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Examining the Connection between Misogyny and Human Trafficking¹

1. Introduction

„All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.“

„No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.“
(The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948)

While humanitarian problems such as extreme poverty and hunger are slowly but steadily declining everywhere in the world (United Nations 2015: 4), the rate of human trafficking is anywhere but near a downturn. Rather than decreasing, human trafficking has experienced a sharp increase over the past two decades, despite the efforts made to stop it. Today, the Global Slavery Index estimates that about 45.8 million people are victims of human trafficking at any given time.

Even though the number of countries with a statute that criminalizes most forms of trafficking in persons in line with the definition used by the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol increased from 18%, or 33 countries, in 2003 to 88%, or 158 countries, in 2016, only a very small percentage of trafficked persons is identified and an even smaller percentage of them experience their perpetrators being sentenced. Human trafficking thus remains a crime where current strategies in fighting the cause, as well as convicting perpetrators, have proven themselves insufficient (UNODC 2016). Human trafficking is a crime of devastating extent, often referred to as 'modern day slavery', because it strips victims of their most fundamental human right: The right of freedom. The effects on mental health of coercion, trauma and violence experienced through human trafficking include post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, panic attacks, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, attachment disorder, self-

harm, dissociative identity disorder and suicide. (European Commission 2016)

We are all affected by it. No matter where one lives, chances are it is happening nearby: from the woman forced into prostitution, to the man working on plantations harvesting fruit; from the women kept in slave-like conditions in diplomatic households, to the child forced to beg on the streets. Alone in Europe victims of 137 different nationalities were identified between 2012 and 2014. (UNODC 2016)

Trafficking for sexual exploitation, the most common form of exploitation within human trafficking, is a particularly gendered, severe and sustained form of violence, with extensive physical, reproductive and mental health impacts. Often the women and girls are initiated into forced prostitution through gang rape committed by the traffickers in order to remove their autonomy, dehumanize them and to degrade them in order to reduce their resistance against rape in the future. Women and girls trafficked for sexual exploitation experience severe sexual brutality. This sexual abuse is often hyper-violent, causing vaginal injuries and significant blood loss, which leads to high rates of sexual transmitted diseases including HIV. Gendered and reproductive injuries include both spontaneous and multiple pregnancies and unsafe abortions, which can lead to infertility as well as chronic vaginal and pelvic pain. (Akidwa 2010; Sarkar et al. 2008; Silverman et al. 2011; Payne 2007)

Human trafficking affects women in an over-proportional large number. The current Global Report on Trafficking in Persons by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) states that 71% of the identified victims are women and girls compared to 29% of men and boys. Also, the most common form of exploitation among all trafficked persons is of sexual nature. The UNODC identified trafficking for sexual exploitation as the most commonly detected form of trafficking for as long as they have been collecting data. Today about 54% of victims are trafficked into forced prostitution, of those 96% are women and girls. One could there-

fore argue that human trafficking has a strong female component. (UNODC 2016)

Surprisingly there is little research examining gender as a *cause* of human trafficking. Despite regular reports on human trafficking from the UNODC, the US Department of State (USDOS) and Europol, there is a gap concerning the question of causality between gender and human trafficking. As I will show in the literature review, academia has also neglected this particular question.

In this work I argue that gender is a *cause* of human trafficking and a whole range of other factors, commonly identified as catalysts, are just a *consequence* of one's gender. Thus I hope to raise new insights into the field of human trafficking, in order to deepen the understanding of this very complex topic, by answering following research question: *What is the impact of misogyny on human trafficking?*

This research question is also purposed towards real-life: if there is a positive effect, these findings could be applied in victim identification and assistance, demand reduction and also help develop more effective strategies against human trafficking. In order to empirically examine my research question, I use a mixed methods approach. The theoretical framework is established through three problem-centred expert interviews, which I analyze using the qualitative content analysis technique. I then test my hypothesis by using a linear regression model with the level of human trafficking as the response and three aspects of misogyny as the explanatory variable, controlling for additional suspected causes of human trafficking.

This thesis is constructed as follows: In the following section I will shortly define the most important terms in my work. I will then review the relevant literature to give an overview of the current state of research. Thereafter I will present my theoretical framework by describing the findings of the qualitative content analysis that I conducted. In a further step I will describe my data and methods and proceed to present my empirical evidence. This step is followed by the interpretation of the results and its discussion. After this I will conclude my findings.

2. Definitions [...]

3. Literature Review

[...] Overall, there is very little quantitative research on the causes of human trafficking and even less on the field of gender and human trafficking. The scarce research that was found during the

literature review only uses official numbers which are most likely distorted. This is understandable though: There is a lack of reliable data concerning human trafficking (Kangaspunta 2003). Furthermore until very recently there was no possibility of working with estimated numbers because the Global Slavery Index, which is the first source that provides systematical estimates on human trafficking in a large number of cases, only exists since 2014.

4. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework was established through an inductive approach; therefore problem-centred expert interviews were conducted. To avoid biases and enhance validity, three different experts from three different organizations were interviewed. The experts were representatives of the *International Organization for Migration* (IOM), the non-governmental organization *Lateinamerikanische emmigrierte Frauen in Österreich – Interventionsstelle für Betroffene von Frauenhandel* (LEFÖ-IBF) and the *Zentralstelle zur Bekämpfung der Schlepperkriminalität und des Menschenhandels* of the Federal Criminal Police in Austria.

[...]

As already mentioned all three experts voiced that violence against a person raises the chance of the affected person becoming a victim of trafficking. This finding is supported by current literature: Gidycz (1993) found that sexual victimization significantly raises the chance of being abused again. Littleton et.al (2016) found that women who experienced physical or sexual abuse in childhood are significantly more likely to experience adult re-victimization than other women. Krebs et.al (2007) found that these women have a seven times higher chance of being re-victimized. This has been reproduced by Barnes et.al in 2009 who found that women who experienced childhood abuse are 2 to 3 times more likely to suffer from violence in their adolescence or adulthood than women who have not been victimized. It is hypothesized that abused women respond to threats differently than other women. Findings suggest that once a woman was victimized she tends to have difficulty recognizing threats and engaging in behaviour repelling potential assault. (Littleton et al. 2016)

Thus, when understanding misogyny as a form of violence against women and taking into account that those women who experienced earlier violence are more likely to experience re-victimization, I conclude my hypothesis:

H1: The higher the level of misogyny in a country, the higher the level of human trafficking from that country

In order to properly test my hypothesis I divide my independent variables into three sub-groups of misogyny basing on Manne`s definition of the term as: “a property of social systems or environments as a whole, wherein women are liable to encounter [...] hateful and hostile reactions because of their gender, together with their perceived or actual transgressions against norms and expectations of patriarchal nature.” (Manne 2005: 2) As I already mentioned before this definition covers multiple levels of disadvantages from which women can suffer: It includes social systems and environments as a whole, thus the *institutionalized and structural disadvantage* of women, as well as *hateful and hostile reactions because of ones gender*. To test for the institutionalized disadvantage I look at the *legal discrimination* against women. The variable I use for this describes the legislative protection a country offers to rape victims. To test for the *structural discrimination* I look at how well women have access to resources and assets in a country. To test for hateful and hostile reactions, which I call *misogynous attitudes*, I test how many men are born for every woman in a country. This is based on the assumption that that a country where a woman is worth less than a man has higher rates of selective-sex abortions (Miller 2001). These three distinctions are not congruent. Legal discrimination against women can exist in countries where women have the same access to resources as men, for example the

women in the canton of Appenzell Innerrhoden in Switzerland who could not vote until 1991 (UN 2003). Furthermore, a woman who lives in a country that has clear hostile attitudes against women, e.g. India where 45% of the population believe it is okay to beat a women (OECD 2014), can still have laws that, theoretically, protect her, as in India where selective-sex abortion is forbidden. The decision to split misogyny into different sub-categories seems particularly important for my research question because of the mixed findings in my literature review and my expert interviews. Thus there is a possibility that certain forms of misogyny have no effect on the rate of human trafficking but others have a strong effect.

In the next step I will test my hypothesis using a linear regression model. To control my independent variables I test for the causes identified by the reports, the literature review and my expert interviews: Poverty, war and conflict, education (or lack of), unemployment, natural disasters, migrant ratio, displacement, peace, corruption, sexual orientation and human rights. Due to missing data discrimination based on ethnicity, disability and religion is not tested.

5. Data and Methods

In order to test my hypothesis I use a linear regression model. In a first step I will test all of my independent and my control variables in bivariate analyses. Then I will test my inde-

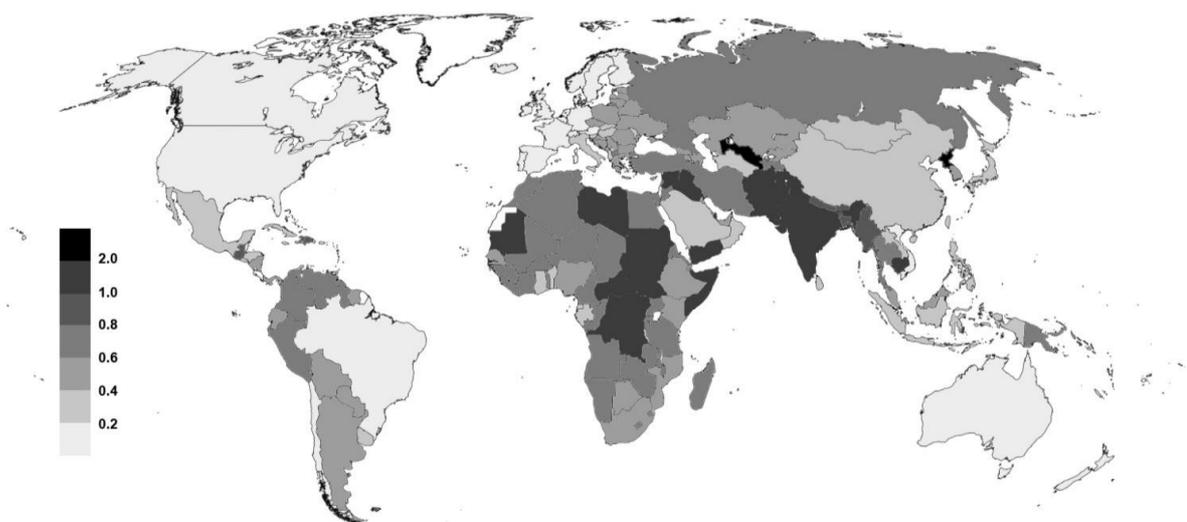


FIG. 1: WORLD MAP INDICATING THE RATE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING. THE SCALE IS NON-LINEAR AT HIGH VALUES, PUTTING NORTH KOREA AND UZBEKISTAN, WITH EXTREMELY HIGH HUMAN TRAFFICKING RATES OF AROUND 4%, IN A CATEGORY OF THEIR OWN.

pendent variables with my control variables in a multivariate analysis. After testing for heteroskedasticity and omitted-variable bias I will interpret my findings. [...]

6 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows summary statistics for response, explanatory and control variables. The values are unweighted, therefore all countries have the same impact on the mean value, regardless of their population. Thus the mean values of the variables cannot be interpreted as values describing the whole world. This means that the mean value of *human trafficking* is not equal to the global rate of human trafficking.

The variable *legal discrimination* can only take the binary values 0 or 1, which explains the fact that the median is equal to the minimum value. The mean value is the ratio of countries with legal discrimination of women. Note, however, that *structural discrimination*, also on a scale of 0 to 1, is not a binary variable, it can take on one of several discrete values.

7 Empirical Results

Bivariate Analysis

Bivariate analyses were performed to analyse the relationship between the response variable human trafficking and the explanatory and control variables.

	mean	SD	median	min	max	n
Human Trafficking	0,54	0,51	0,453	0,018	4,373	167
Legal discrimination	0,42	0,49	0	0	1	142
Structural discrimination	0,33	0,28	0,3885	0	1	160
Misogynous attitude	1,1	0,019	1,05	1,02	1,16	193
Refugee population	5,3	23	0,55	0,01	257,08	159
Natural disasters	7,4	5,1	6,59	0,08	36,5	171
Corruption	87	50	85	1	174	173
Education	8,3	3,1	8,6	1,4	13,4	183
Gay acceptance	-0,95	4,4	-1	-14	9	134
War and conflict	2100	500	2003,5	1189	3650	162
Poverty	18000	37000	4012	10	243895	171
Unemployment	8,7	6,0	7,02	0,32	31,08	174
Migrant ratio	39	88	26	-10	995	153
Human rights	3,3	2,1	3	1	7	195

TABLE 1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR RESPONSE, EXPLANATORY AND CONTROL VARIABLES ROUNDED TO TWO SIGNIFICANT DIGITS, AND THE NUMBER OF DATA POINTS AVAILABLE FOR EACH VARIABLE.

In Table 2, an overview of various bivariate analyses, is shown analysing the dependence of the response variable *human trafficking* on various explanatory and control variables. The regression coefficients and the standard errors of the regression coefficients are shown, as well as the R^2 value. The level of significance is indicated in the row on the right.

Legal discrimination, structural discrimination and misogynous attitude

As theorized, the correlation of *human trafficking* and *legal discrimination* is highly statistically significant. The R^2 value is not particularly high: Only 8.6% of the variance of human trafficking can be explained by the variance of legal discrimination. This, however, does not entirely come as a surprise, as legal discrimination is a binary variable and therefore cannot possibly account for most of the variation of a continuous variable, even though the correlation is highly statistically significant.

The correlation of *structural discrimination* and *human trafficking* is highly significant as well, but also in this case, the R^2 value is rather low with 0.096. No significant correlation was found between *human trafficking* and *misogynous attitude*. Counterintuitively, the correlation coefficient given in Table 2 is even negative, but note the large standard error of the correlation coefficient.

	Coef.	Std. Err.	R ²	significance
Legal discrimination	0.61	0.16	0.086	***
Structural discrimination	0.58	0.14	0.096	***
Misogynous attitude	-1.44	2.04	0.0031	
Corruption	-0.14	0.0017	0.29	***
War and conflict	0.54	0.071	0.26	***
Natural disasters	0.023	0.0077	0.054	*
Education	-0.052	0.0094	0.16	***
Gay acceptance	-0.034	0.0050	0.30	***
Poverty	-3.7e-06	5.7e-07	0.21	***
Unemployment	0.0015	0.0068	0.00030	
Migrant ratio	0.0014	0.00050	0.053	**
Refugee population	0.0012	0.0010	0.0087	
Human rights	0.11	0.017	0.22	***

TABLE 2: RESULTS OF THE BIVARIATE ANALYSES, TESTING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND VARIOUS VARIABLES ROUNDED TO TWO SIGNIFICANT DIGITS. SIGNIFICANCE: *** FOR $P < 0.001$, ** FOR $0.001 < P < 0.01$, * FOR $0.01 < P < 0.05$.

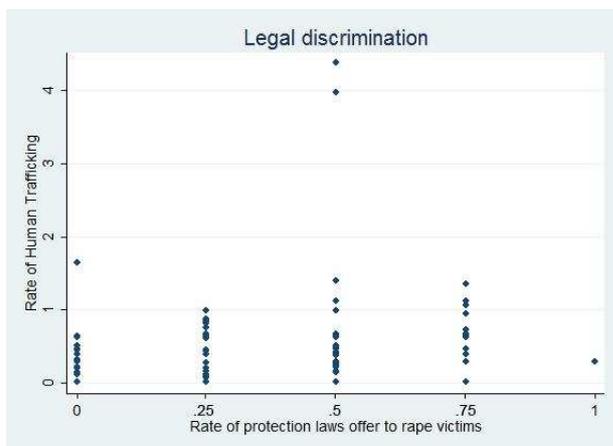


FIG. 2: SCATTERPLOT: EVEN THOUGH THE CORRELATION BETWEEN LEGAL DISCRIMINATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS HARD TO SPOT WITH THE NAKED EYE, IT IS STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT. NOTE THAT BY DESIGN, THE LEGAL DISCRIMINATION INDEX CAN ONLY TAKE ONE OF FIVE DISCRETE VALUES.

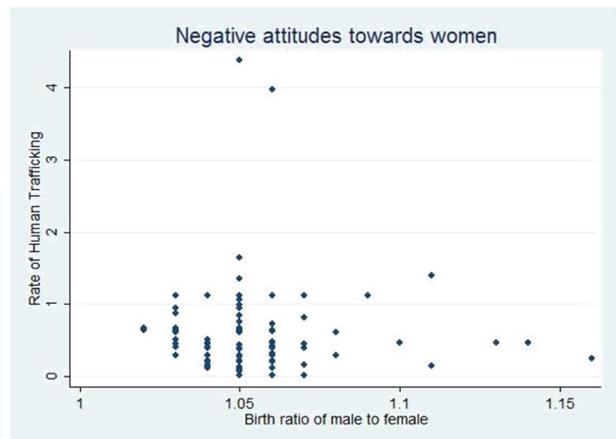


FIG. 3: SCATTERPLOT: WE ASSUME THAT MISOGYNOUS ATTITUDE CAN BE MEASURED IN TERMS OF THE SEX RATIO AT BIRTH AND TEST FOR A CORRELATION BETWEEN THIS VALUE AND THE RATE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING. HOWEVER, NO STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT CORRELATION CAN BE FOUND.

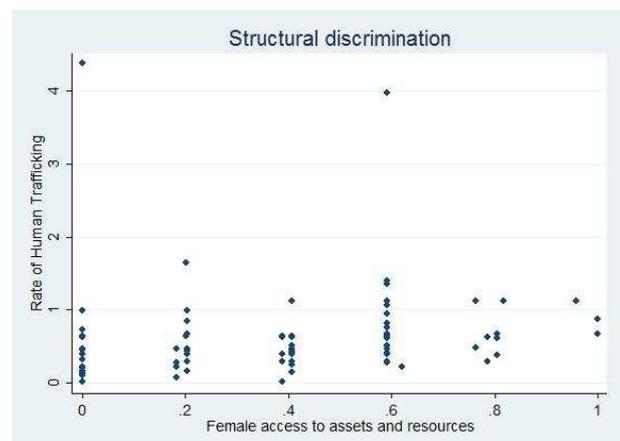


FIG. 4: SCATTERPLOT: STRUCTURAL DISCRIMINATION, MEASURED IN TERMS OF WOMENS ACCESS TO ASSETS AND RESOURCES. THERE IS A STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT CORRELATION BETWEEN STRUCTURAL DISCRIMINATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

Other independent variables

There is a strong correlation between *corruption* and *human trafficking*. Note that a higher corruption score means *less* corruption, therefore the correlation coefficient is clearly negative, linking a higher corruption score to less human trafficking. This variable has a remarkably high R^2 value of 0.29, and the correlation is highly statistically significant.

War and conflict can be clearly linked to human trafficking as well: Less peaceful countries have a higher score on the Global Peace Index, leading to more human trafficking. The correlation is positive and highly statistically significant. The R^2 value is 0.26. Also, a higher risk of *natural disasters*, measured by the index of the World Risk Report, is linked to more human trafficking. However, the statistical significance of this correlation ($p = 0.003$) is weaker, with a considerably lower R^2 value of only 0.054. This shows that the effects of the risk of war and the risk of natural disasters are not equivalent. It is not just a dangerous environment that is associated with human trafficking, the reason for the danger plays an important role as well.

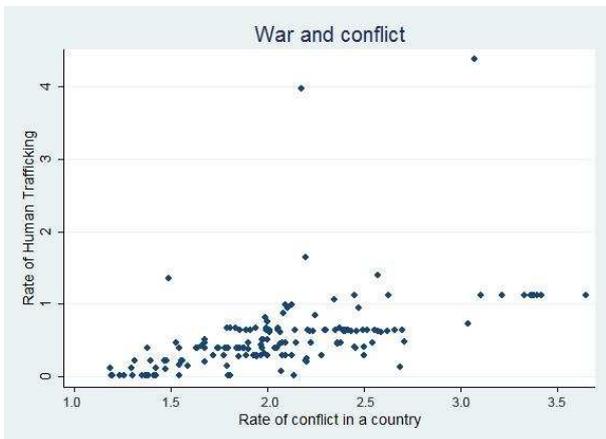


FIG. 5: SCATTERPLOT: HIGHER SCORES ON THE GLOBAL PEACE INDEX (CORRESPONDING TO MORE WAR AND CONFLICT) ARE ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER RATES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

The social factors *education* and *gay acceptance* appear to play an important role too: Countries with a larger mean number of years of education are less prone to human trafficking. The correlation, which is negative, is highly statistically significant. Also, there is a highly significant correlation between gay acceptance and human trafficking: Countries with higher gay acceptance have lower rates of human trafficking, so the correlation coefficient is negative. Note the high R^2 value of 0.30. This is the highest R^2 value of all variables considered in this analysis.

Taking a look at economic factors, we can see that there is a highly statistically significant cor-

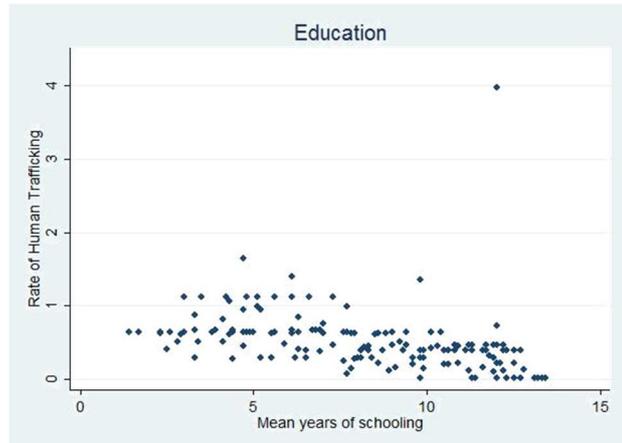


FIG. 6: SCATTERPLOT: MORE MEAN YEARS OF SCHOOLING EQUALS IN LESS HUMAN TRAFFICKING THE CORRELATION IS HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT. THE OUTLIER IN THE TOP RIGHT IS UZBEKISTAN WITH A MEAN OF 12 YEARS OF SCHOOLING, WHILE HAVING A RATE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING OF ALMOST 4%.

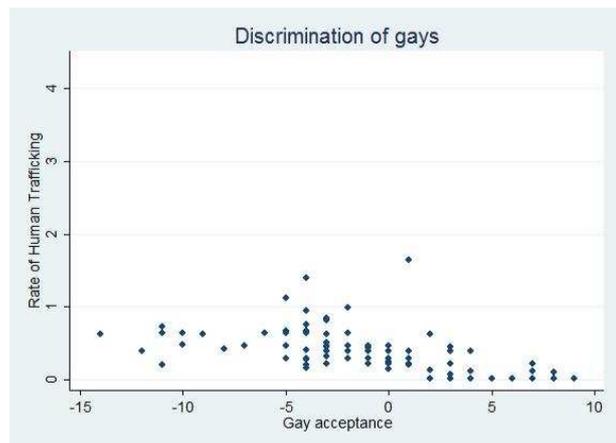


FIG. 7: SCATTERPLOT: THE DISCRIMINATION OF GAYS AND THE RATE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING. COUNTRIES WITH HIGHER GAY ACCEPTANCE HAVE LOWER RATES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

relation of *poverty* and *human trafficking*. Wealthier countries are less prone to human trafficking, again leading to a negative correlation coefficient, the associated R^2 value is 0.21. In contrast to *poverty*, *unemployment* does not predict the rate of human trafficking: There is no statistically significant correlation. A larger *ratio of migrants* living in a country is associated with more human trafficking, but the R^2 value (0.053) is rather low. No statistically significant correlation, however, was found between the *refugee population* in a country and human trafficking. Finally, a higher score on *human rights* is associated with more human trafficking. The correlation is highly statistically significant, and the corresponding R^2 value of 0.22 is comparatively high as well.

Multivariate Analysis

Finally, a multivariate analysis was performed, including all the variables mentioned above. Table 3 shows the results. The total number of observations ($n=89$) is considerably lower than the number of data points in every single dataset and in the bivariate analyses. This can have an impact on the correlation coefficients as well as the level of significance. This should be kept in mind when comparing the results of the multivariate analysis with the results of the bivariate analyses. The R^2 value of the multivariate regression model is high: The variance of the independent variables explains 72% of the variance of the dependent variable.

To test the findings for heteroskedasticity the Breusch-Pagan-Test was applied. The results presented heteroskedasticity in the multivariate analysis. Because heteroskedasticity causes standard errors to be biased, robust standard errors were estimated, hence reasonably accurate p-values were identified. Furthermore the Ramsey regression specification-error test for omitted-variables was performed. The result indicated that no hints towards omitted variables were detected. Note however that the Ramsey test is not very reliable, thus the explanatory power of this test is limited.

Legal discrimination, structural discrimination and misogynous attitude

As expected, there is a correlation of *legal discrimination* and human trafficking, which is statistically significant. Just like in the bivariate analysis, the variable *misogynous attitude* does not show a statistically significant correlation with human trafficking in this model. *Structural discrimination*, which showed a statistically significant correlation in the bivariate analysis, fails to be significant in the multivariate model.

Control variables

No statistically significant correlation between *corruption* and human trafficking can be found in this model, even though this correlation is highly significant in the bivariate analysis. As in the bivariate analysis, the variable *war and conflict* is statistically significant, which shows that peaceful nations are less prone to human trafficking. Surprisingly, however, the correlation of *natural disasters* with the dependent variable, while statistically significant, has a negative coefficient in this model. This suggests that countries with a higher danger of natural disasters have a lower rate of human trafficking. Note, however, that also in the bivariate analysis, the level of significance of this variable's correlation with the dependent variable was only moderate, and its R^2 value was rather low. Taking the data of both the bivariate analysis as well as the multivariate model into account, we can conclude that the

<i>Dependent variable:</i> <i>Human Trafficking</i>	Coef.	Robust Std. Err.	Significance
Legal discrimination	0,19	0,078	*
Structural discrimination	0,080	0,11	
Misogynous attitude	1,9	1,5	
Corruption	0,0010	0,00063	
War and conflict	0,19	0,075	*
Natural disasters	-0,020	0,0071	**
Education	-0,035	0,010	***
Gay acceptance	-0,019	0,0059	**
Poverty	-3,1E-07	3,2E-07	
Unemployment	0,0025	0,0028	
Migrant ratio	-0,00043	0,00062	
Refugee population	0,00023	0,00036	
Human rights	-0,049	0,028	
n = 89, R² = 0.72			

TABLE 3: MULTIVARIATE REGRESSION MODEL. THE LINEAR REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS AND THEIR RESPECTIVE STANDARD ERRORS, ROUNDED TO TWO SIGNIFICANT DIGITS, ARE SHOWN. THE STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE IS INDICATED IN THE COLUMN ON THE RIGHT. *** FOR $P < 0.001$, ** FOR $0.001 < P < 0.01$, * FOR $0.01 < P < 0.05$.

danger of natural disasters does not have a large effect on human trafficking, whereas the danger of war and conflict is a very important predictor.

The mean number of years of *education* shows a significant correlation with the dependent variable, with a negative correlation coefficient. This mirrors the findings in the bivariate analysis. The same is true for *gay acceptance*: A higher level of gay acceptance is associated with a lower rate of human trafficking. This correlation is statistically significant.

In the bivariate analysis, the social factors *education* and *gay acceptance* had a similar influence on human trafficking as *poverty*. It may therefore be suggestive to assume that poverty may be the underlying confounding variable, leading to more education, to a higher degree of gay acceptance and, at the same time, to less human trafficking. It is interesting to see, however, that poverty loses its statistical significance in this model, while both *education* and *gay acceptance* remain good predictors of the dependent variable. Apparently, these two social factors play a more important role than economic wealth.

The second economic factor we look at, which is *unemployment*, is not statistically significant in this model, corroborating the finding from the bivariate analysis that unemployment fails to predict human trafficking.

Neither the *ratio of migrants* in a country nor the ratio of *refugee population* are significant predictors of the dependent variable in this model. The variable *human rights*, which showed a significant correlation in the bivariate analysis, loses its significance as well.

8. Discussion

As theorized, I could find evidence that the legal discrimination of women in a country fosters human trafficking from that country: The absence of laws protecting women from rape seems to have a positive effect on human trafficking. Nevertheless, it is too soon to draw conclusions from these findings as no answers can be given on the question of how exactly these laws have an effect on human trafficking: Do the laws just have to be formally implemented, or do they have to be enforced? If they have to be enforced how strictly must they be enforced and how tough must the sanction be? Further research is needed to understand the precise impact that these laws have. Nevertheless, if reproduced, these findings could open doors to new strategies on fighting human trafficking.

I was unable to find statistically significant results for my two explanatory variables: The *structural disadvantage* of women and the *misogynous attitudes* towards them. Does this mean that misogyny has no effect on human trafficking? I do not think that this must necessarily be the case: Especially when dealing with my variable *misogynous attitude* one must also bear in mind that the natural birth ratio of men to women is naturally uneven. Therefore, more men are born everywhere in the world, not only in places where sex-selected abortions are practiced on a large-scale. As male foeti are also more likely to die in the womb of the mother than female foeti, and medical access is worse in poor countries that tend to selected abortion, this could have an effect on the relative numbers of the birth ratios. (Grech et al. 2002: 1010)

Furthermore the gay acceptance rate has a highly significant effect on human trafficking. This is an interesting finding in regards to my research question as it indicates that the comfort with untraditional gender roles have a negative impact on human trafficking.

It seems that education is the most preventative factor when it comes to human trafficking. This finding is somewhat unfavourable because education is not a quick fix for anything. It takes a lot of effort, time and money over an extended period of time, to establish a functioning educational infrastructure in a country with poor education. Even when this infrastructure is established parents still have to be able to survive without their children working from a young age onwards. Nevertheless, this finding supports the current preferred strategy against human trafficking which is through awareness campaigns.

Strangely the absence of natural disasters seems to increase the rate of human trafficking. This is a highly inconclusive finding and indicates that there might be a hidden effect interfering with my findings. As stated above the Ramsey RESET test for omitted variables was conducted and a negative result was produced. This finding is highly suspect though, because I am aware of missing variables. Nevertheless, the test is not exactly the most reliable test, therefore this finding can be somewhat ignored.

War and conflict seem to significantly nourish human trafficking, which concurs with my findings in the literature and my expert interviews. Please note that the variables I used for my independent variables and for my control variables were dated from 2010 to 2014 in order to

enable the independent variable to have an effect on the dependent variable. In light of the recent refugee crisis in Syria, which took on the magnitude it has now was only after 2014, my explanatory variables could be in unequal relation to my dependent variable. As this crisis has an impact on three of my variables, namely; *war and conflict*, *refugees population* and *migrant ratio*, there is reason to believe that my findings could be distorted.

Despite the existence of an overwhelming range of reports and expert opinions stating that poverty, corruption, unemployment, migrant and refugee status and the lack of human rights cause human trafficking, I could not find any evidence that this applies. Especially my finding that poverty has no effect comes as a surprise, as poverty was identified as a very important push factor that appeared in every single report and in the interviews that I conducted. My finding that poverty has no influence on trafficking is also highly suspect because poverty is the most plausible explanation for human trafficking, and therefore should be tested again in further research.

9. Conclusion

This thesis aimed to test if the level of misogyny in a country has an impact on the level of human trafficking from that country. Therefore, a theoretical framework based on current literature and problem centred expert interviews was undertaken, after which the key terms of the work were specified. In a further step the used data and methodology were presented, followed by the description of the first empirical findings in form of descriptive statistics. Next the findings of the linear regression model were interpreted and discussed.

A number of key findings can be concluded: As theorized, legal discrimination against women has a significant positive effect on human trafficking, while education, which is highly significant, seems to be the most preventive factor when it comes to human trafficking. Gay acceptance has a significant negative effect on human trafficking, while war and conflict seem to nourish trafficking away from a country.

Despite an overwhelming range of reports and expert opinions stating that corruption, poverty, unemployment, migrant and refugee status and the lack of human rights cause human trafficking, I could not find any evidence that this applies.

Lastly, I also failed to find any evidence for my hypothesis that the structural discrimination against women or misogynous attitudes have a positive impact on the human trafficking rate.

However, a number of limitations apply to these findings. First of all the work with „dark crimes“, like human trafficking, is always tricky because the figures used are only estimates. The results of my work are thus only as valid as the estimates are true. Furthermore the number of countries in the regression in the multivariate analysis is rather low with 89 cases.

Also, discrimination against disability and discrimination on the base of belonging to a religious or ethnic minority was not tested because of missing data. Additionally the possibility of additional omitted-variable bias cannot be ruled out, even though a wide range of control variables were included into the regression.

Finally, these results have important broader implications for understanding the impact of misogyny on human trafficking: The findings of this study indicate that the presence of gender specific laws has a preventive effect on human trafficking. Still, it is too soon to draw hard conclusions at the moment: Further research is needed. Nevertheless, if gender specific laws hold to have a negative effect on human trafficking in further studies this could be used in the prevention of human trafficking.

⁽¹⁾ This contribution is an extract of a longer paper which has examined the connections of misogyny and cross-border human trafficking. In order to reach the expected

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