

Advocacy Coalitions in East European Sex Tourism: The Case of Latvia

By

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## ABSTRACT

The widening of the European Union and the emergence of budget airlines have brought with them a host of challenges to new member states like Latvia. A result of the economic polarization and its disproportionate effect on women is the explosion of sex tourism. East European destinations such as Riga have become more prevalent and accessible for sex tourists particularly from Western Europe. Despite this influx of sex tourists, the Latvian government has not formulated a policy response to manage sex tourism. Using Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) from the public policy literature, this project examines sex tourism related policies from the late communist period, starting in 1980 to the present and investigates how policy subsystems influence the shaping of policy in post-communist democracies. Process tracing and elite interviews uncovered two coalitions that formed around Latvian sex tourism, a feminist advocacy coalition and a business advocacy coalition. The data also revealed that these coalitions have remained intact despite the, at times, fluid membership of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) due to economic constraints. This paper also determined that there is no policy on sex tourism in Latvia despite the fact that many government representatives said that there were similar measures found in other policies such as prostitution, pornography, human trafficking, and adult entertainment thus, sex tourism was just a name for another type of similar activity. In addition to these findings, this project also demonstrates that ACF is applicable to mature but evolving policy subsystems outside of the United States and Western Europe. It also recognizes feminist organizations and the subtleties of actors involved in feminist policy research as key players in the policy subsystem that share beliefs and coordinate activity.

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The widening of the European Union and the emergence of budget airlines have brought with them a host of challenges to new member states like Latvia. The transition from a command economy to a market economy in these societies has caused a polarization of income levels, which has left many people unable to meet the needs of a changing society while others profited. In this economic transition women were among the first to feel the burden.

A result of the economic polarization and its disproportionate effect on women is the explosion of sex tourism. Sunny paradises like the Caribbean and South East Asia or European destinations like Amsterdam or Hamburg are commonly seen as the most popular cities for the sex tourism industry. However, East European destinations such as Riga have become more prevalent and accessible for sex tourists particularly from Western Europe. Sex tourism websites rank Riga among the top 20 destinations for sex tourism in the world because of its old town locale and beautiful local women.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, in less than twenty years this country transformed from a closed society, for the most part off limits to outsiders and most tourists, to an open society with European Union membership and borderless visa-free travel.<sup>2</sup>

Despite this influx of sex tourists, the Latvian government has not formulated a policy response to manage sex tourism. However, policy silences or non-decisions can be considered policy outcomes (Weldon 2002; Conway, Ahren, and Steuernagel 1995; Bachrach and Baratz 1962), especially when in the absence of a decision other actors assume responsibility for the decisions made in this policy area (Conway, Ahren, and Steuernagel 1995). A non-decision is defined as “the manner in which the status quo oriented persons and groups influence those community values and those political institutions which tend to limit the scope of actual

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<sup>1</sup> According to Sex Tourism.org at <http://sex-tourism.org/best.html> and For Him Magazine (FHM) 2006 as referenced in <http://www.smh.com.au/travel/a-taste-for-the-real-riga-20090227-8jxy.html>.

<sup>2</sup> This is due to Schengen agreement which eliminates all internal border controls between the 25 member states. For information please see [http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope/nav/en/citizens/travelling/schengen-area/index.html#20122\\_3](http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope/nav/en/citizens/travelling/schengen-area/index.html#20122_3)

decision-making to "safe" issues." (Bachrach and Baratz 1962, 952). This means that there can be action within the advocacy coalitions that are working to influence political institutions or preserve the status quo, thus, despite no policy change there is still development and cooperation on an issue. This paper seeks to determine if advocacy coalitions have formed around this issue when there is no policy present and examines what kinds of advocacy coalitions have formed. It also examines policy change over time with the issue of sex tourism and explores what kind of change has occurred.

While the Latvian government's response is comparable to other similarly situated countries with a significant sex tourism industry including Thailand, Kenya, and the Dominican Republic, it is an interesting puzzle because many governments do not have a policy on sex tourism. This could be because the government does not want to recognize that it is a problem or because they have other policies that cover the area of sex tourism. In fact, the few countries with a sex tourism policy couple it with other types of policies and are not solely about sex tourism. For example, Brazil's Sustainable Tourism and Childhood program (Ribeiro 2010) aims to support families at risk for sex tourism and Madagascar's policy aims to fight against human trafficking, sex tourism, and incest with prevention programs and higher sentencing guidelines for criminals.

Using the case of Latvia, this project examines sex tourism policies from the late communist period, starting in mid-1980s to the present and investigates how policy subsystems influence the shaping of policy in post-communist democracies. It utilizes Paul Sabatier's Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) from the public policy literature, which hypothesizes that competing advocacy coalitions structure a policy domain. ACF places these advocacy coalitions at the center of the analysis and assumes that policy making occurs among specialists in a policy

subsystem. These advocacy coalitions are formed around a number of beliefs which motivate these coalitions to influence policy and this case is an opportunity to test the applicability of ACF in the international context. Sex tourism in Latvia presents a case for testing several hypotheses derived from ACF. I hypothesize that advocacy coalitions have formed around sex tourism but their maintenance, longevity, and amount of influence has limited the formation of sex tourism policy. I also hypothesize that there are a number of coalition resources which influence the ability of one coalition to influence policy change. Finally, I hypothesize that policy change has occurred in sex tourism but this change can be seen in a number of other areas related to sex tourism.

According to Sabatier and Weible, individuals will aggregate into coalitions based on their beliefs (2007), so in order to explain the policy process I will identify these policy outputs and their impact over time. I further expand upon the structure of the coalitions and how this structure is set up which elucidates the link between institutions and the policy subsystem in the political process or policymaking. In order to determine this, this project utilizes a process tracing of the policy process, content analysis of the policies, and elite interviews. In addition to the policy silences other policies are examined to determine the government's stance on sex tourism. Sex tourism encompasses many different policy areas (Tyldum and Brunovskis, 2005) such as prostitution, pornography, human trafficking, and adult entertainment. These topics are highly politicized, which coupled with key actors who have their own political agenda further complicates the situation and the policy environment around sex tourism (Tyldum and Brunovskis 2005).

Therefore, in the first level of analysis the dependent variable is the presence of advocacy coalitions and the independent variables are belief systems and external events. Other



independent variables include several stable parameters (such as attributes of the problem, sociocultural values and institutional structures) and short term parameters that provide restraints and therefore govern the actions of the actors within a subsystem. Then in the second level of analysis the dependent variable is policy change while the independent variables are advocacy coalitions and external shocks. Additionally, the units of analysis for this study are advocacy coalitions and the policy subsystem that correspond to the ACF.

This project adds significantly to the literature on policy and gender by taking a policy analysis approach to sex tourism, which is not usually seen in this field of research. In fact, only recently has ACF expanded beyond policy applications in the United States; therefore, not only is the case of Latvia unique but also the policy area. My research adds to the literature on ACF as well as feminist international political economy. Moreover, it offers real world applications to policy makers on how to combat this expanding problem and applies the concept of sex tourism to a country in Eastern Europe, a region not normally thought of as a haven for sex tourists. This paper is also the first to examine the phenomenon of sex tourism through stag parties in Eastern Europe.

This paper begins with an introduction to the Advocacy Coalition Framework in Chapter One. It examines the theoretical development of ACF and why it is the best framework for the case of Latvian sex tourism. ACF is unique compared to other frameworks because it recognizes the variety of actors in the policy subsystem and how these actors work together to achieve policy change. The chapter examines the nuances and intricacies of the ACF and discusses the framework's application to sex tourism in Latvia. It also outlines the expectations of the framework and the different applications of the framework that have been used in the past. Finally, it discusses the differences between policy development in corporatist systems versus

pluralist systems such as the United States. This foundation is important because we need to understand the expectations of the ACF and what the assumptions of the theory will determine if the Latvian case can test the applicability of ACF.

Chapter Two defines sex tourism and how it has developed into its current manifestation. It examines the close relationship between sex and tourism and what constitutes this relationship. This chapter compares the differences between the Latvian case and sex tourism in other European cities. It also describes the factors contributing to the explosion of sex tourism in Eastern Europe. Lastly, it provides an in-depth look at sex tourism in Latvia providing background information on gender equality and the status of women in the country which led to the development of sex tourism. It also examines how significant the problem is and the recent consequences of sex tourism in Latvia. This chapter is important because understanding the nature of sex tourism is integral to understanding what types of policies surround this issue. It is also important to examine background information on the nature of sex tourism in Latvia, the status of women in Latvia which has added to the problem, and the consequences of sex tourism because all of this informs the current situation and the policy environment in Latvia.

The methods and data are presented in Chapter Three. The beginning of chapter outlines the methods used in this study which includes process tracing, content analysis and interviews. This process tracing of policies related to sex tourism includes prostitution, pornography, and human trafficking policies. The policy process is presented to determine how these policies or laws have developed and what type of influence, if any, can be seen in their adoption and implementation. A content analysis of these policies is also presented to determine the type of policy that exists in Latvia. Elite interviews with advocacy coalition members who shaped the policy process are also added to determine the coalitions present in the issue of sex tourism. This

chapter is important because the development of policies surrounding sex tourism demonstrates that advocacy coalitions have formed around this issue and identifies the beliefs that hold these coalitions together. This chapter further reveals how these policies have changed over time to meet the needs of the changing policy environment and how the emergence of advocacy coalitions has influenced this development. All of these data are important for the analysis presented in the next chapter.

Chapter Four outlines the findings of the study by analyzing and synthesizing the results. It involves an in-depth discussion of the case study and identifies the advocacy coalitions surrounding the issue of sex tourism and the belief structure of these coalitions. This chapter also examines the coalition's interactions within a policy subsystem, in order to ascertain if advocacy coalitions affect policy change in sex tourism policy over time. This chapter also explores whether sex tourism policy is necessary to combat sex tourism or if the other policies on human trafficking, prostitution, and pornography encompass this issue. This is an interesting puzzle because it is similar to other countries in the world with a significant sex tourism problem, thus this examination can inform us about similarly situated countries because the concept of sex tourism has not been analyzed with respect to public policy. Additionally, governmental approaches to sex tourism have never been analyzed from an Advocacy Coalition Framework approach. Therefore, this project will explore Latvia's approach to sex tourism and attempt to determine why a policy has not been developed. Theoretical and methodological limitations to the research and findings are also presented and finally, the conclusion will examine further questions to develop the research.

## 1. Theoretical Framework

“The most important thing is to invite NGOs, not only the government but also NGOs, and in those meetings the situation is discussed as well as what must be improved. There we try to solve the problems and construct a dialogue.”<sup>3</sup>

This chapter begins with a broad discussion of the beginnings of the theoretical development of public policy. It addresses other theories and reveals why ACF is the most appropriate framework for sex tourism in the Latvian case. Then it maps out the main parts of the ACF framework, explains how sex tourism fits into this framework, and addresses the main criticisms of ACF with its application to cases in Eastern Europe.

### *Theoretical Development*

ACF developed out of a number of theories in the public policy literature that looked to examine and make sense of the policy process. Therefore, this section will examine the development of ACF through elements from other theories, including the State Heuristic, Multiple-Streams framework, Punctuated-Equilibrium framework, and Institutional Rational Choice. The Stages Heuristic was the first framework developed to understand the complexities of the policy process (Laswell 1956; Jones 1970). It divided the policy making process into a number of stages including agenda setting, policy formation, policy implementation, and policy evaluation (Sabatier 2007). This allowed scholars to study the different stages independently of each other, but it never really progressed beyond a descriptive framework. As a result, the main criticism of this approach is that it is not a causal and falsifiable theory across the entire policy process (Nakamura 1987; Sabatier 1991). Instead, it is most significantly recognized as a typology that allows scholars to organize types of policy categories not as a framework subject to

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<sup>3</sup> Latvian Government Official, personal interview, July 23, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

empirical tests. Therefore, Stages Heuristic does not address the policy environment as a whole and would not fit into the Latvian case, which calls for a theory outlining the policy environment and causes of policy change. The Stages Heuristic views policy participants in their traditional usage (Congress, Interest Groups, and Bureaucracy) and excludes journalists and researchers (Weible and Sabatier, 2006) which are important contributors to the policy process in the ACF. This framework only focuses on one policy, but in the Latvian case there are a number of different policies interacting in this policy subsystem, thus coalitions operate across multiple policies and focus on a number of different policies simultaneously (Weible, Sabatier and McQueen 2009). ACF accounts for this multiplicity of policies, while the Stage Heuristic does not; therefore, ACF is a more appropriate framework with which to view Latvian sex tourism. Additionally, Stages Heuristic only addresses policy change in a top-down approach with respect to passing legislation, which completely ignores advocacy coalitions and the influence that grass roots and women's organizations have in the policy process. Stages Heuristic also would not recognize policy silences or non-decisions and consequently is not a good fit for the Latvian case.

Multiple-Streams framework developed by Kingdon (1984) grew out of the agenda-setting stage of the stages heuristic and the "garbage can" model introduced by Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972). The framework consists of a variety of streams including: the problem stream, which describes problems and their proponents; the policy stream, which includes proponents of solutions to policy problems; and the politics stream, which contains elections and elected officials (Kingdon 1984 and Sabatier 2007, 9). The streams are independent of each other until something happens that forces policy entrepreneurs to put the streams together and successful policy change occurs (Kingdon 1984 and Sabatier 2007, 9). This framework has been mostly

applied to explain agenda-setting despite the fact that it is designed for the entire policy subsystem (Sabatier 2007, 6). Consequently, there are not many applications of the framework outside of the agenda-setting stage of the policy process, and it is unclear how the “windows of opportunity would work in a non-democratic or transitioning democracy [a category which Latvia can fit into] when elements of the process and actors can be controlled” (Schlager 2007). Multiple-Streams also focuses entirely on the national level at the expense of the sub-national and supra-national actors involved in the subsystem (Schlager 2007). These actors are important in the Latvian case because supra-national organizations, such as the European Union and NATO, have a significant impact on policy development. Therefore, Multiple-Streams is not a suitable framework for sex tourism in the Latvian case.

Punctuated-equilibrium (PE) framework developed by Baumgartner and Jones also focuses on issue definition and agenda-setting by examining both stability and change in public policy making (Truce, Jones, and Baumgartner 2007). These periods of change are caused by the “interaction of boundedly rational people in institutional settings characterized by parallel processing of the policy subsystems and serial information processing of the macropolitical system” (Schlager 2007). The causal drivers of this framework that explain patterns of decisions are interest mobilization, policy image and venues (Truce, Jones, and Baumgartner 2007; Schlager 2007). It also addresses the temporal element which, recognizes that policy change happens through both incremental and quick change even when it seems like it occurs instantly (Truce, Jones, and Baumgartner 2007). Despite this, the PE would not be appropriate to the Latvian case because it is used to examine patterns of decision makers or particular policy options, but this study focuses on advocacy coalitions that structure the policy domain. Therefore, PE calls for a different unit of analysis and does not take these coalitions into

consideration, which are the foundation of the sex tourism subsystem. Additionally, the framework explains policy change but cannot offer predictions or determine why change occurs and what leads to change; instead, it determines that “punctuations can happen and that the magnitude of the change will be related to its frequency of occurrence but will not allow us to make predictions for policy issues” (Schlager 2007).

Institutional Rational Choice examines the behavior of the individual in the marketplace and “how institutional rules alter behavior of rational individuals motivated by material self-interest” (Sabatier 2007, 9). The rational choice approach bridges a number of disciplines, is broad in scope, and has been applied to cases outside of the United States (Sabatier 2007, 9). The framework that has come out of the rational choice literature is the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework (IAD) purported by Elinor Ostrom (2005). The major assumption to come out of this framework is that changes in rules affect changes in behavior because according to IAD rules change but individual action does not (Ostrom 2007). The framework argues that physical and material conditions, attributes of the community and rules-in-use all influence the action arena (Ostrom 2007). It also uses the action arena as the unit of analysis then moves on to “the resulting patterns of interactions and outcomes and then evaluation of these outcomes” (Ostrom 2007). This framework examines policy on three different levels of decision making the operational level (bottom-up), the collective choice level (intermediate) and the constitutional level (top-down) (Ostrom 2007). Therefore, while IAD has a lot in common with ACF it runs counter to ACF because ACF contends that people can change their behavior and has less emphasis on the rules that structure this behavior. Additionally, ACF can examine multiple institutions at work but IAD is limited when multiple institutions are involved (Schlager 2007).

### *Advocacy Coalition Framework*

ACF has grown out of these theories, and its theoretical development incorporates influences from previous frameworks. Sabatier's work with the implementation literature led him to develop this theory with Jenkins-Smith that "makes sense of significant conflicts and technical disputes among multiple actors over a period of ten years or more concentrating on policy change and the interaction of advocacy coalitions within a policy subsystem" (Hoppe and Peterse 1993, Sabatier and Weible 2007, 189). ACF seeks to explain policy change by placing coalitions in the center of analysis and hypothesizes that change occurs through these coalitions. There are a number of paths to policy change that will be examined later in this section but first ACF's basic assumptions will be investigated.

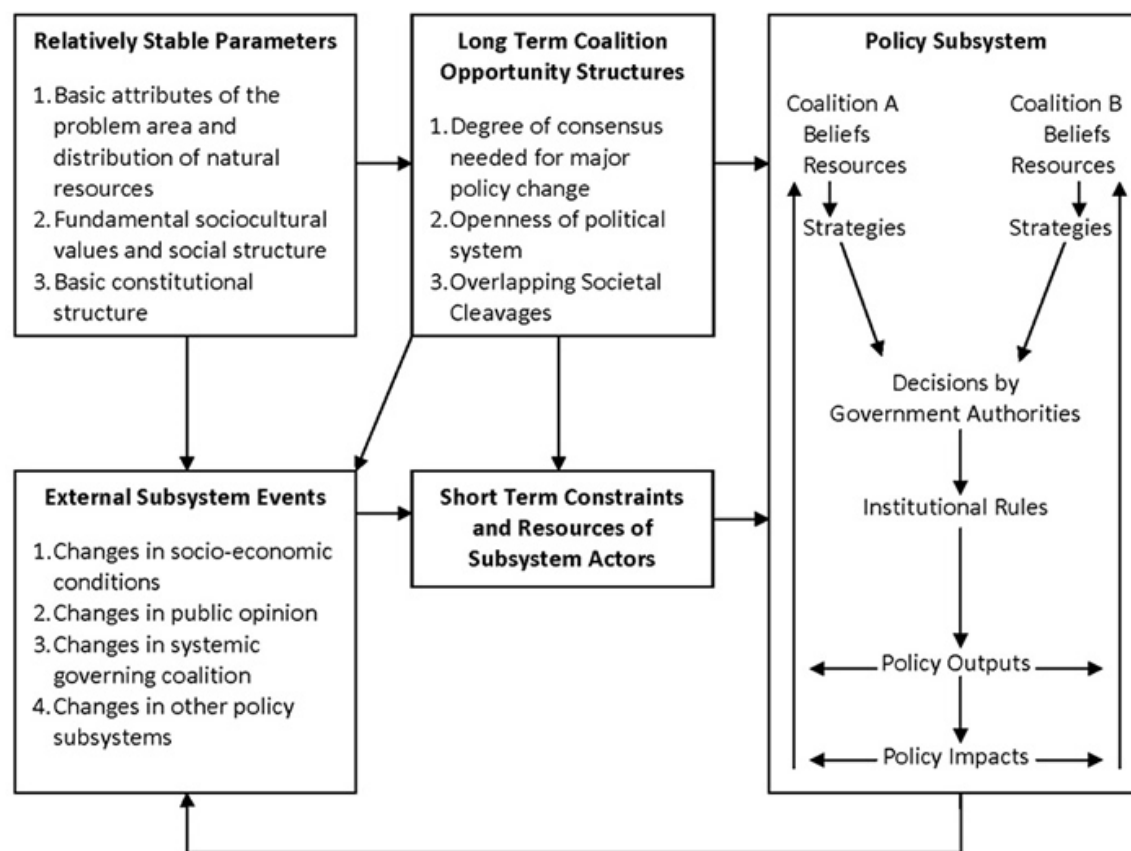
The first version of ACF (1993) mapped five basic premises that Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith argue are central to ACF. First, they posit that theories of policy processes need to examine the central role of scientific and technical information because these are the elements that policy elites discuss (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993, 16-17). Second, a time perspective of ten years or more is necessary to understand policy change in order to obtain an accurate assessment of policy impacts (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993, 16-17). Third, the authors use the policy subsystem as the primary unit of analysis because there are numerous laws and policy initiatives in a policy subsystem at any given time (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993, 16-17). Limiting the unit of analysis to only one of these organizations or programs would exclude the multiplicity of policies that exist in each policy subsystem (Sabatier and Weible 2007). The fourth basic premise of ACF is that policy subsystems include a broad set of subsystem actors from different levels of government on international and national levels (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993, 16-17). Fifth, is a "perspective that policies and programs are best thought of as a



translation of beliefs” that map beliefs and policies simultaneously providing a mechanism for assessing the influence of multiple actors over time (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993, 16-17). Finally, these basic assumptions have been pared down and combined in more recent versions of ACF, but that does not take away from their importance as the basic assumptions guiding this framework and the resulting hypotheses.

Given these basic assumptions, the structural overview of ACF is discussed in the following section. Policies are developed in a complex interdependent environment where numerous actors interact in “nested institutional arrangements, uneven power relations, and with complex scientific information about problems and alternatives” (Weible, Sabatier and McQueen, 2009). The framework includes most of the stages of the policy cycle including top-down and bottom-up approaches and acknowledges the complexity of the scientific and technical information in the policy environment (Weible, Sabatier and McQueen, 2009). ACF attempts to simplify this policy environment and its numerous actors into a workable guide to policy change for all the actors involved. Figure 1 shows the basic framework and how “subsystems operate within a broader political environment defined by relatively stable parameters and external events, and constrained by long-term coalition opportunity structures, short-term constraints and resources of sub-system actors and other policy subsystem events” (Weible, Sabatier and McQueen, 2009).

**Figure 1** The Advocacy Coalition Framework



Source: University of Colorado Denver, *Advocacy Coalition Framework*

ACF is not without critiques as scholars have raised questions about its applicability outside of the United States context (Carter 2001; John 1998; Parsons 1995; Sabatier and Weible 2007). The differences in applicability between corporatist and pluralist systems will be expanded more in the following section of this paper, but a few are introduced here because they relate to the political opportunity structure of the framework. Stable parameters and external subsystem events that affect the long and short term opportunity structures and resources of subsystems actors were added to the model for parliamentary systems because different countries have different political cultures (Sabatier 1998, 120). As outlined in Figure 1.1 the long term constraints include the degree of consensus needed for major policy change, openness of political

system, and overlapping societal cleavages (Weible and Sabatier, 2006). The degree of consensus needed differs dependent on regime type, but this does not limit ACF's applicability to these systems because according to Sabatier and Weible "the higher the degree of consensus required, the more incentive coalitions have to be inclusive (rather than exclusive), to seek compromise, and share information with opponents and to minimize the devil shift" (2007). Therefore, ACF is applicable to the United States where a strong majority is needed and also parliamentary systems such as Germany and Latvia where there is a consensus needed, this not only affects "constraints and strategies of subsystem actors but also the probability that major policy change will occur" (Sabatier 1998, 121). The openness of the political system also presents a significant difference between corporatist and pluralist regimes because corporatist systems are more closed off and have fewer actors, thus the advocacy coalitions will tend to have fewer actors (Sabatier and Weible, 2007). Overlapping societal cleavages are also recognized as the final element in the long term opportunity structure, but no concrete discussion of this constraint was presented in the literature by the authors of the framework. ACF claims that it is useful in cases of political conflict but does not offer any specifics on how this affects the likelihood of policy change (Nohrstedt 2010).

Finally, short term constraints and resources of subsystem actors influence the policy subsystem because "ACF assumes that individuals employ a variety of resources that enable them to develop strategies to influence policy through a variety of venues" (Weible and Sabatier 2006). Resources include the "formal legal authority to make decisions, public opinion, information, mobilizable troops, financial resources, and skillful leadership" (Weible and Sabatier 2006). The authors acknowledge that operationalizing these variables and comparing them across coalitions can be extremely difficult and only two studies have measured resources

through network data (Weible 2005) and qualitative analysis (Mintrom and Vergari 1996; as referenced in Sabatier and Weible 2007, 204).

Most relevant to the Latvian case of sex tourism policy is the policy subsystem. This paper focuses on the policy subsystem itself and the belief structure of the actors in the policy subsystem. Most of the policy making occurs among specialists within a policy subsystem who are influenced by external shocks to the system, stable parameters and coalition opportunity structures (Sabatier and Weible 2007). Therefore, the best way to deal with a variety of actors in a subsystem is to aggregate them into advocacy coalitions (Sabatier and Weible 2007).

Policy subsystems are “defined by their territorial boundary, substantive topic, and the hundreds of policy participants” that make up the advocacy coalitions (Weible and Sabatier 2006). In order to achieve their desired policy, participants on both sides specialize in a policy subsystem to advocate for their objectives, then they maintain participation over time to ensure that these objectives are achieved (Weible and Sabatier 2006). The authors acknowledge that defining the territorial and substantive boundaries of the policy subsystem is difficult because there is significant overlap between subsystems, issues and actors (Weible and Sabatier 2006). Despite this limitation, the authors make a number of assumptions regarding the policy subsystem with respect to the “cognitive abilities, motivations, and beliefs of policy participants (called the “model of the individual”), the tendency for most policy participants to join advocacy coalitions, the likelihood that few policy participants remain neutral as policy brokers, the use of resources by coalitions and the venues within which coalitions influence policy” (Weible and Sabatier 2006). This model of the individual incorporated into the ACF assumes that individuals do not always act rationally by pursuing only material interests, rather it assumes that “normative beliefs must be empirically ascertained and does not a priori preclude the possibility of altruistic

behavior” (Sabatier and Weible 2007). ACF assumes that these actors are constrained by their limited ability to learn new information and filter perceptions through their belief system (Lord, Ross, and Lepper 1979; Scholz and Pinney 1995 as referenced in Weible and Sabatier 2006).

The policy subsystem is unit of analysis for this study which is comprised of journalists, researchers, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), intergovernmental policy analysts, and other actors in policy formulation such as bureaucrats and policy entrepreneurs. Some scholars split up the subsystem to differentiate between policy networks and policy community based on motivations guiding actions of policy formation (Howlett and Rumesh 1998) but since the end goal for each coalition is the same (policy formation) it is more fruitful to keep them together and examine the coordinated action over time. The policy subsystem spans across “public and private sectors, different branches of government, and different levels of the federal system” (Footen 2000). Because the policy subsystem has spanned different levels of government in the federal system of the United State this paper will also examine if the subsystem in Latvia concerning sex tourism spans to the supranational level European Union. The model of individual rationality explained above motivates these actors “to seek out other like minded individuals and form advocacy coalitions” (Weible and Sabatier 2006). These actors share a set of normative and causal beliefs and engage in coordinated activity over time (Sabatier 1998). ACF is designed to take a complex system with a large number of actors and simplify it down to a concerted group working towards a desirable policy outcome where “the success of policy participants depends on their ability to translate their policy core beliefs into actual policy” (Weible and Sabatier 2006). The actions of the coalitions are mediated by brokers and influenced by constraints and resources (Sabatier and Weible 2007). Policy brokers mediate advocacy coalition conflicts. Disagreements over policy often escalate between advocacy coalitions so

policy brokers attempt to find a reasonable compromise among the advocacy coalitions (Weible and Sabatier 2006). Policy brokers can include elected officials (Munro 1993), civil servants (Doggan 1975), and courts (Mawhinney 1993; Weible and Sabatier 2006).

These policy subsystems are aggregated into advocacy coalitions that share a belief system and act together to produce policy programs (Sabatier and Weible 2007). However, belief systems are a precursor to the development of advocacy coalitions. The belief system is divided into three different levels: deep core, policy core, and secondary aspects (Sabatier and Weible 2007, 191). Deep core beliefs are normative and societal beliefs that most people in a culture share; they are a product of early socialization from childhood and as a result are very difficult to change (Sabatier and Weible 2007). Policy core beliefs span the entire subsystem, “are highly salient and have been a major source of some cleavage over time,” which also makes them very difficult to change (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999, 134). These beliefs hold the coalitions together and differentiate them from other coalitions (Sabatier and Weible 2007, 195). There are eleven categories of policy core beliefs that assume that “policy participants are very knowledgeable about the relationships within their policy subsystem and thus may be willing to invest the effort to apply certain deep core beliefs to develop policy core beliefs in the subsystem” (Sabatier and Weible 2007, 195). The secondary beliefs are more narrow and do not span the entire subsystem compared to the policy core beliefs (Sabatier and Weible 2007, 196). They are more easily changed because “they require less evidence and fewer agreements among subsystem actors” (Sabatier and Weible 2007, 196). An outline of these belief structures among the coalitions in Latvian sex tourism will be presented in Chapter Four.

There have been a number of studies that have tested the presence of advocacy coalitions and their maintenance through an examination of the change (or lack of change) in beliefs of the

advocacy coalitions (Jenkins-Smith and St. Clair 1993, Jenkins-Smith, St. Clair, and Woods 1991, Zafonte and Sabatier 2004, Schlager 1995, Schorn 2005). Jenkins-Smith, St. Clair, and Woods argue that electoral change and other exogenous events can explain coalition defections because “even highly polarized and stable systems, public agencies are highly volatile as they respond to their various principles and to exogenous events” (1991, 877). Jenkins-Smith and St. Clair combine belief systems and policy change in their examination of offshore energy policy as a test of ACF and find that belief structure changes are linked with the external events of the energy crises (1993). They highlight cases of non-electoral exogenous events as drivers of bureaucratic behavior and find that coalitions remain stable over time but members are not always constrained by belief systems (Jenkins-Smith and St. Clair 1993, 170-2). Other authors also find that strong conflicts between fundamental policy beliefs and the lack of a quasi-scientific forum for debate can limit policy-oriented learning (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1988, Heintz 1998). Heintz argues that most policy debates involve a mix of the quasi-religious, quasi-scientific and self-interest elements in the belief systems of opposing coalitions and the wider population from which they seek support (1998) which will be interesting to consider in the Latvian case.

Schlager brought forth one more significant criticism of ACF with respect to advocacy coalition formulation and action by questioning how these coalitions come together to form (1995). She hypothesizes that “actors who share beliefs are more likely to engage in at least minimal levels of collective action if they interact repeatedly and experience relatively low information costs” (Schlager 1995, 262). Schlager also hypothesizes that “coalitions are likely to persist if the major beneficiaries of the benefits that a coalition produces are clearly identified and are members of the coalition” (1995, 264). Mawhinney (1993) examines competing and

unequal coalitions and determines that minority coalitions have a greater incentive to remain intact because they hope to gain power while majority coalitions can become less cohesive because they already have power. Zafonte and Sabatier seem to build off of this idea of coalition stability and determine that coalitions are stable over time but they do not find support that broader beliefs are more stable than secondary beliefs (2004). However, the authors admit that this has to do with the former categorization of beliefs which was reformulated to include subsystem wide beliefs in the policy core preferences (Zafonte and Sabatier 2004, 98). Coalition stability will be especially interesting to examine in the Latvian case where funding for interest groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) creates a fluid policy environment with new organizations entering the subsystem and old organizations collapsing due to lack of funding.

Belief structures have been examined in a variety of ways in the literature with questionnaire data (Herron et al. 2005; Weible et al 2004), content analysis (Chen 2003; Zafonte and Sabatier 2004; Larson et al. 2006), and interviews (Liftin 2000; Elliot and Schlaepfer 2001; Green and Houlihan 2004). Sabatier and Weible suggest conducting interviews with participants in at least two different advocacy coalitions (Weible and Sabatier 2006). These can be used to identify and operationalize belief structures and advocacy coalitions. Thus the belief structures and the advocacy coalitions will be elucidated in Chapter Four.

### *ACF Expectations*

This paper will examine how advocacy coalitions affect policy change and determine if policy change happens due to external perturbations or advocacy coalitions. Significant perturbations to the system are a necessary but not sufficient cause of change in the policy core attributes of the governmental program (Sabatier and Weible 2007). Therefore, the development



and changes of the advocacy coalitions will be a significant element of this study. The study will further examine how actors form around the issue of sex tourism and respond to policy issues through institutions within the Latvian government.

ACF seeks to explain policy change by hypothesizing that change occurs through coalitions that arise due to four different paths in a policy subsystem. The model of the individual comes into consideration again due to distrust among the coalitions which makes it unlikely that coalition members will change their policy core beliefs voluntarily (Sabatier and Weible 2007). Major policy change must come from outside of the coalition through external means (Sabatier and Weible 2007). Sabatier and Weible hypothesize four paths to policy change. The first path contends that external shocks to the system including changes in socio-economic conditions, public opinion, governing coalitions or other changes in the policy subsystem are a necessary but not sufficient condition for policy change because they can affect the policy core beliefs of the subsystem (Sabatier and Weible 2007; Weible, Sabatier and McQueen, 2009). These external shocks initiate change by shifting resources and changing beliefs within the coalitions that can draw attention to the cause and tip the power of coalitions (Weible and Sabatier 2006). Second, policy change can occur through policy-oriented learning, which can induce policy change through new ideas or research and can cause a revision of policy objectives (Weible, Sabatier and McQueen, 2009). Policy-oriented learning can also affect the beliefs of advocacy coalition actors but learning is impeded because individuals face the aforementioned cognitive constraints (Weible and Sabatier 2006). Additionally, policy learning happens over a longer period of time (ten years or more) than external shocks and they have an effect on secondary beliefs (Weiss 1977 as referenced in Sabatier and Weible 2007).

The third path is through internal subsystem events, that happen internally within the subsystem and reveal shortcomings in the current subsystem practices (Weible, Sabatier and McQueen, 2009). The fourth and final path to policy change is from negotiated agreements between advocacy coalitions. In this model of policy change there is cross-coalition learning that allows safe negotiation and implementation of agreements leading to policy change (Weible, Sabatier and McQueen, 2009). One of these events outlined in the literature is a hurting stalemate which is when all advocacy coalitions reject a continuation of the status quo and are out of solutions so they are willing to compromise and negotiate policy change (Weible and Sabatier 2006).

The plethora of research applying ACF has led to a number of testable hypotheses and theoretical expectations which are also germane to this study. ACF theorizes that beliefs are the causal driver for this political behavior (Weible, Sabatier, and McQueen 2009). Rational actors seek allies who hold similar beliefs and these actors want to translate their beliefs into actual policy before their opponents can do the same (Weible, Sabatier, and McQueen 2009). ACF hypothesizes that when core beliefs are disputed within a subsystem the advocacy coalitions tend to be stable over a decade or so (Sabatier and Weible 2007). It also assumes that actors within these coalitions will agree on issues pertaining to the policy core beliefs but that there will be less agreement on the secondary beliefs (Sabatier and Weible 2007). Finally, it assumes that significant external shocks “are a necessary but not sufficient cause of change in the policy core attributes of a governmental program” (Sabatier and Weible 2007). All of these hypotheses will be tested on the Latvian case in the methods section of the paper.

*ACF Applications*

ACF was developed from the policymaking systems of the United States but has also been applied to a number of advanced industrialized and established democracies.<sup>4</sup> It has been largely applied to environmental policy with little attention to applications in areas that include underlying issues such as morality, sexuality, or democratic transitions. The framework was revised, in response to criticism from scholars outside of the United States, to include non-pluralist European and authoritarian regimes, and as a result its applicability has expanded beyond the US and Western Europe (Sabatier and Weible 2007). East European countries are unique in policy applications because they have transitioned away from an authoritarian regime and been democratic for 20 years but they are not yet advanced industrialized societies nor established democracies. According to Freedom House, Latvia has been categorized as a free and democratic society since the survey began there in 2002 (Freedom House 2011). Therefore, the temporal constraint of ten years has been met in post-communist countries because for a significant portion of this period they were recognized as democratic. Sabatier acknowledges that systems do not have to have a democratic prerequisite to fit into the ACF framework, “the minimal condition for ACF to be useful is that some degree of coordinated dissent from the policies of a dominant coalition exists” (1998). Andersson’s application of environmental policy in Poland from 1980 to the present, a period that included martial law and overt authoritarianism, demonstrates this successful application of ACF (1999). It reveals that ACF was useful in this case because it helped identify membership and coalition belief changes during a period of extreme authoritarianism (Andersson 1999, Sabatier 1998) Consequently, this paper will seek to emulate Andersson’s by also showing that ACF can be used in the East European context even

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<sup>4</sup> For an extensive list of ACF applications please see Sabatier 2007 (Sabatier and Weible 2007, 217-219)

though the Latvian case does not fit precisely into the mature policy system for which it was established.

Furthermore, arguments have been made that ACF cannot be applied to parliamentary systems. This is because policy subsystems are more complex due to multi-party coalition governments and have a number of differences which must be taken into consideration. First, policy documents in parliamentary systems can come in many different forms. In Latvia there is a hierarchy of laws and policies with the highest level being restitution, then laws, Cabinet of Ministers regulations, and finally Municipal Government regulations.<sup>5</sup> These documents have a legal status that is more ambiguous than policy documents in the American context, where there are concrete policies or laws passed by Congress or promulgated by the cabinet (Sabatier 1998). As a result these policy changes are more difficult to track unless one has an intimate knowledge of the inner workings of the ministries. Second, according to Sabatier elections in parliamentary systems are less frequent, that means that it is difficult to determine when a major policy change has occurred because the government can spread out the reforms over a much longer period of time than in the US context (for example through a white paper, then a framework or law, and finally a detailed implementation) (1998, 120). This is incorrect and has since been removed from subsequent explanations of ACF because while the schedule of elections in parliamentary democracies can occur over a longer period of time than presidential democracies, governing coalitions can also fall and new elections will be held. This means that the frequency of elections in parliamentary systems, on average, actually turns out to be greater than in presidential systems but the schedule for these elections can be longer than in the presidential context. Additionally, these changes in governing coalitions constitute an external shock to the policy subsystem which can initiate policy change. As a result of these differences, Sabatier added the degree of

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<sup>5</sup> Government Official, personal interview, July 23, 2009, Riga Latvia.

consensus needed as an intervening variable to the model that affects the “constraints of subsystem actors, but also the probability that major policy change will actually occur” (Sabatier 1998).

Since policy development in parliamentary systems differs from the presidential systems like the United States, a brief outline of how policies in Latvia develop is necessary to explore these differences. This is important because there are institutional differences across regime types that must be taken into consideration when examining the development of policy. In Latvia the policy documents mentioned previously are passed down by the Cabinet of Ministers, the highest executive body in parliamentary systems comprised of the ministers of the thirteen individual ministries and the Prime Minister. These policies are promulgated by the ministers themselves or the Committee of the Cabinet of Ministers, which consists of all “members of the Cabinet, State Secretaries of Ministries, as well as representatives of the working group of the draft and representatives of other relevant institutions and non-governmental organizations” (MK 2008). The Cabinet of Ministers then approves laws which are sent to parliament to be debated but they also approve a number of policies which are implemented in the Ministries. These types of policy documents account for approximately 75 percent of all the legislation in Latvia.<sup>6</sup> There are two different types of policies: legal acts and policy documents; legal acts include normative acts, draft legislation, and regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers while policy documents are programs, and guidelines decided upon by the Cabinet of Ministers.<sup>7</sup> If none of the Cabinet members present objects against the decision, the Cabinet of Ministers acts unanimously, however, if any of the present cabinet members object a vote is called and in the event of a tie, the Prime Minister casts the deciding vote (Ministru kabineta iekārtas likums hereafter MKL

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<sup>6</sup> Policy Expert, personal interview, August 6, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>7</sup> Policy Expert, personal interview, August 6, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

2008). The Cabinet meetings are open to the public and if there is a vote, the vote totals are available however, to my knowledge the debates of these meetings are not available so there is no way to tell who voted for or against certain policies. Policies can also be made on the municipal level and this process is similar to city councils in most municipalities. However, the interaction between different levels of governance in Latvia is somewhat messy as exemplified by this quote:

There are state policies that function on the level of the state and further Riga's Dome [city council] has their own policies and similarly the municipality has their own. The problem with law making is that it's not set up so precisely, if we take for example, something gets crossed somewhere maybe then state policy takes over, whereby limiting municipal power. It's not suitable and there has to be communication with state police and the subject has to be given over to the state police for possession.<sup>8</sup>

ACF has been widely applied to different policy areas such as health care, economic policy, and environmental policy to explain the policy process. It was formulated to understand the role that technical information plays in the policy process and most specifically geared toward environmental and energy policies (Sabatier and Weible 2007). ACF assumes that this scientific and technical information plays a role in modifying beliefs of policy participants, which is why researchers are an important component of the policy process (Sabatier and Weible 2007). This relates to the dependent and independent variables in this study because this information can change the beliefs of the participants in the advocacy coalitions, which as stated previously is a condition for policy change. More recently ACF has been utilized to explain feminist issues such as emergency contraceptives (Schorn, 2005) domestic violence policy subsystems (Abrar, Lovenduski, and Margetts, 2000), human trafficking (Footen 2000), abortion and equal pay (Shannon 1997). These feminist applications of ACF demonstrate that feminist beliefs can drive and influence policy change in the area of domestic violence policy and have

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<sup>8</sup> Tourism Official, personal interview, July 28, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

even adjusted the core belief structure of advocacy coalitions (Abrar, Lovenduski, and Margetts, 2000). The authors argue that “resistance to feminist proposals comes partly from a set of beliefs about gender relations that is deeply embedded in the dominant culture” (Abrar, Lovenduski, and Margetts, 2000).

The emergency contraceptives study examined policy-oriented learning and determined that core beliefs drive the coalitions and provide the impetus to further feminist beliefs and policy priorities (Schorn 2005). The study on human trafficking in the United States demonstrates ACF’s application to valence policies, which are policies that are widely seen as a public evil (Footen 2000). This is an interesting test of ACF because on the surface we do not expect to see coalitions form around this issue because it is rare that actors come out in favor of human trafficking. Despite this, coalitions do emerge through congressional hearings, and they fall into a feminist coalition, a pragmatic coalition and a left/right coalition (Footen 2000). While no coalition favors trafficking, they do have imbedded belief structures and different approaches to solving human trafficking. Utilizing ACF in this case allows us to see the existence of coalitions and beliefs. It is also an interesting application of ACF because it shows that feminist policy can have both bottom-up and top-down approaches.

Shannon argues that effective feminist policy intervention must have subsystem models that include “top-down, bottom-up, and intermediate levels of institutionalized and non-institutionalized action and accommodate conflict over policy, within a contextual, systemic, background” (1997). She contends that ACF meets all of these criteria and she utilizes this framework to identify coalitions in her analysis of effective feminist policy intervention in Australia and Ireland on equal pay and abortion. These recent applications into feminist research demonstrate that this framework also discerns the subtleties of feminist public policy that many

other policy frameworks do not. ACF acknowledges belief systems of feminist advocacy coalitions and takes into account feminist interaction with state institutions (Abrar, Lovenduski, and Margetts, 2000). This is important in the Latvian case because it recognizes feminist organizations as key players in the policy subsystem simply because they share beliefs and coordinate activity, a point that will be elucidated in the later in the paper.

This study seeks to fit into and expand this feminist literature on ACF to other feminist issues such as prostitution and human trafficking. This research adds to the literature in its application of sex tourism, a highly contentious issue in Latvia, and determines if advocacy coalitions have emerged despite the fact that there is not policy on this issue. This study further assesses ACF's applicability outside of the United States and determines if this is a useful model to analyze policy change in the Latvian case. This paper argues that ACF is the most appropriate framework with which to investigate the sex tourism phenomenon because it encompasses multiple level actors by aggregating them into advocacy coalitions which allows us to analyze the variety of actors in a subsystem. It also addresses policy change with external perturbations which can affect the policy core beliefs something which can be seen in the Latvian case with its transformation from communism. Consequently, this framework was chosen because it considers the technical aspects and intricacies of sex tourism and the subtleties of actors involved in feminist policy research that many other frameworks fail to recognize. In conclusion, there are a number of other alternate models for policy change, however, as stated above they have obvious shortcomings in the Latvian case and do not address many of the nuances of ACF. Consequently, ACF is the most appropriate framework with which to investigate the sex tourism phenomenon in Latvia. Now that the theoretical framework has been established, the Chapter Two will set up and define sex tourism and its application to Eastern Europe through stag parties.



## 2. Sex Tourism

“The only problem is that we have an extremely large proportion of those British tourists. If we had other tourists, then Brits who piss about all the time would not be as visible. Let's not be completely politically correct - unfortunately, this is their specialty”  
Nils Ušakovs, Mayor of Riga (Bankovskis and Šlapins, 2009, 18)

Sex tourism is defined as tourism with the intent to seek out sexual experiences. Many times the travel destination is chosen based on the likelihood of finding these sexual experiences but incidental or situational sex tourism is also included in this definition because participants utilize sexual services while on vacation or a business trip when it presents itself and therefore, would fit into this category. This chapter explains the history of sex tourism in Eastern Europe, defines sex tourism and its linkages to other forms of tourism, examines the differences between the Latvian case and sex tourism in other European cities, and then describes the factors contributing to the explosion of sex tourism in Eastern Europe. Finally, a brief description of the sex tourism industry in Latvia will reveal the roots of this problem and some of the consequences this industry has brought to Latvia.

Several scholars argue that sex tourism is a product of the industrial revolution and movements of the last two hundred years (Ryan and Hall 2001). However, the concept of sex tourism in Eastern Europe can be traced back much further, as travelers from the West have been traveling east in search of sexual adventures since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, perpetuating and advancing a sort of conquest as they traveled (Wolff 1994). They wrote about their travels in books and magazines, glorifying their conquests, which in turn brought more people hoping to have similar experiences. According to Wolff, 18<sup>th</sup> century Eastern Europe became the domain for exploring sexual fantasy: “Every traveler from Western Europe was capable of deriving some satisfaction of this sort from the contemplation of Eastern Europe, which served to define the superior civilization of the visitor” (Wolff 1994, 68). Despite the fact that sex tourism is not a recent

phenomenon it has changed remarkably since the 17<sup>th</sup> century (with technology and globalization) making it more accessible to people from all social classes in society.

The concept of sex tourism has been discussed in the past decade across numerous disciplines and in some cases linked to prostitution and sex trafficking (Kampadoo 1998; Thorbeck and Pattanaik 2002; Bauer and McKercher 2003; and Pettman 1997).<sup>9</sup> Prostitution is a precursor for sex tourism in the Latvian case. Latvia has semi-legalized prostitution and the existence of this industry has facilitated the boom in sex tourism. Bauer and McKercher argue that sex tourism would not be possible if a sex industry subculture did not exist at the destination (2003, 4). Therefore, without an indigenous sex industry and unclear laws on prostitution, sex tourism would not exist in these two cases. Additionally, Cynthia Enloe has developed what can be seen as a recipe for sex tourism:

To succeed, sex tourism requires women to be economically desperate enough to enter prostitution. The other side of the equation requires men from affluent societies to imagine certain women...to be more available and submissive than the women in their own countries. Finally, the industry depends on an alliance between local government in search of foreign currency and local and foreign businessmen willing to invest in sexualized travel, (1989, 36-37).

These characteristics can be seen in the Latvian case and will be examined in the case study analysis.

As stated previously, sex tourism is defined as tourism with the intent to seek out sexual experiences. The travel destination is chosen based on the likelihood of finding these sexual experiences. The relationship between sex and tourism, put forth by Bauer and McKercher (2003, 5-6), can be described conceptually as consisting of three dimensions (Figure 1): first, the “role that sex plays as a motivator for travel”; second, “the nature of the encounter”; third, “the

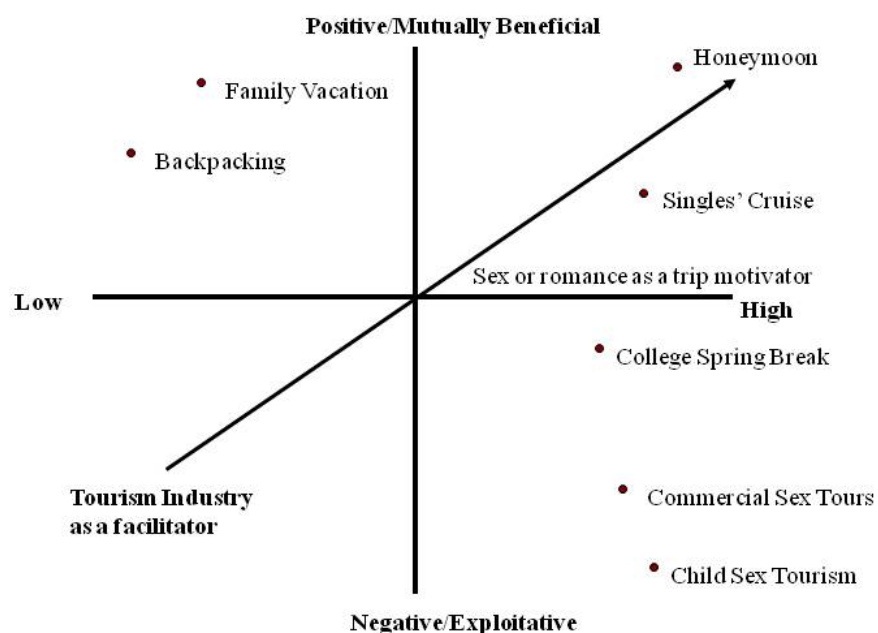
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<sup>9</sup> While the debate on the linkages between prostitution, human trafficking and sex tourism, is beyond the scope of this study it is important to note that many feminists disagree that legalized prostitution fuels the sex tourism industry and facilitates human trafficking.

role played by tourism as a facilitator of sexual...encounters” (Bauer and McKercher 2003, 5-6).

From this graph we can see the close relationship between sex and tourism and how they are merged under the concept of sex tourism in the lower left quadrant.

**Figure 2**



Source: Bauer and McKercher 2003, 4.

Sex tourists can be anyone from a woman seeking romance with a cabana boy in the Caribbean to a commercial sex tourist group looking to prey on underage girls in Thailand. Ryan and Hall acknowledge that there are a wide variety of sex tourism encounters ranging from the neophyte or first time sex tourist, to the returnee, and then veteran client (2001, 59). They also identify situational sex tourists who avail themselves of the opportunity when it presents itself. However, they fail to mention the most common type of sex tourism in Eastern Europe - stag parties. These stag or bachelor parties are groups of 20-40 year old men who primarily come to

Riga looking for a good time and cheap sex. Not all members of stag tours are sex tourists; only those who employ prostitutes for sexual purposes are sex tourists.

Sex tourism in Latvia differs from the sex tourism in other European cities like Hamburg and Amsterdam in several different ways. Prostitution is a legal and regulated industry in the Netherlands and Germany but in Latvia it is only legal under certain provisions. It lies in a moral grey area which means that most types of regulation and supervision fall outside of the law. Unlike women in the Netherlands and Germany who can choose to work in these legal industries, Latvian women are often forced into the industry due to economic necessity or human trafficking and cannot register prostitution as employment. Of course force and coercion do exist in the Dutch and German cases but the economic situation in those countries has not caused significant emigration and because the industries are legalized they can receive state benefits for their work. Consequently, there is a higher likelihood of exploitation in Latvia because prostitution is not regulated and legalized, so prostitutes have no real recourse if something happens to them because regulation falls outside of the law. Economic exploitation also factors into the Latvian sex industry because Westerners come to the East where goods and services are inexpensive. Latvia desperately needs tourism to fuel its economy; this coupled with the status of women in the country also means that economic exploitation is prevalent here, whereas in Germany and the Netherlands this economic desperation is not as apparent.

The form of sex tourism in Latvia is also different from sex tourism found in Western Europe, the Caribbean, and East Asia because the most popular form of sex tourism in Latvia is through stag parties. Most of the sex tourists traveling to Latvia are in the form of these stag or bachelor groups and not the single travelers seen in most sex tourism destinations. This makes sex tourism more noticeable in Latvia because they are not located in certain red light districts as

in Western Europe and South East Asia, or relegated to the beach, like in the Caribbean. Instead they are in the historic center of Riga and making their presence known. However, the mayor of Riga, Nils Ušakovs would like to change this and create an entertainment industry center or mini Las Vegas type theme park dedicated to gambling in the outskirts of Riga (Kolyako, 2009). This would attract tourists from Russia because gambling is severely restricted in Russia (Kolyako, 2009) and would most likely be a haven for prostitution and other types of activities.

Cheap airfare has facilitated the rise of sex tourism (Charles 2005) in Eastern Europe and has made it easier for a person to be transported into a completely different culture and society in just a little over an hour. This is another reason that sex tourism in this region differs from other regions of the world because cheap airfare has been a catalyst of sex tourism. Sex tourism in the Caribbean and South East Asia was facilitated in part by airfare which made those regions more accessible. Now Eastern Europe is more accessible due to low cost airlines, so instead of the middle and upper class people that go to the Caribbean and South East Asia due to the expensive flights from Western Europe, people from different economic backgrounds can be sex tourists in Latvia. My interview data, which will be described in the next chapter, also supports this notion that Latvian sex tourists can be anyone from a truck driver to a barrister. The fact that they travel to Eastern Europe because it is cheap shows that they will shop around for the best price and go to whatever new city provides them with the cheapest thrills. A BBC article in 2006 said that “the stag parties certainly aren’t coming to Riga for culture, and they give little impression of caring about which country they are visiting. It could be anywhere as long as the alcohol is cheaper than it is Britain,” (Charles 2005).

Sex tourists are individuals looking for an escape from their daily lives. According to Susanne Thorbeck, the demand for commoditized or purchased sexual satisfaction has increased

in recent decades because of “the episodic character of the encounters, the lack of emotional involvement, and the search for something different without commitment but still safe, [are] characteristics of tourists who are seeking sex for sex and adventure,” (2002, 39). However, these sex tourists go beyond the occasional vacationer’s one night stand, in that they choose the destination based on sex and the “stinginess that they display stems from their perspective on sex, that it is a commodity to be purchased” (Thorbeck 2002, 38).

**Figure 3**



Source: Dean 2009

There are a number of factors contributing to the explosion of sex tourism in this region. The countries of Eastern Europe were more or less off limits to Westerners for the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, since the fall of communism and the opening of borders, men from

the West have been travelling to the Eastern Europe in search of sexual services. European Union expansion in 2004 facilitated sex tourism, which has quickly spread to capital cities and major towns throughout Eastern Europe. Now with acceptance into the Schengen Zone, East European border controls (with the exception of Romania and Bulgaria) have been dissolved, facilitating the free movement of people and goods across 25 countries. This new borderless, visa free movement promotes travel to these countries with ease and has contributed to the rise of sex tourism in this region. Therefore, in less than twenty years these countries have gone from a state of isolation to one of complete access that has encouraged an increase of tourists to these unexplored and exotic locations ever year.

After the borders of Latvia were opened to influence from the outside, globalization and capitalism have facilitated Western industries and businesses into the region. The airline industry has played a pivotal role in the sex tourism business and contributed to the rise in sex tourism by providing easy access to the region. Low cost airlines like Ryanair, easyJet, and Germanwings have brought tourists to Eastern Europe for prices as low as one Pound or Euro. The introduction of these airlines to the region around 2004 spurred a significant rise in tourism. This coupled with EU accession meant that there was also a significant rise in labor migration from the region because East Europeans could now work in the West. These factors triggered an increase in the frequency of flights and in the number of low cost carriers to the region. Additionally, these carriers have also added destinations to more countries and expanded to smaller regional cities like Kaunas, Lithuania and Constanta, Romania. Currently, Ryanair flies to nine East European countries with 20 destinations. EasyJet also flies to nine countries with 11 destinations, and Germanwings flies to 12 countries including Albania, Ukraine, and Russia with 19 destinations.

Low cost airlines have facilitated tourism in Eastern Europe and in a way unlocked the region to tourists from the West.

The final element in the formula for sex tourism is the accessibility of inexpensive alcohol and sexual services. Many choose to travel to the East because a flight, hotel, and drinks for a weekend in Eastern Europe cost less than a night out in their home country. In fact many tour operators have capitalized on these factors and specifically cater packages geared towards stag or bachelor parties. According to Stag web, stag packages in Latvia start at around \$150.00 per person and include entertainment such as alcohol, strippers, topless waitresses, table dancers, guided pub crawls, and VIP strip club entry.

Finally, since many countries in Eastern Europe have experienced this problem it would be interesting to see if the same conditions existed in other locations further East. Testing this assumption is beyond the scope of this paper but as low cost airlines expand and border controls lessen, sex tourism could spread further eastward. One example of this is Ukraine, which could be the next destination for sex tourists in Eastern Europe. Germanwings already has weekly flights to Kiev from locations all over Europe and Ryanair just began weekly flights from Dublin and the United Kingdom to Rzeszow, Poland, just 40 miles from the Ukrainian border, and 90 miles from Lviv. With visa-free travel introduced in 2005, it is only a matter of time before these airlines begin continuous flights to Ukraine, and sex tourists move on to their new destination. Therefore, Eastern Europe is at a critical juncture where they can choose to combat sex tourism and the problems that come along with it or they can choose to do nothing, which could lead to an increase in crime, sexually transmitted diseases, and other social problems. An anonymous BBC commenter summarized the issue most succinctly, "These things come in cycles. Now it's the Baltic cities, previously Dublin. For our fathers and grandfathers it was Paris, Berlin, Rome...



except they did it with uniforms on. ‘Hordes of young men sweeping across Europe looking for beer and women.’ That’s been going on for a thousand years!’ (MB Korea 2006).

### *Sex Tourism in Latvia*

As stated previously the sex tourism industry in Latvia blossomed in May 2004 when European Union membership and the introduction of low cost airlines to the Riga airport made the country more accessible than ever before. However, the seeds for the emergence of this industry were planted long before 2004 with economic inequality, liberal prostitution laws, and the status of women in the country. Latvia was a republic of the Soviet Union from 1940 until 1991 with a brief interlude of Nazi occupation during World War II. While Latvia’s incorporation into the Soviet Union is still a contentious issue today, it is important to mention that its policies were linked to the Soviet Union for over 50 years. Therefore, pre-1991 policies from the Soviet Union will be briefly addressed because they influenced policy development after Latvia became independent.

Gender equality theoretically existed in the Soviet Union, and the country had a number of political institutions and agencies devoted to women. There was a Women’s Department (*Zhenotdel*) within the communist party, and Women’s Councils (*zhensoviety*) were designed to help women reconcile work and home life (Johnson 2009, 26). However, these organizations were driven by the Communist party, not by women as “the Soviet Union established political institutions designed to help women, institutionalizing a weak kind of de facto feminism into the state and leaving no real room for autonomous feminist activism” (Johnson 2009, 17, 26). In the 1930s the “woman question” was declared to be solved in the Soviet Union, so, when Latvia was incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940, the roles of women were radically recast (Eglitis 2002, 219-220). Although Latvia and the Soviet Union had unique histories until 1940, these

policies merged when Latvia was incorporated, and as a result the gender regimes of socialism changed gender relations but did not eliminate inequality in the Soviet Union (Eglitis 2002, 197). Consequently, women in Latvia viewed gender equality as a government imposed program and not as a way of liberating them or promoting their participation in governmental decision making (Dean 2008). Latvian women thought they understood what gender equality was and wanted no part in feminism during the transition from communism. In fact, even today the word feminism and anything or anyone associated with it is considered communist or socialist (Dean 2008).

The status of women in Latvia has changed significantly since the fall of Soviet Union and is another element that has led to sex tourism in the country. The Soviet system professed equality of the sexes and at the time had one of the highest employment rates for women in the world. However, women earned 30 percent less than their male counterparts in 1990 and were the first to lose their jobs in the market reforms of the transition period (Hughes 2005). The fall of communism signaled an expanding free market coupled with unemployment, decreased state support, rapid rise in prices and the development of capitalism that “fostered conditions ripe for the massive expansion of the sex business in Latvia” (Eglitis 2002, 217). Women were the first to be laid off from jobs and bore the brunt of the economic transition, so it is unsurprising that prostitution was an off shoot of the economic transition, as Eglitis asserts “the movement out of the workplace back into the home (and motherhood) is consistent with the need to shed the excess employment in the drive for greater efficiency and competitiveness in the market place” (2002, 187).

The term “New Amsterdam” has been used to describe Riga, the capital of Latvia, and a city of less than a million inhabitants in what is widely considered the new sex capital of Europe. The sex tourism industry in Riga is centered on the “old town locale” and consists of strip clubs,

massage parlors, and many more types of adult entertainment both legal and illegal. As stated previously, the most common type of sex tourism in Eastern Europe is stag or bachelor parties. The name stag, or bachelor party, has also instilled itself in the Latvian language, the term *vecpūisis balle*, if broken down into its roots, literally means old man party. Many stag parties book stag party packages through a number of tourism providers located in Latvia or contracted out through a company in their home country. Most packages include accommodation, food, and things like lap dances, booze cruises with strippers, pub crawls with strippers, or strip club excursions. Many stay in stag hotels, which are sparse accommodations that have sprung up around town to cater to the industry. In addition to drinking and attending types of adult entertainment, many stag parties also partake in paintball, four wheeling, shooting AK-47 rifles (which are legal in Latvia) and bobsledding. While out on their activities these men often wear matching uniforms or t-shirts alerting the locals that they are on a stag party, which sets these men apart from the locals and makes them easily identifiable.<sup>10</sup> Again it must be mentioned that not all members of stag tours are sex tourists, only those who employ women for sexual purposes.

Unpublished marketing research from the Riga Tourism Office performed by Baltic Monitor SIA suggests that sex tourists make up around four percent of the total tourists to Riga (Baltic Monitor SIA 2006). Respondents to the survey were asked what they anticipated seeing or accomplishing in Riga, and 3.6 percent of respondents said meeting women and having sex. The research also provided a breakdown of the reasons for travel and among the 15-29 age group; 12 percent cited entertainment, drinking, eating and girls as their reason for traveling to Riga. This percentage went down to a little over two percent and less than one percent in the 30-49 and over 50 age brackets, respectively. This number seems conservative, considering how

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<sup>10</sup> The author has seen or interviewed stag party goers dressed as women, sailors, prison inmates, babies, and parrots.

easy it is to find a plethora of stag parties nearly every weekend of the year; however, it is difficult to differentiate between stag party goers and sex tourists. Although not every person participating in a stag party is a sex tourist, the two are not mutually exclusive. One tourism official said “these studies show that if there is interest in this area then it is very minimal. And of course [there are] studies where it was said that these sorts of activities do not exist and if we do have this then it is reflected in the 3.6 percent of the total amount of tourists that come to Latvia and their interests.”<sup>11</sup> He said that compared to other places like Japan and even the rest of Europe sex tourism is minimal in Latvia and not as well organized.<sup>12</sup> However, another tourism expert estimates the percentage of sex tourists to be at least 10 percent if not 15 percent of the total tourists.<sup>13</sup> He also thinks that instead of looking to the West, many sex tourists are from Russia and the Far East but are undetected by most locals because they are Russian speaking.<sup>14</sup>

This is contrasted with an informal study of tourist groups conducted by the author that reveals the motives and activities of groups of male tourists.<sup>15</sup> These tourists came from a variety of different West European countries, but 77 percent of them were from the United Kingdom and Ireland. The average age of respondents was 29 years old. Eighty percent of those interviewed said the purpose of their visit to Latvia was a stag party while the remaining 20 percent cited reasons ranging from business and tourism to sporting events. Latvia was chosen as the tourism destination due to the cheap prices (41 percent) and the women (one percent). Thirty nine percent of respondents went to a strip club or prostitute and consequently are defined as sex tourists.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Tourism Official, personal interview, July 28, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>12</sup> Tourism Official, personal interview, July 28, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>13</sup> Tourism Expert, personal interview, August 4, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>14</sup> Tourism Expert, personal interview, August 4, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>15</sup> Information on the methods utilized to conduct these interviews can be found in Chapter Three Methods and Data.

<sup>16</sup> For the purposes of these interviews, I define sex tourists as someone who has been to a strip club or prostitute due to the sexualized nature of these activities.

Overall, 88 percent of these sex tourists were stag party participants. This demonstrates that a relationship of some kind exists between sex tourists and stag parties.

Respondents were also asked about their overall impression of Latvia, and some replies included “words cannot describe how pretty the women are,” “very sexy ladies,” “the women are nice to look at,” and “I don’t think it’s a whorehouse for rich Europeans.” These survey results, while not representative, allow us to reaffirm some of the previous assumptions and draw some conclusions about the type of tourists that come to Latvia. The results suggest that these tourists are indeed from the West, although this could have to do with the willingness of Westerners to talk to me because of my nationality and their likelihood of being in the tourist section of town. The replies given by respondents demonstrate the nature of the relationship between the locals and the tourists. For many, their overall impression of Latvia included talking about the women, which displays how they view the destination and what they think is the most important aspect of their trip. Finally, I assumed that many tourists chose this destination because it was cheap and the survey data reinforces this assumption with groups of male tourists.

### *Consequences of Sex Tourism*

Sex tourism has been brought to the forefront in Latvia not only through the plethora of sex tourists in the old town but also through a number of high profile criminal cases involving sex tourists. A significant consequence of sex tourism is increased crime rates and mafia-related activity since 2004. Since much of this industry is unregulated, police have a hard time enforcing this industry and as a result mafia connections have been found to underground brothels and sex clubs. Mafia connections also spawn human trafficking, drug, and arms rings, which add to the crime and seedy image of Latvia. Despite the illegality of human trafficking in most East

European countries, trade in human beings is significant in this region because of the lack of regulation of this industry due to the unclear laws on prostitution. As a result, police departments are unsure how to enforce laws on human trafficking and overlook the fact that many of the prostitutes could be trafficked.

The sex tourists themselves also commit crimes during their short visits to Latvia. On November 11, 2006, a British citizen urinated on the Freedom Monument, a national monument, and was forced to pay a fine of 810 LVL (around \$1600) (LETA News). This crime outraged Latvian society and could suggest why the public opinion data (which will be discussed later) is so decidedly against sex tourism. Another British man urinated near the Freedom Monument while his friends photographed him in March, 2007, and he was forced to pay a 45 LVL (around \$90) fine (LETA News). One thing that is very interesting and curious about both encounters is that they happened on days where there was a significant police presence around the monument (Nov 11 and March 16 are national military days). A survey of the newspaper articles on the subject suggests that a total of eleven people have been caught urinating on this monument since 2006. In 2008, the Riga Central Court imposed a five-day administrative arrest, but most of the sentences were fines of less than \$100 (LETA News). One tourism expert acknowledges that these crimes are multifaceted as “sex tourists can be victims by being robbed or cheated. They are also the ones committing crimes but this is the smaller part. There have been instances of crimes against the tourists but the situation escalated, the police jumped in to get involved and hooliganism happens, but this is a fairly small percentage of crimes.”<sup>17</sup> Former Riga Mayor Janis Birks believed that harsher penalties must be introduced for people who urinate on the monument, and in February 2008 amendments to the Administrative Violations Code were forwarded to the Latvian parliament (LETA News 2008). The amendments are meant to prevent

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<sup>17</sup> Tourism Expert, personal interview, August 4, 2009, Riga Latvia.

foreign tourists' obscenity and lewdness at the Freedom Monument and stipulate raising the applicable fine to 200 LVL (\$400), and 500 LVL (\$1000) if the offender is caught doing the same thing again (LETA News 2008).

According to the Latvian Municipal Police the main administrative crimes committed by tourists are drunk and disorderly conduct.<sup>18</sup> For the most part these crimes are not committed by one specific nationality but many people hear English being spoken and assume that the perpetrators are British. Additionally, according the British Embassy the proportion of British citizens that committed crimes compared to other countries has been reduced due to programs and cooperation with the British Embassy in Latvia.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, criminal offenses do occur such as assaulting an officer or urinating on the Freedom Monument (which can be considered a criminal offense depending on the circumstances and increase the sentence of the crime).<sup>20</sup> Official statistics on other crimes committed by tourists were unavailable from Latvian State Police due to privacy laws. However, according to a municipal police official the situation with tourists committing crimes has improved but this is mostly as a result of increased police presence, which was enlarged to meet this increase in tourists.<sup>21</sup>

Another significant consequence of sex tourism is increased rates for sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. In 2008 and 2009 the leading women's non-governmental organization in Latvia, the Resource Centre for Women, Marta (Marta Centre) published a brochure entitled *Riga's Best Nightlife Guide*, which outlines the dangers of sex tourism highlighted some startling statistics about AIDS and HIV. According to the brochure, a bio-behavior survey in 2002 found that 16 percent of sexually-exploited persons (prostitutes) in Riga

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<sup>18</sup> Riga Municipal Police Official, personal interview, July 2009, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>19</sup> British Embassy Official, personal interview, October 2007, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>20</sup> Riga Municipal Police Official, personal interview, July 2009, Riga Latvia.

<sup>21</sup> Riga Municipal Police Official, personal interview, July 2009, Riga Latvia.

were found to be HIV positive by salivary tests. The brochure also lists AIDS and HIV infection rates have increased 700 percent since the year 2000. Repeated attempts to learn of the source for the data listed in the brochure could not be obtained (Dean 2008). However, it must be noted that statistics for sexually transmitted diseases were not kept in the Soviet Union, so this significant increase is suspect and due to the fact that the rate started out at zero in 1990. Comparing the data in the brochure to official government data from the Central Statistics Bureau, we can see that there were 13 people in Latvia with AIDS, and this number had increased to 217 by 2009 (Centrālās statistikas pārvaldes 2011). Therefore, a 157% increase can be seen in the HIV/AIDS infection rates, not a 700 percent increase, as the brochure maintained.

The final consequence of sex tourism is the image that it projects to the rest of the world. The impression of seedy strip clubs and red light districts featuring beautiful sexually submissive local women is not one that tourism officials want to project.<sup>22</sup> In fact tourism officials believe that the image of sex tourism will deter tourists from traveling to Latvia and hurt Latvian's personal self-esteem and contact with foreigners (BISS 2007). However, the Latvian government has done little to regulate this industry because it would mean that they could lose the valuable tourism revenue that many people depend on. Therefore, as time progresses and the problem worsens, countries could begin to introduce reforms and measures to limit sex tourism because they realize that cultural tourists spend more money and cause less problems than sex tourists.

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<sup>22</sup> Tourism Official, personal interview, October 2007, Riga Latvia.



### 3. Methods and Data

“We know how to write beautiful programs, but their realization is difficult” (Jānis Ivančiks, Professor Department of Criminology, Police Academy, Baltic Institute of Social Sciences 2005).

In order to determine if there are advocacy coalitions forming around this issue despite the absence of policy, this project employs a process tracing of the policy process, content analysis of the policies, and elite interviews. This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the case study methods conducted for this paper and the data accumulated during fieldwork. An outline of the process tracing method is also presented to demonstrate how elite interviews with advocacy coalition members who shaped the policy process are utilized in order to triangulate the data. A number of policies will then be examined from the late communist period starting in the mid-1980s to 2010 and demonstrate how policy subsystems influence the shaping of policy in post-communist democracies. This part of the chapter is divided into different policy areas by theme beginning with sex tourism and then moving on to prostitution, pornography, human trafficking, and adult entertainment. These laws were chosen because when asked what laws Latvia had concerning sex tourism a number of respondents remarked that these four areas encompassed the type of policy Latvia had on sex tourism. The policy process is presented and most specifically how these policies or laws have developed and what type of influence, if any, can be seen in their adoption and implementation. In addition to the policy process a description of the policies developed is presented in addition to an examination of public opinion and NGO activity surrounding these policies. This data is important to include so that we can determine which advocacy coalitions have formed, their coalition belief structures, and if policy change has occurred.

This paper draws on data generated from fieldwork in Latvia August 2007 to July 2008, July to August 2009, and July 2010.<sup>23</sup> During the 2007 to 2008 time period, I was a participant observer and volunteer at the leading stakeholder for women's issues in Latvia, the Resource Centre for Women, Marta. This organization is a women's non-governmental organization that works to facilitate gender equality and to protect the rights of women in Latvia by shaping and coordinating cooperation between women's NGOs and government institutions on the national and international levels. This participant observation included attendance and observation of international and regional governance conferences.<sup>24</sup> The observation and conference participation is important to mention because I have been a participant in the evolution of the policy environment surrounding sex tourism since 2007. Thus, while many of the observations in this paper are first hand, they may be colored by my association with Marta Centre's positions during this period (Heintz 1988, 214). As a result the observations presented in this paper are based upon my first-hand impressions as an observer in those debates and wherever possible documentation is cited to substantiate these observations (Heintz 1988, 237). In addition to participant observation, I conducted archival work gathering policies and data for the content analysis portion of the study at the Latvian National Library, University of Latvia, and Latvian National Archives. Qualitative analysis of the documents and data obtained was translated and analyzed using the qualitative technique of summarizing and coding (Weiner and Koontz 2010, 635).

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<sup>23</sup> Human subjects clearance was obtained (HSCL #18104) from the Human Subjects Committee at the University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus and the informed consent form was translated into Latvian.

<sup>24</sup> These conferences include *Opening the Labour Market for Women* Riga, Latvia September 2007 sponsored by the European Union, *The Sub-Committee on Equal Participation of Women and Men in Political Decision-making*, Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe, Riga, Latvia, November 2007, *The United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Trafficking (GIFT) Forum*, Vienna, Austria February 2008 and *The Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings* in April 2008 sponsored by the Baltic Assembly and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

This paper also draws on data generated from semi-structured open-ended interviews with stakeholders from government agencies, civil society organizations, academics, and international partners at national and subnational levels.<sup>25</sup> Interviews took place on three separate research trips to Latvia in November 2007, July and August of 2009, and July 2010, and a total of 24 interviews were conducted for the case study. Purposive sampling techniques were utilized first to select a sampling frame of interview respondents from important ministries or non-governmental organizations, based on my knowledge of the sex tourism policy subsystem as a guide (Tansey 2007, 770). In addition to seeking out individuals in these ministries a reputational snowball sampling techniques was utilized, “in which interviewees were identified based on suggestions of other interview subjects, was used to identify individuals with a reputation for being knowledgeable and experienced” with the sex tourism policy subsystem (Weiner and Koontz 2010, 635). A non-probability approach was employed with both techniques which consisted of interview subjects selected from a larger population without random selection of subjects (Tansey 2007, 768). One advantage of this technique is that it allowed me to uncover a hidden population of interview subjects that led to advocacy coalition members (Tansey 2007, 770). A disadvantage of this is it that is comes at the expense of random sampling of the population which means that the interviews cannot be generalized to represent the entire policy subsystem as a whole. However, the process tracing method is not aimed at a representative sample but instead looks to include interviews from the most important players who participated in the policy formation (Tansey 2007, 765). Thus, random sampling is counterproductive to the “logic of process tracing as it risks excluding important respondents from the sample purely by chance...and non-probability sampling approaches are the most appropriate” (Tansey 2007, 765). Access to participants was gained through email, phone, or personal contact. Interviews

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<sup>25</sup> See Appendix 1 for a list of interview questions.

lasted from 20 minutes to an hour and were conducted in Latvian and English to determine the advocacy coalitions involved in the policy subsystem. All of the interviews were conducted in person except one which was conducted via telephone. Interviews were taped for accuracy in reporting and “follow up phone calls or emails were used when needed to ensure accurate and complete information was obtained” (Weiner and Koontz 2010, 635).

Governmental representatives from key ministries and organizations within the government working with the issue of sex tourism, were targeted for interviews and assessment. This included the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Economics, Cabinet of Ministers, Riga Municipal Police, and the Latvian State Police. Tourism agencies could also participate in advocacy coalitions; therefore, representatives from the two government-supported tourism agencies, the Riga Tourism Coordination and Information Center and Latvian Tourism Development Agency, as well as two tourism companies that run stag party trips to Riga, were interviewed. Additionally, officials from both the United States and United Kingdom Embassies spoke with me about sex tourism and what programs and initiatives they were doing to combat it with their citizens. Email responses were received from the President’s Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which also allowed me to determine their views on the issue, their role in the subsystem, and what initiatives they were working on to combat sex tourism.

In addition to elite interviews I also conducted 44 semi-structured tourism interviews with groups of 20-40 year old men in 2008 and 2009. These interviews were conducted in English, Latvian, and Russian. Interview subjects were chosen purposively as part of convenience sampling in the center of Riga on weekend nights in the summers of 2008 and 2009, the only factor necessary to be interviewed was being part of a group of men. While I realize that these interviews do not demonstrate a representative sample of the entire population of tourists,

these interviews provide me with the mentality of a number of sex tourists and how they view the women of Latvia. During these interviews respondents were asked a number of questions about their experience in Latvia, to determine their overall motivation for travel, impressions of Latvia, and how likely they were to solicit sex while on vacation.<sup>26</sup>

As stated previously, process tracing is utilized in this study and is the “systematic examination of diagnostic pieces of evidence that are selected and analyzed in light of research questions and hypotheses posed by the investigator” (Collier 2011, 2). The temporal sequences of events and mechanisms of a hypothesized causal process are discovered within a case study and contribute to supporting or overturning alternative or competing explanatory hypotheses (Bennett 2010, 208). Causal-process observations (CPO’s) are the pieces of evidence on which process tracing focuses and are parallel to data-set observations utilized in quantitative research (Collier 2011, 3). The interviews, newspaper articles, leaflets, meetings and correspondence will be employed as data in the process tracing section. This diversity of data will help triangulate and cross-check the results through a number of data sources to increase the robustness of the findings and is the most appropriate method for uncovering causal mechanisms (Tansey 2007, 766). The interview data can also make inferences about the beliefs or actions of a wider group of people without interviewing everyone in the group (Tansey 2007, 766). Consequently, this data will be utilized to uncover the beliefs and actions of the advocacy coalitions in Latvian sex tourism.

### *Sex Tourism*

As stated previously, there is no Latvian government policy on sex tourism. This is despite the fact that public opinion is decidedly against sex tourism, so we can see a disconnect

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<sup>26</sup> See Appendix 2 for a list of interview questions.

between what the public wants and government action. This section will examine a number of initiatives in other areas of the policy subsystem aimed at curbing this problem. It will also examine, through a number of elite interviews, what the government and its policy makers say they are doing to combat this problem. Finally, elements of cooperation with sex tourism and the tourism industry will be explored.

This recent influx of tourists to the old town of Riga has not gone unnoticed in the local population. A 2007 public opinion poll from the BISS demonstrates the perceptions within the local Latvian population. Sixty one percent of respondents said that sex tourism currently is a problem in Latvia, 18% disagree, and 21% failed to provide a concrete answer. There was no significant difference among responses between men and women (BISS 2007). Additionally, over 70 percent of respondents said that sex tourism should be restricted, two percent said it should be promoted, and 12 percent think that nothing should be done. There were observable differences with respondent answers when education level was taken into consideration as 60 percent of those with primary education thought that sex tourism should be limited in Latvia, which rose to 72 percent with secondary education, and 81 percent with higher education (BISS 2007). Finally, over 80 percent of the population said that they were against sex tourism because it contributes to the exploitation of women, the degradation of the Latvian population, and ruins Riga's image and the atmosphere of the city center. This public opinion survey demonstrates that the local population is decidedly against sex tourism and that they view sex tourism as exploitative. Therefore, we can see a disconnect between public opinion and policy, as the population clearly wants to see a regulation of the industry, which could be due to the issue framing or a policy success of one advocacy coalition at the expense of another.

Despite this lack of legislation and perhaps as a way to meet the demand of public opinion, an expanding constellation of groups have begun combating this trend through a number of anti-sex tourism programs. The initiatives have even grown to the international arena as the Embassy of the United Kingdom has created a program to encourage responsible tourism.<sup>27</sup> This *Responsible Tourism Program* is targeted at British and other foreign tourists visiting Riga (and other East European destinations) to promote responsible trouble-free tourism. The campaign handed out flyers and coasters with tips and travel advice like “do not urinate in public, always use a toilet instead.” As stated previously, this program has seen some success as municipal police have noticed a decrease in crimes committed by citizens of the United Kingdom, but there are no official statistics to back up this claim.<sup>28</sup>

Additionally, non-governmental organizations in Latvia had begun to respond to the problem. A program called *An Airport – Public Awareness Campaign* was sponsored by the Resource Centre for Women, Marta in the International Airport of Riga. While the project’s main goal was warning women about human trafficking, it was also an anti-sex tourism campaign cautioning men arriving in Latvia about the dangers of sex tourism.<sup>29</sup> In addition to this campaign, the Marta Centre has also advocated for legislation limiting sex tourism in the media and parliament. Marta Centre views legislation as the main measure to eliminate sex tourism, “we have tried very hard to get the official political agenda to work against demand for sexual exploitation and to punish those that buy sexual services.”<sup>30</sup>

Another NGO, Re!action, initiated a *Stop Sex Terrorism Campaign*. The aim was to draw public attention to the problem of sex tourism, and to make sex tourists think about how they are

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<sup>27</sup> British Embassy Official, personal interview, October 2007, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>28</sup> Municipal Police Official, personal interview, August 6, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>29</sup> NGO Expert, personal interview, August 11, 2009 Riga, Latvia.

<sup>30</sup> NGO Expert, personal interview, August 11, 2009 Riga, Latvia.

negatively affecting the public image (BISS). It also called on local girls to be reluctant in their dealings with foreigners (BISS). However, the organization itself said that the campaign was aimed at Latvian and Russian girls to dissuade them from having one night stands, because this type of behavior creates a negative image of Latvia abroad and encourages sex tourism.<sup>31</sup> The main event of the campaign was a graffiti painting portraying a production line of similar-looking beautiful women coming out of Latvia, only to fall off the belt and into the arms of pawing sex tourists. A song was even written about sex tourism by the pop/alternative band Re:public entitled “Big City.” The song warns children to run away from the big city because there are rich foreigners there who want to exploit them. This demonstrates that in a short time sex tourism has become disseminated in Latvian culture and is important to note because even cultural elements like pop songs are speaking out against this phenomenon. The song by Re:public about sex tourism was also a cornerstone of this campaign. In the BISS poll, a number of tourism industry experts expressed a negative assessment of the organization Re!action and their social campaign (2007). These experts expressed doubts that this campaign was able to achieve its true objective and instead gave visitors a negative impression about Latvia and deterred those who traveled to Latvia for other reasons (BISS 2007).

The Latvian government has not initiated any social programs or campaigns themselves but has supported the British campaign. Additionally, according to Riga’s Tourism Centre, a special English speaking Police Patrol was also instituted in old town during the summer of 2007 specifically for tourists, and a tourism hotline was created in January 2007 with English speaking operators.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, a Mobilized Tourism Information and Coordination Center operated in the old town center and offered assistance and handed out helpful pamphlets to tourists;

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<sup>31</sup> Advertising Official, personal interview, October 2007, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>32</sup> Tourism Official, personal interview, October 2007, Riga Latvia.



however, due to budget cuts, it was shut down in 2009.<sup>33</sup> In the BISS poll, experts stressed that these temporary campaigns are not likely to change anything because long-term solutions are needed to curb this problem (2007). They also stressed the link between sex tourism and other negative phenomena, such as the relatively cheap alcohol, gambling, and illegal drugs. They determined that sex tourism is just one of the factors that cause a negative image of Riga and Latvia and that works needs to be done in all of these areas (BISS 2007).

As stated previously, the Latvian government has not formulated a specific response aimed at combating sex tourism. Despite this lack of policy, interviews with policy entrepreneurs revealed that the Latvian government does think it is fighting sex tourism in a couple of ways. First, government officials had problems with my designation of sex tourism because they felt that it is a designation which had come from outside of Latvia, “with that designation there is no document or solution with this term in it, sex tourism as a term developed when the fundamental problem surfaced which came along with low-cost airlines.”<sup>34</sup> Instead, they wanted to express sex tourism and policy in Latvian terms therefore, they argued, there was an unambiguous policy on sex tourism due to the fact that there is no policy specifically named due to the fact that they don’t use this term:<sup>35</sup>

If someone in Latvia was writing on the same topic as you are, he would title it ‘The fight against prostitution in Latvia’ or some sort of research on this, or rather ‘policy on the fight against prostitution.’ But that would be the same as sex tourism because that is only a question of the name. If we don’t have sex tourism policy where this title appears, it doesn’t mean we don’t have it. We have it in terms of content, through these various instruments [such as the regulations governing prostitution, pornography, human trafficking, and adult entertainment]. And these are the tools we use to fight against sex tourism, because one of the reasons why tourists come here is because there are pole dancers and strip tease dancers. And through this right act, the city can specify, mostly far

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<sup>33</sup> Municipal Police Official, personal interview, August 6, 2009, Riga Latvia.

<sup>34</sup> Government Official, personal interview, July 23, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>35</sup> Government Official, personal interview, July 23, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

away points, where these things can happen. So in essence, the policy is in place, but it is called something different.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to the differences in terminology, many government officials said that a number of other policy areas cover the issue of sex tourism. They talked about the overlap between sex tourism and issues like prostitution and human trafficking:

They are not inseparable from each other, either we can forbid prostitution, and it's not here anymore and then there is no more sex tourism. Or we allow it and sex tourism will be here, either in a large or small size, which depends on the sex services, possibility to get here etc. and other relaxation opportunities. But if prostitution is allowed, sex tourism will stay. At this point we have just to fight these illegal prostitution services.<sup>37</sup>

This quote is interesting because it could convey that sex tourism is easier to regulate by addressing individual elements of the problem rather than developing a comprehensive policy.<sup>38</sup>

Another government official said sex tourism policy should be formed by the authorities in other areas not the major policy making body in Latvia:

The Cabinet of Ministers in terms of this question in the last year the daily schedule has not included anything about things like “do we have a sex tourism problem” and how we can solve this. That is really a question more addressed by the tourism development authorities or the human trafficking authorities. It doesn't have to be a decision of the Cabinet, because the Cabinet is already overworked everyday in terms of problems, there's no room for new issues. It would be unrealistic to predict that the Cabinet would, in the near future, do something on the issue of sex tourism on its own.<sup>39</sup>

A number of respondents talked about an initiative to close bars that were cheating tourists, as an initiative of the government fighting sex tourism. There were a number of complaints by foreigners of different nationalities that they were getting cheated by being charged an exorbitant amount for drinks by certain bars and restaurants. As a result, the United States Embassy released a list of clubs, in November 2008, that were off limits to embassy personnel and that

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<sup>36</sup> Government Official, personal interview, July 23, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>37</sup> Government Official, personal interview, July 23, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>38</sup> Thanks to Erik Herron for pointing this out.

<sup>39</sup> Government Official, personal interview, August 11, 2009, Riga Latvia.

tourists should watch out for when they visit Riga.<sup>40</sup> After that the media picked up on it and the US Ambassador began talking with the Latvian President and contacts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>41</sup>

This is one of the things that the US embassy did to help the problem when they released their list of venues where foreigners have been cheated. That is one problem, the other is about the harassment on the streets, that is the start of the cheating which happens later where a tourist is charged 20 times what they should be and services are combined as “a night together (where the woman is paid to hang out).<sup>42</sup>

As a result of this list the Latvian President’s Office along with the Riga Municipality closed a number of these clubs down for administrative licensing violations:<sup>43</sup>

The list was effective in informing Latvian policy makers and the Latvian public that this was going on but there still has been no concrete changes. We at first thought that the problem was with corrupt police officials but have since ruled that out and determined that the private security firms are a big part of the problem. The closing of clubs is only the first step, there needs to be concrete rules, legal legislation that says there cannot be two menus with two different prices. There is no law that says that they cannot charge two different prices.<sup>44</sup>

A number of the interview respondents said that promoting cultural tourism and tourism development was another way to combat the problem of sex tourism:

In the economics ministry there are people who work on tourism policy development and the goal is to attract the largest number of tourists possible. This number of tourists has grown and seeks out a low level of culture which is due to cheap airline tickets. Their goal in coming to Riga is not the opera, is not the theatre, it is Latvia as a goal and place, for beer, bars, and women. But here there is the double edged sword, that we of course want to have the amount of tourists grow, but that appears as tourism development, and all these negative things come with it, but we are ready to fight, but not in terms of sex tourism policy but other areas of tourism development.<sup>45</sup>

They also worried about sex tourism interfering with cultural tourists, who some argue spend more money than sex tourists. Although this is still up for debate, as most of the tourism

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<sup>40</sup> US Embassy Official, phone interview, August 17, 2009.

<sup>41</sup> US Embassy Official, phone interview, August 17, 2009.

<sup>42</sup> Government Official, personal interview, July 23, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>43</sup> State President’s Office Official, personal correspondence, August 10, 2009.

<sup>44</sup> US Embassy Official, phone interview, August 17, 2009.

<sup>45</sup> Government Official, personal interview, July 23, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

providers said that sex tourists spend more money than cultural tourists, while most tourism officials I spoke with said the reverse is true.

The only thing we can do, for example, our goal is absolutely to show that this small percentage does not affect the remaining percentage's tourists here. That is our fight. There are many night clubs in Old Town and everywhere where these services are offered, we fight against that. To extinguish sex tourism there is no reason to do this because it's not possible and as long as it's not hurting tourism, there's no reason to do this.<sup>46</sup>

Finally, there are a number of interviewees who saw sex tourism as a normal way of life and something all countries have to face.

I just think, you look at any city in Europe and it just gets back to the problems in supply not really demand. Any city in Europe you will get any...prostitutes is another touché...but it's the oldest trade in the planet..you are never going to get rid of it. There are ways to manage it there are ways to help control it and there are ways make it safer but you are never going, you have to face reality, you are never going to exclude it.<sup>47</sup>

Additionally, one tourism provider said that there is a group of tourism providers that is working together to bring tourists to Latvia and preserve a positive image of the country in the media:

There is a bit of a network going on and things that are involved in and people sort of work to try and preserve the reputation and keep people coming here. They mainly try and instigate this forum or fund the forum or get people working in a cooperative and that might have been a good idea and potentially could still happen. And essentially that is what they are doing, they are bringing people together to talk and its one of the conclusions from a police meeting. The changes have got to come from within the government or the embassy, they can advise or try and control but really it has got to be [people working within the tourism network working] with the tourism providers and the hotels, the restaurants, the clubs. It's these people that really need to be making the changes and helping push this ideology through and getting this understanding, rather than dictating from the top it doesn't count for much.<sup>48</sup>

Despite this lack of policy, it is evident that government and tourism officials say they are doing something to combat human trafficking in Latvia. Whether these initiatives are successful

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<sup>46</sup> Tourism Official, personal interview, July 28, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>47</sup> Tourism Provider, personal interview, August 12, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>48</sup> Tourism Provider, personal interview, August 12, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

because they reduced sex tourism or simply because sex tourists have moved on to another destination, remains to be seen.

### *Prostitution*

Prostitution is an area that is intimately linked to sex tourism because without the existence of prostitution tourists would not travel to the destination. There is a long history of prostitution in Latvia but in the current era of independence this history began with the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic which adopted the Declaration on the Restoration of Independence of the Republic of Latvia on May 4, 1990. Although it would take the failed coup in Moscow in August 1991 to have most nations recognize Latvia's restoration of independence, one of the government's first formal acts was to approve the United Nations (UN) Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (which was passed by UN on December 2, 1949) (Valsts programma, 2004). The government also approved UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (which was passed by UN on December 18, 1979) (Valsts programma, 2004). Consequently, even when it was unclear if the Republic of Latvia would actually survive, lawmakers made international conventions and protocols paramount on the government agenda.

Prostitution was banned in the Soviet Union and viewed only as a capitalist problem because the economic and social conditions that caused it did not exist in Soviet Union (Waters 1989). The country ratified the 1949 UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic of Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others in 1953, but added the proviso that "in the Soviet Union the social conditions which spawned prostitution have been removed"

(Tiurukanova 2006, 11). However, a closer look at the situation has suggested that prostitution was prevalent in Latvian restaurants, foreign hotels, and at times even procured by the Soviet authorities (Lipša 2008). A Baltic Institute of Social Sciences (BISS) survey about the sex industry stated that Riga, as a port city, has historically been a place known for prostitution (2007). During the interwar period of the 1920s and 1930s, prostitution was prevalent in Riga especially after the Great Depression due to economic conditions (Zelče un Sprugaine 2005). This declined during and after war but reemerged in the mid-eighties under Mikhail Gorbachev's reform policies of perestroika and glasnost (restructuring and openness), when Riga was compared with a small Paris (because of its prostitution) (BISS 2007). Moreover, Riga with its strategic geographical position has always been very attractive not only for tourists but also for sailors and women have worked in brothels providing sexual services to meet the demand (BISS 2007). However, the Communist Party took great lengths to pretend that prostitution did not exist. In fact, prostitution was unacknowledged in the legal code until mid-1987 when, due to media attention, it was made into an administrative offence with a fine of 100 rubles for a first offense (Waters 1989). One of the impetuses for the change in this law was due to media attention surrounding the book *Interdevochka*, which told the story of women working as prostitutes in the hotels that housed foreign businessmen (Johnson 2009, 33). In August 1986, a communist youth newspaper *Sovetskaya Molodezh* revealed that prostitution occurred in Latvia, when it published the story of "restaurant girls," women who went to bars and restaurant in Riga looking for foreign tourists and sailors (Waters 1989).

After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the new Latvian government upheld this administrative offense and ban on prostitution. In 1996, the occupation of prostitution was deleted from the Administrative Violation Code of Latvia (Administratīvo pārkāpumu kodeksā

hereafter APK 1996) which changed prostitution's status and moved it into a grey area as neither legal nor illegal (Eglitis 2002, 219-220). Then, by 1998 the Criminal Law and Regulations to Limit Prostitution (*Prostitūcijas ierobežošanas noteikumi* hereafter PIN) were enacted that legalized prostitution within certain parameters (PIN 1998). It banned minors from prostitution and established specific locations, set by local governments, where persons who engage in prostitution can offer sexual services and also specified that prostitutes could not work in groups. A 1998 survey found there to be between 10,000 and 15,000 prostitutes in Latvia, which is the most recent data available (Kurova and Zariņa 2000). The ratio for prostitutes is thus between 1.5 and 2.3 per 1000 people, which is higher than Sweden (0.3 per 1,000), where prostitution is illegal and the buyer of the sexual service is criminalized, and equal to or more than the Netherlands (1.6 per 1,000), where prostitution is legal and regulated (Kilvington et al. 2001). This survey of prostitutes also mentioned that only 18 percent of prostitutes were ethnically Latvian, and the remaining 82 percent were Russian, Ukrainian, or other nationalities (Kurova and Zariņa 2000). This does not echo the ethnic composition of the country, which is 58.2 percent Latvian and 37.5 percent Russian (CIA World Fact Book), thus significantly more Russian speakers are involved in prostitution than Latvians. Consequently, "commodification has not emerged in public discourse as a social problem because prostitutes are mostly non-Latvian and clearly not mothers of the nation" (Eglitis 2002, 189). A number of different types of prostitution exist in Latvia including services in clubs, hotels, massage saloons, sauna prostitution, individual prostitution, street prostitution, male prostitution, minor prostitution, and prostitutes going abroad to work (Kalikov 2004, 55).

The status of prostitution has changed numerous times over the course of Latvian history and today often goes unrecognized by most Latvians. Eglitis goes on to argue "the dominance of

the commercial sex business by ethnic “others” (non-Latvians) may allow Latvian-dominated political structures to cast the issue of prostitution as a juridical one and to marginalize it as not fundamental to the state and national interest” (Eglitis 2002, 223). This, coupled with the status of women in Latvia and the economic transition which led to high levels of unemployment, meant that prostitution has spread along with the rapid increase and feminization of poverty in Latvia (Eglīte 1999). The BISS argues that Latvian socio-economic development levels and people's financial security, promote women's involvement in prostitution because there is increased desire to get married to a foreigner, or to obtain a material benefits from the tourists (2007). All of these factors contribute to the development of sex tourism in Latvia.

The vice squad was the main enforcement unit of these prostitution regulations in Latvia and it has experienced a varied history on the municipal and national levels. The vice squad was formed in 1990 on the national level as part of the State Police under the Ministry of Interior.<sup>49</sup> This unit policed prostitution and other vice crimes but was closed in 2003 and reconstituted as the Human Trafficking Unit, which still exists today. This unit deals with human trafficking first and foremost but also polices pimping and brothels.<sup>50</sup> There are seven national State Police units divided by the type of crime, such as human trafficking, criminal, traffic, and public order offenses. All criminal matters go to the State Police. In addition to national level State Police there are also municipal level police who deal with administrative crimes and are under orders of the municipal governments such as the Riga City Council.<sup>51</sup> A vice squad of 15 officers was set up in April 1993 under the municipal police (Kalikov 2004, 62). This squad was known as the Morality Police because it policed the sex industry in Riga (Eglitis 2002, 219). This municipal level unit was charged with checking the documents of the prostitutes including the medical

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<sup>49</sup> State Police Official, personal interview, August 11, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>50</sup> State Police Official, personal interview, August 11, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>51</sup> Municipal Police Official, personal interview August 6, 2009, Riga Latvia.



card. The Vice Squad kept a registry of prostitutes that at one time listed approximately two thirds of all sex workers in the mid-1990s in Riga (Kalikov 2004, 62). However, prosecution of offenses related to prostitution was rare and up to 1996 only 37 criminal cases had been prepared due to the “legal difficulties inherent in gathering evidence and prosecuting suspected criminals mean that even extant laws are inadequately enforced” (Eglitis 2002, 219). Eglitis also notes that most of the criminal cases prepared by the police were against the prostitutes themselves (34 cases were for refusing to seek medical attention for sexually transmitted diseases) and not against people coercing or profiting from their work (only 4 or 5 were for pimping) (Eglitis 2002, 219). This Vice Squad was shut down in July 1997 due to budget cuts on from the Riga City Council and the work was transferred to the Narcotics Office of the criminal police, but the emphasis was shifted to narcotics because prostitution was no longer criminalized. This explanation is important because it shows the complex side of regulation with respect to prostitution. It also demonstrates that the police have been reactive to policy shifts, only eliminating agencies once prostitution became de-criminalized. Furthermore, the data reveals that the police who investigated prostitution crimes now investigate human trafficking which could suggest that the Latvian government sees them as interrelated crimes.

On June, 17 1998 the Latvian Criminal Law was passed by the Saeima (Latvian Parliament), which added language and sentencing guidelines to many of the provisions surrounding prostitution and pornography and took prostitution out of the grey area by making it legal within certain provisions (*Krimināllikums* hereafter KL 1998). The Criminal Law established in Section 163 stated that if the restrictive rules on prostitution were repeatedly violated, the person committing the crime could suffer imprisonment, or community service, or a fine not exceeding fifty times the minimum monthly wage (KL 1998). The Criminal Law also

instructed the Cabinet of Ministers to develop and adopt rules restricting prostitution (KL 1998). It stated in Section 164 for those compelling someone to participate in prostitution, the violator could receive a sentence punishable by imprisonment for a term of three to six years or a fine dependent on the severity of the situation and if a minor was involved (KL 1998). Pimping was also outlawed in Section 165 and punishable by imprisonment for a term of four to eight years with or without confiscation of property again dependent on the severity of the situation and if a minor was involved (KL 1998).

After being compelled by the Saeima, the Cabinet of Ministers passed the regulation limiting the type of prostitution in Latvia on November 4, 1998 (PIN 1998). The Regulations to Limit Prostitution (PIN) presented by the Minister of the Interior and the Prime Minister defined prostitution as sexual services for money or other compensation, a prostitute as someone who engages in prostitution, and sexual services as any kind of sexual activity which arouses or satisfies (except for telephone services provided) (PIN 1998). It also set up the first indigenous regulation against human trafficking by prohibiting organizing sexual services abroad, as well as for those arriving from overseas operations (PIN 1998). The PIN outlined that minors were prohibited from engaging in prostitution, that regular health checks and records of a health card must be undertaken by a qualified physician, and that prostitutes carrying sexually transmitted diseases were prohibited from working until they recovered from the disease (PIN 1998). According to Kalikov, no more than 200 sex workers have had the health card since the law was enacted (as of 2004) because of the fact that only police officers and not clients actually ask for the health card (2004, 65). As a result, most sex workers are afraid of the confidentiality of being registered in database because the card contains personal and medical information (Kalikov 2004, 65).

The regulation also states that “sexual services are prohibited from advertising in the press and other media (other than media of an erotic nature), as well as with other parties” (PIN 1998), however this was not enforced at the time. In fact, one government official confirmed this:

Let’s say for example] this person is distributing these fliers for massages or for dancing but it’s not written on the flyer that [sexual services are offered], it is simply an advertisement about some sort of entertainment. He who wants to control the process has to go further must go to the place and see. Determining whether something is prostitution or if it is really only massage or dancing, that you can’t know, you have to see it at the place.<sup>52</sup>

Knowingly promoting prostitution, driving prostitutes around, or renting a building for the practice of prostitution was also illegal although this regulation was not specifically addressed as pimping and only vaguely alluded to it in the aforementioned language. Additionally, the language surrounding brothels is equally as vague and states “people may not join together in groups to offer and provide sexual services for money, as well as take orders for sexual services for a fee” but this does not count when the client asks for more than one prostitute to provide sexual services (PIN 1998). This demonstrates that the legal language on pimping and brothels was established in policy at this time, but it was very ambiguous which made it difficult to enforce and prosecute. According to one analyst these regulations have had virtually no effect “since the law has provided for an administrative punishment for violating rules concerning the limitation of prostitution, administrative punishments were levied against only 79 sex workers” (Kalikov 2004, 62). He contends that in 1999 there were 13 administrative cases involving pimping and one about involvement of minors in sexual activities (Kalikov 2004, 62).

In March of 2000 administrative sentences were added in the Latvian Administrative Violations Code Section 174.4, which set the violations of the Regulation Limiting Prostitution

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<sup>52</sup> Government Official, personal interview, July 23, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

at a fine of 250 LVL (\$500) (APK 2000). This article provided law enforcement with both criminal and administrative offenses for violations of the prostitution provisions but it was not clear what offenses constituted a criminal offense and what offenses constituted an administrative offense. A subsequent set of Regulations to Limit Prostitution again presented by the Interior Ministry and the Prime Minister, passed in 2001 outlined specific diseases that made it illegal to sell sexual services (PIN 2001). Regular health checks were now defined as monthly health checks with a specific health card issued by the Health Statistics and Medical Technology Agency (PIN 2001). The regulation also added the internet to the types of media prostitutes could not advertise within and outlawed people with HIV/AIDS from engaging in prostitution (PIN 2001). The regulations also limited where prostitutes could offer sexual services in territories that exceeded 20,000 people, to specific sites as designated by the Municipality or State Police (PIN 2001). However, according to the BISS by 2007 most municipalities have not identified these sites because City Council members have significant opposition within the local population as people who live on these locations fear crime and a drop in property values (BISS 2007). Therefore, this provision was repealed by the Ministry of Interior in the 2007 regulation and municipalities were not required to establish this territory but they had the right to prohibit where sexual services could be offered (BISS 2007).

The 2007 Regulation to Limit Prostitution was proposed by the State Secretary of the Ministry of Health to establish uniform procedures for medical examinations for people engaging in sex work (Paskaidrojuma raksts 2007). The health checks and their frequency were non-binding and the ministry wanted to reduce the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases by forbidding prostitutes with certain diseases from working without being treated by a physician (Paskaidrojuma raksts 2007). The draft regulation deleted the list of health card registration

numbers and the registration of prostitutes due to patient privacy laws and the 1950 United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic of Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others which prohibits any registration of prostitutes (Paskaidrojuma raksts 2007). The 2007 amendment also deleted wording referring to Vice Squad, the reasoning for this was not clarified in the explanatory documents but this could be because this unit no longer existed within the State Police. According to Kalikov, the laws were improved and expanded only after information about organized pedophilia in Latvia came to light (2004, 62), although he did not state specifically what changes or cases to which he was referring.

An amendment to the Latvian Administrative Violations Code in 2008 changed a violation of Section 174 in the Regulations to Limit Prostitution from 250 LVL (\$500) fine across the board to a hierarchical approach with fines for individuals from 250 to 500 LVL (\$500-1,000), but for legal persons the fine ranged from 500 to 1,000 LVL (\$1,000-2,000) (APK 2008). Again the definition of “legal persons” remains unclear and there are still two different offenses criminal and administrative for violations of the Regulations Limiting Prostitution. An amendment to the Criminal Law Section 163.1 in 2009 added clear language concerning brothels in Latvia. Rather than referring to the establishment or a group of people the amendment addressed brothels outright and their maintenance, management and financing (KL 2009). Partaking in these activities was punishable by imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years or community service, or a fine not exceeding one hundred times the minimum monthly wage. Amendments were also made in a number of other sections. For example Section 164 changed prison limits from a term not exceeding five years to a term of two to six years and for acts including a group of people or a minor a prison term up to six years was changed to five to eight years (KL 2009). In Section 165, a person who is living off the avails of prostitution could be

sentenced up to six years instead of four years. Also, in Section 165.2 any behavior which promotes legal or illegal departure from or entry, transit or residence in a foreign country was deleted (KL 2009).

In 2008 the most recent Regulation to Limit Prostitution placed further restrictions on the locations prostitutes could offer their services and congregate, one such limitation specified that they may not solicit services within 100 meters of a church or school (PIN 2008). According to government documents this new regulation was aimed at protecting the public's morals especially concerning children, by identifying specific places where prostitution services can be offered (Paskaidrojuma raksts 2008a). It was also proposed to replace the word "prostitute"<sup>53</sup> with the word "person" because this word without reference to its relationship was considered to be discriminatory (Paskaidrojuma raksts 2008a). The new regulations also looked to extend the range of the authorities empowered to monitor compliance. They assigned the State Police and municipal police to implement the regulations with the Health Inspector overseeing the health examination at professional quality medical institutions (PIN 2008). It also sought to eliminate prostitution at places such as massage parlors, consequently, the regulation called for "managers of entertainment and recreational institutions to ensure that sexual services for purchase are not offered, provided, and received in these institutions" (PIN 2008). One expert in a focus group on prostitution conducted by BISS argued that the Latvian law does not define clearly what constitutes a sexual service (BISS 2007), consequently, it is difficult to limit something that has not been defined in law. The Interior Ministry and State Secretary proposed these changes and held a meeting with the Ministry of Justice, Riga City Council, the National Police, Municipal Police, the International Organization for Migration, and the Resource Centre for Women, Marta

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<sup>53</sup> In Latvian the word prostitution is *prostitūta* which ends with an "a" and denotes only the feminine version of the word, meaning that only women work as prostitutes.

in June 2007 (Paskaidrojuma raksts 2008). At this meeting a conceptual agreement was reached on the draft's content and direction (Paskaidrojuma raksts 2008). In 2009, the Health Minister and State Secretary supported amendments to this regulation that made the Centre for Health Economics charge 1.00 LVL (\$2.00) including Value Added Tax (VAT) to cover the cost of the health card preparation and service of persons who are engaged or wish to engage in prostitution (Anotacija 2009).

Currently, there are no NGOs in Latvia specifically devoted to prostitutes. The Latvian Gender Problem Centre "GENDERS" established in 1994 worked to develop preventive strategies and measures against HIV/AIDS and STDs among prostitutes (Kalikov 2004, 65). However, a number of interview subjects and the BISS study affirmed that they no longer offer these services. This is a common phenomenon with many suitcase NGOs in Eastern Europe because they are established for a specific project and once the funding from the government or international donors runs out, they are forced to close. Despite the majority of the public supporting the idea that the government should establish an assistance program for women engaged in prostitution, so they can return to normal life, none currently exists (65 percent supported this idea while 9 percent disagree and 26 percent did not provide a concrete answer) (BISS 2007). Currently, there is one NGO, Dia+logs that travels to areas of the city where prostitution is permitted and provides HIV/AIDS tests and condoms (Dean 2010). Also, the Resource Centre for Women, Marta lobbied for the abolition of prostitution in the Saeima in 2006 but it is unknown if prostitutes in Latvia would support this measure. This proposed amendment to the criminal code was sent to the human rights committee instead of the legal and judicial committee and was voted down because it was during the new parliamentary elections.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> NGO Expert, personal interview, August 11, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

Since these changes in 2008 there have been no additional regulations or amendments to the criminal or administrative codes. Therefore, as it stands today prostitution in Latvia is legal within certain regulations where prostitutes can gather and offer their services. Despite this lack of policy change since 2008 there have been some lively meetings and discussions which should be mentioned because they elucidate some of the advocacy coalition members. A focus group of experts gathered by the BISS had many recommendations on how to improve the situation with prostitution in Latvia. One such recommendation was placing a priority on policing these areas because “since the elimination of the Vice Squad, there is no longer a separate entity to deal with prostitution surveillance” (BISS 2007). According to these experts, in general, the police lack the capacity to investigate regulations because the provisions are complex and it is difficult to collect evidence (BISS 2007). Additionally, experts acknowledged that the police often lack the interest in monitoring this area due to the prevalence of other types of violations and the fact that most police resources are devoted to these other areas (BISS 2007).

The 2008 economic crisis and unemployment exacerbated the problem of prostitution in Latvia, so experts gathered in March of 2010 to discuss the issue of prostitution in the country (TV2 2010). The meeting included members of NGOs, medical specialists, and government officials and according to a news report the experts decided that prostitution in Latvia is almost completely unmonitored which means people are vulnerable to becoming prostitutes (TV2 2010). This also means that the Latvian government is not receiving their share of taxes for the estimated 60 to 100 million LVL (\$120 to 200 million), that the sex industry in Latvia brings in every year from prostitution (TV2 2010). As a result of this conference there were lively discussions in the media and among politicians.<sup>55</sup> After this meeting Marta Centre started a

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<sup>55</sup> For examples of these debates please see <http://www.lv.lv/?menu=doc&id=219869> and <http://lv.lv/?menu=doc&id=206804> (in Latvian).



social campaign in June of 2010 titled *Buy a Girl – Save the State!* with the aim of preventing human trafficking and starting a discussion in society against the legalization of prostitution and criminalizing the buyers of sexual services. The campaign started websites “imitating actual sexual service portals and referring to the opinion of specialists (criminal law experts, gynecologists, contraceptiveologists) on the economic benefits to the state, if Latvia legalized prostitution, which would make the government a legal pimp for levying taxes from sexually exploited girls and women” (Marta Centre 2010). The campaign was shut down by the State Police within hours and according to Marta Centre an administrative case was started for breaking the Regulations Limiting Prostitution “while 19 other brothels are still active on the internet in Latvia” (Marta Centre 2010).

In addition to the laws, public opinion regarding prostitution has also changed over time in Latvia. During the transition from communism the public opinion on the matter “shifted from condemnation of the individual moral failure to recognition of structural failure to ensure a normal life for women” (Eglitis 2002, 220). Therefore, people began to blame the economic conditions in Latvia that forced women to work as prostitutes instead of the women themselves for participating in such an activity. This opinion changed by 2007 when 78 percent of respondents to the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences survey supported the statement that prostitutes just wanted to make money while 13 percent were against this statement. Despite this change in public opinion, most of the debate surrounding prostitution has been on whether it should be legal or illegal, a sentiment which still holds true today (Eglitis 2002, 220). In the BISS survey 61 percent of respondents thought that prostitution was a normal phenomenon that has existed throughout time, 25 percent did not agree and 14 percent did not provide a concrete answer (BISS 2007). It is also interesting that the majority of respondents (69 percent) expressed

a negative view towards the government's current initiatives on the issue of prostitution while only five percent expressed positive viewpoint, and 25 percent had no opinion (BISS 2007). Finally, 49 percent of respondents believed that Latvia needed to legalize prostitution in order to collect taxes while 27 percent disagreed and 24 percent did not provide a concrete answer to this question (BISS 2007). According to the experts interviewed by BISS, these "Regulations to Limit Prostitution proposal can be seen as an attempt to find a middle ground between legalization of prostitution (although in certain circumstances it is allowed) and the criminalization of prostitution and punishing customers" (2007). They also mentioned how prostitution is related to organized crime and illegal elements such as currency embezzlement, drug trafficking, and human trafficking "thus, prostitution is seen as part of an extensive illegal network which seeks to legally enter Latvia and find a legal framework" (BISS 2007).

### *Pornography*

Closely linked with prostitution is pornography which saw a massive expansion in Latvian society after the fall of communism and during the first years of independence (Eglitis 2002, 223). This is because many publications struggled to survive without the government support they had under communism, thus, they saw publishing pornography as a way to bring in much needed revenue (Eglitis 2002, 223). Watson has even suggested that "the pornographic icon [was]...the new symbol of freedom" (Watson 1993, 472 as referenced in Eglitis 2002, 223). After the prostitution provision was deleted from the Latvian Administrative Violations Code in April 1996 the first measures to address anything related to pornography was in May 28, 1997 when Article 173.2 was added (APK 1996). This article banned the import, manufacturing, distribution, public exhibition, or advertisement of erotic and pornographic materials. The

sentence for this crime was a warning or fine not exceeding 100 LVL (\$200), with or without confiscation of these materials for erotic materials and 100-250 LVL (\$200-300) and seizure of the material for pornographic materials (APK 1996). Despite this addition to the code and the monetary sentence that came with it, no definition on what constitutes erotic or pornographic material was given, thus, making prosecutions for this offense difficult. In 1998, Pornographic materials provision Section 166 was added to the criminal code which added a criminal penalty of one to five years of prison dependent on the severity of the situation and if a minor was involved (KL 1998). This article provided law enforcement with both a criminal and administrative offenses for violations of the pornography provisions but it was not clear what offenses constituted a criminal offense and what offenses constituted an administrative offense.

In March of 2000 administrative sentences were increased in the Latvian Administrative Violations Code for those importing, manufacturing, distributing, exhibiting, or advertising rules erotic and pornographic materials Section 173.2. For “legal persons” a fine of up to 1,000 LVL (\$2,000), with or without the confiscation of materials for erotic materials and for pornographic materials a thousand to 2,500 LVL (APK 2000). Despite this sentencing increase, the definitions of erotic and pornographic materials and legal persons remained unclear. Article 174.4 was also added in this amendment which placed a fine of 250 LVL (\$500) for violation of the rules limiting prostitution (APK 2000). Then in May 18, 2000, the amendments to the Criminal Law Section 164 also increased the prison term from one to five years to five to twelve years to anyone found guilty of producing pornographic or erotic material with a minor (KL 2000). Amendments to the criminal law in 2004 added community service to the possibility of sentencing options for Section 166, pornographic or erotic material import, manufacture and distribution of circumvention (KL 2004).

A draft regulation passed by the Cabinet of Ministers in November 2005 began the discussion on pornographic materials in Latvia. A significant increase in erotic entertainment and complaints about “public disorder and public moral hazards” brought the issue to the forefront of Latvian society. Subsequently, the Ministry for Special Assignments for Electronic Government Affairs proposed a framework for circulating erotic entertainment activity and the Ministry for Regional Development and Local Government developed a framework for regulating the erotic entertainment operations and activities (Saiema Presidium 2006). According to government documents, the law was necessary because a previous Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 348 lapsed on June 1, 2005 and the Children’s Law Act was used to replace it but had not included the necessary definitions and interpretations of the terms erotic and pornographic materials (Saiema Presidium 2006). In addition, the plethora of erotic entertainment places located in Riga and their unlimited activity reflected badly in international media and contributed to the image of Latvian erotic destination (Saiema Presidium 2006). In order to prevent this image of Latvia from prevailing, there was an urgent need to provide a legal framework for erotic entertainment activities as the current one was insufficient (Saiema Presidium 2006). The government also hoped that this law would reduce the number of companies engaged in erotic entertainment organization which in turn will protect and promote public morality (Saiema Presidium 2006). According to government documents four NGOs were consulted and supported this law including Press Publishers Association, the Latvian Naturist Association, parent organization of "Everything" and SIA "Media Services" (Saiema Presidium 2006).

The Law on Pornography Restrictions (Pornogrāfijas ierobežošanas likums hereafter PIL) banned the promotion of pornographic material on the internet and within the media, set requirements for sex shops, and regulated where erotic entertainment can be organized (2007). It

provided municipalities with the ability to designate areas where erotic entrainment is prohibited “if necessary for public order, rights of other persons or public morals” (PIL 2007) The law went through the Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee and after three readings in 2006 and the early part of 2007 was finally signed into law on May 3, 2007 (Saiema 2007). According to experts this area is especially difficult to regulate because “electronic resources are constantly being re-registered or go out of Latvia’s jurisdiction and this process actually cannot be tracked anymore” (BISS 2007). They also noted how prostitution has changed over time and now the sex workers use advertisements in various magazines and the internet so the agreement for sex often occurs over the telephone or electronically (BISS 2007). Additionally, the increase of foreign tourists to the country has caused an increase in these types of services being provided and aimed at foreigners (BISS 2007).

### *Human Trafficking*

Human Trafficking is another closely related phenomenon to sex tourism as women could be trafficked to Latvia to work in the sex industry. Government documents acknowledged this link in late 2008 and the early months of 2009, as the State Police noted an increase in the amount of trafficking in human beings because women were increasingly starting to engage in international prostitution due to the economic downturn (Kopsavilkums 2009). Therefore, policies about human trafficking influence sex tourism and prostitution and vice versa because many of the “stereotypes about human trafficking in Latvian society are closely linked to stereotypes about prostitution” and sex tourism (BISS 2007).

In March of 2000 changes to the criminal code were the first elements to be tackled with respect to human trafficking in Latvian. These changes added imprisonment of five to twelve

years for inducing or coercing a minor to engage in prostitution Section 164, and pimping a minor Section 165 (KL 2000b). Section 165.2 was also added and addressed sending a person for exploitation in Latvia or a foreign country, which was punishable with four years in prison and ten years for a minor with confiscation of property (KL 2000). If this offense is committed by an organized group or if it occurs with a juvenile, a prison term of eight to fifteen years with confiscation of property is required by the Criminal Law (KL 2000). Passing these trafficking offenses into Criminal Law occurred in advance of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (henceforth referred to as the Palermo Protocol) that was passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 15, 2000 (KL 2000). This demonstrates that Latvia was not compelled to pass these trafficking amendments by the United Nations because it did so in advance of the most significant UN convention on the subject.

This is because Latvia began moving closer to Europe and away from the post-Soviet region thus, Latvia sought to align many of its policies with Europe. The area of human trafficking is no different because in May 2000 as a member of the Council of Europe, Latvia was subject to the Council of Europe Recommendation R (2000) 11 Trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 19 May 2000 (Valsts programma 2004). In addition to the Council of Europe recommendations, Latvia also signed the Palermo Protocol on December 10, 2002. Human trafficking was amended in the Latvian Criminal Law extending the provisions beyond those already included for minors, in April 2002. This amendment, Sections 154.1 and 154.2, outlined the meaning of human trafficking in Latvia. It was defined in the Criminal Law as “the

exploitation of persons made in recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons by using violence, threats, abduction or deceit, a person's dependency on the offender, the state of helplessness, or giving or receiving material or benefits to achieve the consent to trade, from which depends on the victim” (KL, 2002). They also included forced labor, debt bondage, indentured servitude, and organ trafficking in their definition. For trafficking human beings to a foreign country a sentence of three to eight years was prescribed, however, if this included a minor five to twelve years was recommended, and imprisonment for a term of ten to fifteen years with confiscation of property was prescribed if the crime was particularly heinous, the victim was a juvenile, or if the crime was committed by an organized group (KL 2002).

Since Latvia’s appearance in the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report formulated by the United States Department of State in 2002 Latvia has transformed from a source and transit country for women and girls (Trafficking in Persons Report hereafter TIP 2002) to a source, transit, and destination country for men and women trafficking for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation (TIP 2009). Therefore, the situation in the country has changed dramatically from 2002 when only women and girls from Latvia were trafficking from or through the country, to 2009 when men and women are trafficked to Latvia for a variety of exploitative purposes. These changes in the types of trafficking and the demographics of the victims have added to the significant policy development we can see in this area over the past ten years. Despite this, change in policy and the nature of the problem Latvia still “does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking, however, it is making significant efforts to do so” (TIP 2010). The evaluation of Latvia’s trafficking efforts in the yearly TIP Report has guided policy adoption and implementation efforts. Over the years we can see

significant policy change, therefore, the next section will examine this development and influence over time.

The first TIP report that evaluated Latvia in 2002 reveals that “police anti-trafficking activity has increased, and more cases were investigated in 2001 than in previous years” (TIP 2002). This could be directly related to the establishment of the Human Trafficking Unit in the State Police in 2003 because Latvian police did not fully investigate human trafficking until they attended seminars in Norway and Sweden where they learned how to investigate human trafficking (TIP 2002). The report also mentions that Latvia prohibited trafficking for sexual exploitation but does not have a comprehensive law against trafficking in persons (TIP 2002). This changed in 2004 when Latvia developed a National Action Plan for human trafficking and perhaps there is a connection between the TIP report and Latvia’s policy development in this area. The 2002 report also mentions that there are few trafficking victim protection or assistance programs to help protect victims in Latvia which is addressed in the subsequent action plan in 2004 (TIP 2002). The 2003 report offers recommendations that would be addressed in the 2004 action plan including the limited government resources for trafficking-specific programs and the lack of clarity on the “roles and responsibilities of different ministries and law enforcement agencies...and central government coordination is lacking” (TIP 2003). This report also speaks to the development of the Human Trafficking Unit and their increased professionalism and number of investigations (TIP 2003). Finally, the report also mentions improved cooperation between NGOs and law enforcement for witness protection and rehabilitation of victims (TIP 2003).

The Government Program for the Elimination of Human Trafficking 2004-2008 was adopted on March 4, 2004 by the Cabinet of Ministers. It was developed with active support



from the US embassy and the implementation was coordinated by the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Welfare, and Ministry of Education and Science.<sup>56</sup> The program was necessary in order to fulfill the obligations arising from Latvia's participation in international and regional protocols or memberships to prepare the set of the necessary draft legal enactments (Valsts programma 2004). Additionally the program is essential in order to improve the trafficking situation and provide for the actions of the state institutions and the non-governmental organizations in their fight against the human trafficking. (Valsts programma 2004). The program aimed to promote the targeted prevention and fight against human trafficking focusing on education and support services for victims of trafficking combined with public and community efforts to prevent trafficking in human beings. In the content of the program the influence of the US Embassy is evident as it uses much of the same language that the Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP) employs such as identifying Latvia as a source, transit, and destination country.

The implementation of the program was seen as successful by the government despite the fact that it only funded 6.3 percent of what the program required (2,162,220 LVL were called for but only 136,000 LVL were allocated) (Valsts programma 2009). According to one expert, basically everything that did not require money from the government was completed but everything that required money was left for later.<sup>57</sup> Lack of monetary commitment to the program was one of the biggest critiques by experts in the field of human trafficking. One NGO remarked that the Latvian government always has a hard time with finances, because they work only with the projects provided by foreign funds or European funds because the Latvian government cannot give out any money (BISS 2005). Another assessment of the program

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<sup>56</sup> Government Official, personal interview, July 23, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>57</sup> Government Official, personal interview, July 23, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

criticized the lack of coordination distributing functions between the national authorities, which, they argued complicated the implementation of the program (BISS 2005). One final critique discussed that the lack of program implementation was due to the changes in government, as the program was adopted under one government but then another government was elected and the program was no longer a priority (BISS 2005). Despite these critiques, according to the government the planned results were achieved because human trafficking was significantly reduced in the country, and victims of trafficking were provided state-funded rehabilitation services (Valsts programma 2009). However, how the government actually arrived at this assessment is still unclear as the number of trafficking victims is difficult to determine. The Trafficking in Persons report also mentions that while the Government of Latvia does not conduct independent anti-trafficking campaigns it does support the efforts of NGOs (TIP 2004). This demonstrates again the cooperation between NGOs and the government on the issue of human trafficking. One government official noted that the only people who really understand human trafficking in Latvia are the non-governmental organizations, which is why they were invited to express their views and participate in the program (BISS 2005).

As stated previously this program did prepare Latvia for ratifying its international agreements which it did on May 15, 2004 when it ratified the Palermo Protocol. The 2004 TIP report recognizes internal trafficking for the first time in Latvia, from rural areas of high unemployment to Riga and other urban centers (2004). It talks about the Interior Ministry's proposal to criminalize internal trafficking because at that time domestic trafficking cases were prosecuted under laws on pimping. Consequently, in December 2004 sentencing guidelines for sending a person for sexual exploitation were increased from four to six years and foreign country was deleted from the first sentence in Section 154 this changed the wording "for a

person who commits trafficking” rather than for a person who commits trafficking to a foreign country” (KL 2004b).

Despite these legislative changes the 2005 TIP report said “the government continued to provide no direct funding for foreign or domestic NGOs for services to victims” (TIP 2005). Although the report states that some “local municipalities provide ad hoc funds to victim assistance projects.” One example of this support was in Riga where the municipality provided funds to the Skalbes Crisis Center and Dardedze Center for abused children, organizations that identified and assisted trafficking victims in 2004 (TIP 2005). The 2006 report recommended the Latvian government consider formalizing a mechanism for trafficking victims to request and receive social services and rehabilitation from government ministries. Latvia addressed this in the 2006 regulations for social services, which outlined how victims of trafficking were able to receive social rehabilitation services from the government (*Sociālās rehabilitācijas pakalpojums* hereafter SRP, 2006). However, there were several requirements attached to the government money such as, victims of human trafficking could only receive state-funded rehabilitation services if they cooperated with the police, which left many of those that did not with limited services provided by NGOs (SRP, 2006). Additionally, this assistance was only available for six months, and the victim had to be certified as a victim of human trafficking and could only go to certain state sponsored NGOs for assistance (Dean 2009).

The Law on Residence of a Victim of Trafficking in Human Beings in the Republic of Latvia outlined the strategies for returning or awarding a temporary residence permit to foreign victims of human trafficking was forwarded from the Cabinet of Ministers to the parliament in May of 2006 and finally passed in January 2007 (*Par cilvēku tirdzniecības upura uzturēšanos Latvijas Republikā* 2007). The Criminal Law was also amended in 2007 to align Latvia with

international standards and treaties concerning human trafficking. Sentencing on Sections 154.1, 164, 165, 165.1 and 166 was increased (10-15, 5-15, 5-15, 8-15 and 5-15 years respectively), and a provision for “confiscation of property and police supervision for a term not exceeding three years was added to the law if the offense was committed by an organized group or committed against minors” was added to all of these sections (KL, 2007).

The Government Program for the Elimination of Human Trafficking 2009-2013 is a continuation of the 2004-2008 program. According to government documents, “it should be noted that human trafficking as a growing global problem continues to be topical at the international level” (Kopsavilkums 2009). This statement demonstrates that this program was developed due to international pressure rather than organically from Latvian lawmakers. The document goes on to state that in the U.S. State Department TIP report 2008 Latvia is still ranked Level 2, and it was understood that Latvia will take steps to improve the situation, because the current steps are not sufficiently effective (Valsts programma 2009). The program's main objective is to plan and “implement measures to promote the prevention of human trafficking by improving public education on human trafficking; providing support services to victims of trafficking; promoting cooperation between public authorities and non-governmental organizations; and preventing human trafficking by improving law enforcement authorities” (Valsts programma 2009). The Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Welfare are responsible for implementing the program but it was developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Welfare, Children, Family and Integration Affairs, Ministry of Education and Science Ministry, the Latvian Prosecutor's Office, the Latvian Association of Local Governments, the Riga City Council, the Resource Centre for Women, Marta, the Shelter “Safe House” and the Models and Agents Association (Valsts programma 2009). According to government documents a number of

the tasks for the campaign are delegated to NGOs because these organizations are involved in the rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking and utilized government funds. As a result, cooperation including joint projects and regular meetings were planned to improve the maximum involvement of non-governmental organization's decision-making (Valsts programma 2009). Despite all of this cooperation and work that was involved in formulating the program, on August 27, 2009 the same day the program was passed by the Cabinet of Ministers an additional addendum was added which said "given the financial situation in the country," the government was eliminated from the program the planned tasks that required additional funding (Par Programmu cilvēku tirdzniecības novēršanai 2009). This demonstrates a pattern in Latvian policymaking where anything that could potentially cost the government money is disregarded. Thus, similar to the last government program on human trafficking, there are a number of initiatives in the present program that cannot come to fruition due to a lack of funds from the government.

In addition to aligning itself with international conventions Latvia also had obligations to its European counterparts as part of its European Union of Council or Europe membership. These documents influenced the Latvian Government Program for the Elimination of Human Trafficking 2009-2013 and are important to note because of this influence. The EU plan on best practices in 2005 to 2007 outlined standards and procedures for combating and preventing human trafficking and published the recommendations that included in the assessment of the EU Member States (Valsts programma 2009). European Council recommendations on human trafficking victim identification, assistance and rights, and combating trafficking in human beings in 2007 also encouraged the implementation of national plans to combat trafficking (Valsts programma 2009). The Baltic Assembly, an international organization which promotes

cooperation in the Baltic States (The Baltic Assembly), adopted a resolution to fight against human trafficking in December 2008 (Valsts programma 2009). Finally, a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), report evaluated the progress of implementation of NATO's policy to combat trafficking in human beings also in December 2008 (Valsts programma 2009). These supranational organizations and programs are important to mention because of their influence on Latvian domestic policy. They further demonstrate the complex policy environment surrounding human trafficking but do not specifically relate to sex tourism which is why only their influence is explained.

In addition to these international conventions in which Latvia cooperates with other international organizations and governance bodies, internal cooperation can also be seen with human trafficking policies. The Ministry of Interior led an inter-ministerial working group that met on a regular basis in 2004 to implement Latvia's National Action Plan (TIP 2005). The TIP report in 2006 also called for increased cooperation among NGOs and local authorities because while there is good cooperation in Riga outside of the capital there is minimal cooperation between these two agencies (TIP 2006). The report also explains that "the Ministry of Interior worked closely with local NGOs and international organizations to develop and implement the anti-trafficking project entitled *Opening the Labor Market for Women* (TIP 2006). Coordination of government agencies, municipalities and non-governmental organizations is also an integral part of the implementation of the Government Program for the Elimination of Human Trafficking 2009-2013 (Darba grupu 2011). Government documents reveal an order of the Prime Minister named specific representatives from NGOs and government agencies who are to participate in this working group in order "to ensure the rapid exchange of information and coordinated action of human trafficking prevention and relief and social services for victims of

trafficking” (Darbu grupa 2011). This document is interesting because it reveals the advocacy coalition members in the trafficking policy subsystem. Unfortunately, no documents like this exist for sex tourism yet it is very interesting that instead of referring to NGOs in an anonymous way they are mentioned by name as active participants in the implementation of trafficking policy in Latvia.

### *Adult Entertainment*

In 2007, Restrictions on the Nature of Intimate Entertainment (Intīma rakstura izklaides hereafter IRI) (or adult entertainment) were proposed in the Cabinet of Ministers by the Interior Minister. The restrictions were finally passed the Cabinet in 2008 and outlined rules governing the intimate nature of the entertainment consent procedures and a harmonization of existent documents (Paskaidrojuma raksts 2008b). This regulation provides a list of places where it is prohibited to organize and promote adult entertainment, one such limitation specified that adult entertainment workers may not solicit services within 100 meters of churches, medical institutions, educational institutions, social care and social rehabilitation institutions, bus terminals, railway stations, airports, and passengers in ports (IRI 2008). It also outlines how municipalities can govern the application process for permits to offer adult entertainment facilities such as strip clubs (Paskaidrojuma raksts 2008b). It further prohibits adult entertainment from advertising on the Internet, the press, and other media for children and young people, as well as free informational materials (Paskaidrojuma raksts 2008b). These regulations were drafted with input from a number of NGOs and other government agencies such as the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, Ministry of Culture, the Latvian Association of Local Governments, Regional Development and Local Government Affairs, the Riga City Council, Ministry of Health, and State Police (Paskaidrojuma raksts 2008b). Penalties for breaking these

rules are found in the Latvian Administrative Violations Code under a new article in Section 174.3 but the amendments to the code have not been voted upon by the Cabinet of Ministers and subsequently do not exist as of the writing of this thesis.

Adult entertainment is rather a new policy area in Latvia but one that is related to sex tourism because many of the sex tourists frequent these types of establishments. In conclusion, there has been policy development and change in the areas of prostitution, pornography, human trafficking, and adult entertainment. This section examined this change and development over time which will inform the next section on advocacy coalition and belief formation.



#### 4. Findings and Analysis

“The problem is that the trade (of human beings) has long become a business.  
Sex tourism is just one part of it.” (BISS 2007)

The previous chapter examined the policy process in a number of areas related to sex tourism. While the Latvian government has no policy specifically aimed at combating sex tourism, the areas examined were what most policy experts in Latvia referenced when speaking about how the government works to combat this problem. This examination of the interwoven and complex policy process reveals that there are many overlapping themes between the areas of sex tourism, prostitution, pornography, human trafficking, and adult entertainment. This chapter will attempt to merge all of these themes and the policy process by discussing the formation of advocacy coalitions, what kind of coalitions have formed, and the lack of policy change on this subject despite these coalitions. It concludes with the theoretical and methodological limitations of the study.

##### *Advocacy Coalition Beliefs*

The examination of the policy process uncovered a significant amount of cooperation on the issues of prostitution, pornography, human trafficking, and to a lesser extent, adult entertainment. Through process tracing it is evident that cooperation has existed on some issues more than others. For example, there was significant cooperation on human trafficking with not only top-down influence on the policy process but also grassroots coordination on the implementation aspects. Prostitution also saw a number of players emerge to influence the adoption process as the policy developed over time. Despite this coordination, NGOs have come and gone with these issues, which could suggest a lack of longevity over time with members

going in and out of the coalition in a fluid manner. The Advocacy Coalition Framework tells us that coalition members can include journalists, researchers, policy analysts and other bureaucrats. Thus, despite this fluidity of NGOs, other policy entrepreneurs can step in to fill this role within the bureaucracy. Since many NGOs only last for a few years in Latvia, the organization GENDERS is an excellent example of this, there must be other people pushing for these initiatives. Since most of the legislation originated from inside the ministries, one could assume that there are people within these ministries pushing for the legislation or people from the outside influencing them. Either way the impetus for policy change must come from somewhere because internal and external determinants only explain a handful of the situations that were examined. Does this cooperation in other areas transcend to sex tourism and does cooperation mean that there will be advocacy coalitions? ACF places these advocacy coalitions at the center of the analysis and assumes that policy making occurs among specialists in a policy subsystem. These advocacy coalitions are formed around a number of beliefs which motivate these coalitions to influence policy. Therefore, in order to determine if advocacy coalitions exist, the beliefs that would unite these coalitions must be determined.

A number of beliefs can be seen throughout the policy changes that have occurred. One is the definite increase in sentencing for violations against prostitution, human trafficking, and pornography regulations and laws. This increase in penalties could symbolize a desire to acclimate to other international norms or to align with international obligations as is evident in trafficking policy. It could also mean that there are people in the policy sub-system who see these issues as important and that there is a need to prosecute individuals who violate them. The establishment of the Vice Squad also demonstrates that some players within the government view enforcement of the provisions, such as prostitution, as important. However, the dissolution

of this body and their ineffectiveness in prosecuting individuals for this crime also shows that there is a lack of commitment and longevity to this process. The status of prostitution and its prohibition until 1996 could demonstrate an anti-prostitution or abolitionist belief in policy entrepreneurs while the deletion of the administrative code could demonstrate a pro-prostitution belief. The 1998 push for regulation could suggest that there are also regulationist beliefs, as policy entrepreneurs believe that the government should regulate this industry.

The limitations imposed on where prostitutes could gather, which essentially pushed them out of the old town and main streets of Riga toward the highways and certain side streets, could symbolize a belief to clean up the center of the city so that prostitution was not seen but still legal. Conversely, the lack of implementation of these limitations in every city except Riga and the eventual repeal of these provisions suggests that there is an alternate lobby wanting to improve access to prostitution. The increased definitions on pimping, the expulsion of brothels, and the overall limiting of prostitution could suggest that there is an anti-prostitution lobby because all of these limitations make prostitution more difficult to procure. The regulations on advertising further diminish the availability of prostitutes for sex tourists, as that was a way for them to know about the types of establishments that can be found in Riga. However, the lack of enforcement on this law could imply the significant influence of the proprietors of these businesses because they need these tourists to be able to make a profit. The health card and health checks regulation, as previously stated, was not for the clients but the police and seemed like more of an inconvenience for the prostitutes than something that was really imposed to protect them. Thus in this regulation, beliefs about projecting a positive image are prevalent due to the lack of enforcement of this restriction. If this provision promoted another belief or area there would be enforcement on this issue. However, the fact that it was unenforced demonstrates

that it is there to attempt to project a positive image and demonstrate that Latvian prostitutes are disease free. The limitations on adult entertainment also reveal some of the beliefs that have come forward during this time period because they specifically target some of these strip clubs and massage parlors in the old town. These regulations hurt business and impose costly restrictions on these establishments because they have to bring things up to code and pay fines for noncompliance. Additionally, the revenue stream is likely to be hurt by the banning of flyers and leafleting in the old town as this was a major source of advertisement for these businesses. The disconnect that is evident between public opinion and most of the policies examined could suggest the influence of an advocacy coalition because without it, the government might only be influenced by public opinion.

Finally, the March 2010 meeting about prostitution reveals a number of beliefs as there was a group arguing for the abolition of prostitution, due to the economic conditions in the country, causing more and more people to turn to prostitution (TV2 2010). This group believed that prostitution was violence against women and wanted the Latvian government to abolish it and fine the buyers of the sexual services instead of the prostitute. There was another group, which was against prostitution because it believed that the government should provide opportunities so that women do not have to choose prostitution. Additionally, they believed that the government should do more to protect the prostitutes and ensure their safety. One final group called for the regulation of prostitution, which is essentially legalization, in which prostitutes are taxed for their earnings and it is recognized as a real job in the tax law. They believed that the Latvian government was missing out on taxes from the 60 to 100 million LVL (\$120 to 200 million) a year that the sex industry earns and that valuable income could help the Latvian economy (TV2 2010).

Throughout this cooperation and the formation of belief structures, two sets of competing interests have emerged over time, one is feminist and the other is business. The types of policy pushes such as the increases in some of the penalties for offenses surrounding prostitution, pimping, and pornography, along with changes in wording that were seen as discriminatory, demonstrate the emergence of a feminist coalition. Additionally, the fact that most of the programs to deter sex tourism were formulated by non-governmental organizations with a feminist mindset further demonstrates this fact. This is also supported by my interviews and participant observation which suggest that this coalition does exist because I was able to witness the cooperation and lobbying of this coalition first hand. Marta Centre is the leader of this coalition because they are the strongest voice on feminist issues in Latvia and they are the organization that is continually seen throughout the process tracing portion of the paper as an advocate of feminist policy. Additionally, Marta Centre is the leader of the Latvian Women's NGO Network which began with 15 member organizations in 2003 and has now grown to include 52 women's organizations around Latvia (Marta Centre). According to their website the purpose of the network is to analyze, monitor, and lobby for policies to promote equality between women and men and the network provides coordinated participation in policy advocacy and a common platform on the local and national levels (Marta Centre). Consequently, this organization, its prevalence in the process tracing and in leading campaigns against sex tourism suggests that they are the leader of a feminist advocacy coalition.

The beliefs and the belief structure of the feminist advocacy coalition are outlined in Table 1. The deep core policy belief is for no victimization of women, which is why they stand against sex tourism because they believe that it victimizes women in Latvia. The feminist advocacy coalition policy core belief is to project a positive image of Latvian women so they

want to limit sex tourism because it casts a negative light on women in Latvia. The reason that this is a policy core belief instead of a deep core belief is due to the fact that the coalition was formed on the premise of non-victimization of women, which to them is a normative assumption and fundamental value, as ACF suggests. The positive image of Latvian women is less ingrained, as this is a newer phenomenon in Latvian society but it still spans the entire subsystem of advocacy coalition members and it is difficult to change. Finally, the secondary aspects are not system wide and have fewer agreements, which are embodied in the feminist advocacy coalition with two beliefs. One is ethnicity and the divisions between Latvians and the Slavic speaking minority because some organizations are geared toward one specific ethnicity or language group. This is not really something that is debated but it is something that can still divide the coalition as some issues are seen as appealing to the Slavic minority such as language rights. The other element is the more significant divide on prostitution within the feminist advocacy coalition. This is evidenced by the March 2010 meeting in which there were distinct divisions between abolitionist members, who view prostitution as violence against women, and another group that does not want to ban prostitution and argues that women sometimes need to work as prostitutes in order to make a living. The coalition is, at times, bitterly divided on this issue within the advocacy coalition on sex tourism. Due to the fact that prostitution is a large element of the sex tourism there could see a split in this coalition in the future, but currently, within the sex tourism policy subsystem this coalition is united.

The business advocacy coalition, which includes tourism, is less visible than the feminist coalition but has been seemingly more effective in pushing their beliefs into policy, especially in the 1990s. This coalition also lacks a central figure, compared to the feminist advocacy coalition, and instead has a significant number of politicians and members of the bureaucracy who favor a

business model above all else. Additionally, this coalition has influential lobbying power because they are organized through a number of tourism associations such as the Latvian Tourism Information Organization Association and the Latvian Tourism Agents Association. The deep core beliefs, as exemplified in Table 1 of the business advocacy coalition, are based on profits made by the business and tourism sectors. They do not want government interference or regulation in this sector as a normative value. Their policy core beliefs are tourism development, necessary tax revenue, and regulationist prostitution. These are ideals that are held throughout the coalition and deal with their fundamental policy choices, as explained in ACF. They urge tourism development no matter the cost for Latvia because the tax revenue from these tourists is necessary to boost the economy. They view some of the limits placed on prostitution as bad for business because prostitution is what brings some tourists and businessmen to Latvia. Finally, the secondary belief is projecting a positive image of Latvia. The reason that this is a secondary belief is that some do not care what the image of Latvia is as long as they are making money while others think that Latvia has to have a positive image to bring tourists to the country. There seems to be a disagreement on this issue between tourism and business because one prioritizes Latvia's image over money while the other does not.

**Table 1: Advocacy Coalitions Belief Systems**

<b>Belief System</b>	<b>Feminist Advocacy Coalition</b>	<b>Business Advocacy Coalition</b>
Deep Core	No victimization of women	Profitability No government interference in the market
Policy Core	Positive Image of Latvian Women	Tourism Development Necessary Tax Revenue Regulationist Prostitution
Secondary Aspects	Abolitionist/Regulationist Prostitution Ethnicity	Positive Image of Latvia

Source: Dean 2011

As hypothesized in ACF there are a number of coalition resources which influence the ability of one coalition to influence policy change (Sabatier and Weible 2007, 201-204). The feminist advocacy coalition has public opinion as one of their resources because it is significantly against sex tourism. They are also able to mobilize their members effectively through regular meetings and correspondence in the Women's NGO Network. Information could also be on their side as the severity of the problem and the crimes that tourists commit is widely publicized. Conversely, the business coalition has the financial resources to influence bureaucrats compared to the feminist coalition, which, at times has struggled to keep its doors open. They also have skillful leadership and access to bureaucrats which helps them influence and promote their policy positions.

As stated previously, in this paper the first level of analysis the dependent variable was the presence of advocacy coalitions and the independent variables were belief systems and external events. It is evident that belief systems influence the presence of advocacy coalitions because without these beliefs the coalitions would not have been able to form. External events like European Union membership and the introduction of low cost airlines also added to the presence of advocacy coalitions. This is because without these events sex tourists would not have inundated Latvia and the problems with crime and overpowering the city would not have occurred. Other independent variables included several stable parameters such as socio-cultural values of Latvia and the institutional structures which enabled these coalitions to affect policy change. The next section will move on to the second level of analysis concerning policy change.



### *Policy Change*

The second level of analysis examines if there has there been policy change over time and, if so, what change has occurred. The dependent variable for this level was policy change while the independent variables are advocacy coalitions and external shocks. Through the process tracing examined in Chapter Three, a significant amount of policy change was handed down by outside players like the European Union, United States, or United Nations. The Interior Ministry was the main promulgator of most laws and regulations while the Ministry of Welfare, Health, and Education and Science Ministry played a more minor role. The previous section demonstrated that advocacy coalitions were present within the sex tourism policy subsystem in Latvia and examined what kind of beliefs these coalitions possessed. The process tracing revealed that there has been policy change in all of the policy areas analyzed prostitution, pornography, human trafficking, and adult entertainment. However, there was no policy change in sex tourism policy, as Latvia continues to lack a policy on this issue. Despite this lack of policy change we can see cooperation on the issue which shows that there was a non-decision on this topic and not a retention of the status quo because the public perception has changed. If there were no initiatives on sex tourism then arguments for the preservation of the status quo could be made but due to this cooperation and the initiatives on this issue there was a non-decision or policy silence on this issue and not a retention of the status quo. Therefore, one of the independent variables did not act as it should have to encourage one of the four paths to policy change as ACF had hypothesized.

As stated previously, an external shock to the system brought sex tourism to Latvia. Also, the reasoning why these sex tourists chose Latvia, due to a combination of cheap beer, low cost airlines, and liberal laws on prostitution, has already been examined. However, one of these

reasons have changed as prices in Latvia have risen significantly since 2004, thus goods and services that were once cheap are now expensive. A number of tourism officials and tourism providers mentioned the rise in prices as the cause of the decline in the stag tourism industry:

[These tourists are] from nations where things are expensive, and they chose vacation places based on price, where it is cheaper to go. For example, Prague, in the Czech Republic, when [sex tourism] started [and low cost airlines began flying there] things were very cheap. Prague now is just as expensive as us and now maybe even more expensive. Before, you could go into a restaurant and have a nice meal for 4-5 LVL (\$9-10) and now that might be 15 LVL (\$30). Together with that, there is an interest to go to places where there aren't such a steep rise in prices. They want to find something cheaper.<sup>58</sup>

Once prices started to rise and the economic crisis began to set in, fewer and fewer stag parties could be found on the streets of Riga. Although tourism providers are optimistic the market will bounce back they are not so sure that this will bring more sex tourists back to Riga:

As long as Ryan Air continues to push Riga as a destination then you will have the Ryan Air traffic so there will be people coming on weekend breaks. When the prices go down you probably will see a peak in stag tourists. But in regards to stags it's quite a fickle industry, it's like Prague's been done and Riga now that's been done. I don't really know if Minsk or Kiev will be next or whether people will start going to those places.<sup>59</sup>

This rise in prices coupled with the economic crisis could be the external events which led to the decline of this industry and, in turn, led to no policy change or development because the problem was not as immediate. After many of the sex tourists left, the problems caused by them declined and their visibility on the streets of Riga lessened which allowed other more important issues to take center stage.

Advocacy coalitions, the other independent variable, could have also contributed to the lack of policy formulation in this area. ACF recognizes the variety of actors in the system and how they work together to achieve policy change. Advocacy coalitions exist in the sex tourism policy subsystem but it is unclear how these coalitions persist over time, especially if the

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<sup>58</sup> Tourism Official, personal interview, July 28, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>59</sup> Tourism Provider, personal interview, August 12, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

problems associated with the scope of the subsystem exist. Additionally, the overlapping and nested subsystems of the other policies, such as prostitution, pornography, and human trafficking, make the situation and the effectiveness of these coalitions more complicated because they are working on a number of issues at the same time (Sabatier and Weible 2007, 193). That coupled with the fact that the policy subsystem in sex tourism is still evolving, could mean that the feminist advocacy coalition was not developed enough to mount a significant assault on the lack of sex tourism policy. Mature policy subsystems are one of the foundations of ACF and are an area categorized by a “set of participants who share an expertise in a policy domain and who want to influence policy over an extended period” and are comprised of “agencies, interest groups, and research institutions that have sub-units specializing in that topic for an extended period” (Sabatier and Weible 2007, 193). The sex tourism policy subsystem meets both of these requirements but the feminist coalition has still has problems moving toward policy development in the area of sex tourism. Perhaps this is due to the lack of sub-units specializing in this research and because the feminist coalition has framed their approach to sex tourism through prostitution, so there is an overlapping of the subsystems and as a result the policy influence cannot be seen in sex tourism policy but is evident in prostitution policy.

*Is sex tourism policy necessary?*

Another hypothesis related to why policy change did not occur in Latvian sex tourism is because there are so many other laws that govern this area. Therefore, if the overlapping structures from other policy subsystems are evident, is sex tourism policy really necessary? As stated in the introduction, a number of countries do possess sex tourism policy, however, this policy is couched in other policies such as human trafficking, incest, and supporting families at

risk for sex tourism, thus, sex tourism is not really a standalone policy. Most policy makers I interviewed said that a sex tourism policy was not necessary because the current policies already account for sex tourism:

If we understand [sex tourism policy] in terms of prostitution and the fight against human trafficking then that is our priority, that's why there are these booklets, these programs are developed and there are special police units, that work with this. But there is also the other view that doesn't have to do with the official government view. If sex is allowed then sex tourism exists, because sex and sexual services are allowed. Together with that it all could be. It's the same thing when the sexual services are offered here, there are no problems, but if it is offered to all tourists. But in your terms if there are pimps brought in, someone is getting money off of this, a foreigner gets cheated then this is a problem. And for them these problems get addressed.<sup>60</sup>

However, this analysis that sex tourism policy is unnecessary could be clouded by the fact that sex tourism has decreased since the economic crisis.

And speaking about whether it is a problem or not, that in politics may not be the most important problem that we have to fight at this time. We have seen that in a few years the situation [with sex tourism] can change. In 2006 we saw that there were a large amount of stag parties, 2007 too, now we feel that they are becoming fewer, either because of the economic crisis or because they found other new places to go. In this sense, the market will regulate the situation. But of course places where sex is offered exist, but at the same time owners have found ways to successfully hide their ventures so they don't break any laws. These problems won't go away and it's hard to expose them.<sup>61</sup>

Sex tourism could come around again especially since the prices in Latvia have decreased somewhat as a result of the economic downturn. Consequently, sex tourism policy is necessary if the Latvian government wants to take an active stand against sex tourism. Some policies are symbolic by nature and even if the necessary areas are covered by other policies, it evident that these policies are not doing enough to combat the problem. A policy on sex tourism would demonstrate that the Latvian government views the issues of prostitution, human trafficking, and sex tourism as intertwined and that prostitution leads to sex tourism which in turn leads to human trafficking. The government cited these policies in their interviews as the policies they use to

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<sup>60</sup> Government Official, personal interview, July 23, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

<sup>61</sup> Tourism Official, personal interview, August 3, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

combat sex tourism; therefore, this connection demonstrates the need to have a clear policy on prostitution because it causes sex tourism and human trafficking. The ambiguousness in the policy areas that the government argues are fighting sex tourism are not effective, thus, the government either needs to have more clear policies or establish a sex tourism policy which would encompass all of these areas. Additionally, it is interesting that the government claims that these policies combat sex tourism when the majority of them were developed before the recent surge in sex tourism in 2004. Only a few of the administrative changes to prostitution and the main regulations on adult entrapment have been added since 2004. This demonstrates that only the policies developed after 2004 could have been developed to stop sex tourism, even though most government documents related to their adoption do not mention this problem.

Considering a majority of the other countries in the world with a significant sex tourism industry do not have a sex tourism policy why should we expect Latvia to have one? Latvia is a member of the European Union and NATO and has the opportunity to lead the world on this issue. Yes, sex tourism policy is not a worldwide phenomenon but Latvia must decide if it wants to be associated with countries like Thailand, Kenya, or the Dominican Republic that do not take a stand on this issue or like Germany and the Netherlands who have legalized prostitution and regulated sex tourism industry. Either way the government should have clearer policies on all areas related to sex tourism or simply adopt a sex tourism policy. Passing a policy on this issue would bring attention to the issue of sex tourism, thus if the Latvian government is trying to combat it, as they claimed in numerous interviews, why would they not pass a policy on this issue? There are a couple of reasons why the Latvian government could not want to have a policy on sex tourism, the first could be the cost of enforcing such a policy. Second, it could be that the government does not want to recognize that it is a problem or that the economic

downturn has dissipated the problems associated with sex tourism. Third, the Latvian government could value the hard currency and influx of tourism dollars more than the human cost of sex tourism. As outlined previously, the human cost includes increased crime, rates of sexually transmitted diseases, and women being trafficked into the country to fuel the sex tourism industry. In fact, a number of interview respondents said that the President's closure of the bars cheating tourists was a way to entice sex tourists back to Latvia because it would cast a positive light on Latvia and people would no longer be cheated. Finally, perhaps another reason why Latvia does not have a policy is due to the influence of the business advocacy coalition which especially during an uncertain economic climate, brings money into the country. Despite this analysis of motivations, none of these reasons were cited in any of the interviews and instead officials claimed that it was the fact that they had other policies (outlined above) which covered the most important issues with sex tourism and that the government would rather focus on other issues. In summary, it is evident that the Latvian government could pass a policy on sex tourism if the government felt that it was necessary. Therefore, if the Latvian government wants to actively combat sex tourism they should take a stance on the issue and develop real policies to combat the problem or face the consequences of continuing down a road hoping other ambiguous policies will regulate this issue.

### *Limitations*

There are a number of limitations to this study and the case study method which must be briefly examined. First, there are questions of generalizability and low external validity. Due to the fact that this is a case study, it might be difficult to generalize the findings in this study to other cases because case studies are not a representative sample. Thus, limiting this analysis to

only one country could constrain its generalizability, but this study was a test of the Advocacy Coalition Framework and so the findings could be generalizable to many countries with transitioning political systems. Additionally, the findings from this study also elucidate how policy subsystems influence the shaping of policy in post-communist democracies. Further research could be expanded to other countries with this model and quantitative data could be added to increase the external validity. Generalizability claims, while not unfounded, are not seen as a limitation because the findings could be applicable to cases beyond sex tourism and Latvia.

The next limitation is the selection bias in that the cases are not a diverse set. However, there are not many countries in the world with sex tourism problems and my language knowledge limits my ability to perform research in countries outside of the former Soviet Union. This is because performing this kind of research and utilizing the prescribed methods requires an intimate knowledge of the case and the language of governance. This research would be difficult for me to do outside of this region because I lack the language knowledge and expertise in the policy subsystems. Therefore, the complexities that are studied in this case might not occur across a full set of cases and the causal patterns that could arise with this complexity are not homogeneous (Collier and Mahoney, 1996).

There are also limitations with the data on sex tourism specifically the interviews because officials like to paint their government in a flattering light, especially to foreigners, and many times will not acknowledge that sex tourism is a problem. This is why the triangulation of data was performed with numerous sources from archives, newspapers, government documents, and interviews. The same questions were asked to all interview subjects in order to determine the accuracy of the data which suggests that the results are as unbiased as possible. Finally, my own

bias must be acknowledged due to the participant observation I performed as I was a participant in the evolution of policy in sex tourism. However, the triangulation of the data has, in my opinion, led to a presentation of the results as unbiased as possible given my intimate knowledge of the subsystem.



## 5. Conclusions

“And the question in politics of how to fight sex tourism, there is no answer.”<sup>62</sup>

This paper determined that advocacy coalitions formed around the issue of Latvian sex tourism even though there was no policy present. This is similar to what is expected with the Advocacy Coalition Framework, only it goes one step further to examine policy subsystems where a policy does not exist. This demonstrates that the beliefs that hold these coalitions together are stronger than we thought because they are able to hold together coalitions when there is no policy development. This also could suggest the strength of overlapping coalitions that are fighting for similar policies in other areas related to sex tourism.

Process tracing and elite interviews uncovered two coalitions that formed around Latvian sex tourism, a feminist advocacy coalition and a business advocacy coalition. It also revealed that these coalitions have remained intact despite the, at times, fluid membership of NGOs due to economic constraints. These two coalitions are not necessary contrary to other coalitions that have been found with ACF but the combination of the two is unique as most coalitions opposing feminist advocacy groups are traditional (Abrar, Lovenduski, and Margetts, 2000), or Christian Conservative (Schorn, 2005, Footen 2000, Shannon 1997). However, in morality policy these types of opposition have been observed on the municipal level (Sharp 2005). This will be addressed in the next section on further research but it is important to note that the advocacy coalitions witnessed in Latvian sex tourism are unique to what has been seen in other feminist literature utilizing ACF, therefore, this paper offers a new advocacy coalition to counter feminist coalition.

This paper determined that policy change has occurred in a number of areas related to sex tourism such as prostitution, pornography, human trafficking, and adult entertainment. It

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<sup>62</sup> Latvian Government Official, personal interview, July 23, 2009, Riga, Latvia.

identified how the policy environment has changed, the policy outputs over time, and what type of influence was involved in these outputs. This project also demonstrates that ACF is applicable to mature but evolving policy subsystems outside of the US and Western Europe. It also recognizes feminist organizations and the subtleties of actors involved in feminist policy research as key players in the policy subsystem that share beliefs and coordinate activity.

Finally, this paper also determined that there is no policy on sex tourism in Latvia despite the fact that many government representatives said that there were similar measures found in other policies and sex tourism was just a name for other types of crimes. However, a policy, even if it was symbolic, is necessary if the Latvian government wants to claim that it is combating this phenomenon. The policies that they currently have fight other types of societal problems and do not send a message to sex tourists that they are not welcome in Latvia. Instead, recent bars closures suggest that the Latvian government, at times, caters to this demographic of tourists and ignores that sex tourism is a problem due to the fact that the country is dependent on the influx of capital that these tourists bring with them. Latvia needs to decide if they want to continue to be known as the “Bangkok of the North” and regulate for this contingency of tourists otherwise things will continue in the ambiguous state they are currently.

### *Future Research*

This last section outlines questions for future research concerning the inclusion of morality policy frameworks in my study. As stated previously, in morality policy business or economic interests have been observed on the municipal level (Sharp 2005). This is due to the fact that “there are theoretical grounds for expecting there to be a connection between the politics

of morality and the economic development” (Sharp 2005, 18). Future research on this topic could consider inclusion of this framework because “city image is a guide for purposive action suggesting which projects, plans, and policies should receive public-sector backing” (Sharp 2005, 18). Sharp contends that this positive image luring investors can also be related to tourism because a positive image lures more tourists and thus more profits, similarly, a negative image staves off tourists or brings in the “bad” kinds of tourists (Sharp 2005, 18). This is very appropriate with sex tourism because as we have witnessed sex tourists are a fickle market and some of these economic development ideas are related to the way government officials in Latvia might think. Therefore, applying this theory to sex tourism in the future could provide us with some answers to why the government officials have acted in this manner and how they could act in the future with respect to policy. Additionally, future research could also expand this analysis to other countries in Eastern Europe with sex tourism such as Czech Republic, Romania, Poland, and Ukraine to see if similar results would be achieved. It also could be applied to countries outside of this region with sex tourism or policy subsystems where a policy is not present but there is significant media attention to the problem.

### **Appendix 1: Semi-structured Interview Guide**

- 1.) Can you describe how and why sex tourism began in Latvia?
- 2.) What early responses did the government have to combat this problem?
- 3.) Can you explain the current policy on sex tourism?
- 4.) Can you explain how you arrived at this current policy?
- 5.) What do you think of the current policy?
- 6.) Why was this policy approach chosen to solve this problem?
- 7.) How have the policies been implemented?
- 8.) What checks and balances do you have in place to ensure that these policies are implemented?
- 9.) What agencies within the government enforce these policies?
- 10.) Has the policy been effective at combating the problem?
- 11.) If you could write and implement the policy over again are there any changes you would make?

**Appendix 2: Sex Tourist Questionnaire**

What country are you from? \_\_\_\_\_

City or town? \_\_\_\_\_ Age? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you do for a living? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the purpose of your trip? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you choose Latvia? \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of activities have you participated in during your visit?

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What is your impression of Latvia?

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What do you think of the women of Latvia?

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