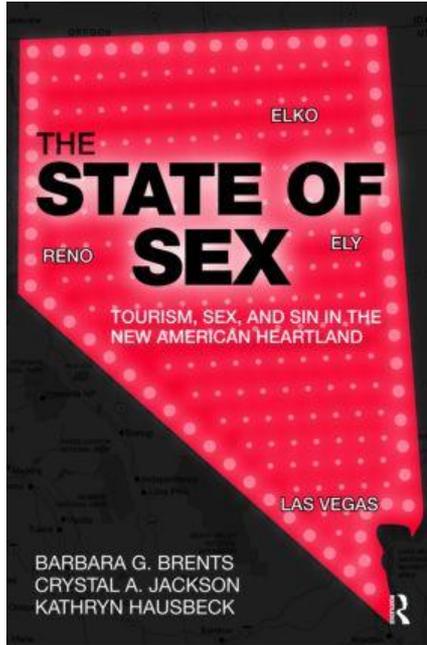
Conclusion

Understanding existing narratives can help us get to better narratives

- Information access
- Narrative assumptions
- Applied frameworks
- Flawed criticism
- Present and future



Recommended Readings



Question & Answer