Human Trafficking in Gauteng, South Africa

How do socio-economic factors influence the vulnerability of women to engage in sexual services and potential trafficking in Gauteng, South Africa?

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1 Abstract

This research aims to investigate how socio-economic factors influence the vulnerability of women to engage in sexual services and potential trafficking in Gauteng, South Africa. This province is South Africa’s most prosperous one with an enormous flow of migrants and is therefore of interest to investigate. Moreover, it is certainly intriguing to examine more into South Africa's measures against human trafficking; additionally, it is interesting to investigate further here because of the signature by South Africa of the Palermo protocol and look further and deeper into if this signature has helped decrease the crime. This research seeks to untangle the complex web of factors contributing to vulnerability. By examining the socio-economic and potential other dimensions of human trafficking in South Africa, the aim is to gain a deeper understanding of how these factors interact, perpetuating a cycle of victimization and further raise crucial awareness of the subject. This research has adopted a abductive qualitative content-desk study to be most appropriate for the research and in order to do at least harm as possible to the victims by using already published documents and reports. Furthermore, theories and approaches such as Radical Feminist Theory, Rational Choice Theory, Human Rights-Based Approach and V-Dem Approach have been used in order to answer the objective as successfully as possible. The conclusion of this study points at the fact that women’s lower societal position, along with patriarchal influences, cultural practices and state corruption impact human trafficking and the vulnerability for women making them fall a victim of the crime. Recommendations that have been made in the paper are further studies on the subject and an idea of universal legislation regarding human trafficking, which could be similar to Agenda 2030 and finally some urgent measures in Gauteng.

Key Words: Human Trafficking, exploitation, socio-economic, GBV, corruption

Acknowledgment

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<td>RadFem</td>
<td>Radical Feminist</td>
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<td>HRBA</td>
<td>Human Rights-Based Approach</td>
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<td>ZAR</td>
<td>South African Rand (National currency)</td>
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<td>GBV</td>
<td>Gender-Based Violence</td>
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<td>UNODC</td>
<td>United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime</td>
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<td>DPCI</td>
<td>Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation</td>
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<td>SAPS</td>
<td>South African Police Service</td>
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<td>National Prosecuting Authority</td>
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Human trafficking is a pressing concern with profound social and economic implications, and its presence in South Africa is a stark reminder of the vulnerabilities that persist within the nation (Motseki, 2020). This introduction seeks to shed light on the complex possible interplay of socio-economic factors contributing to the vulnerability of individuals to trafficking in the South African context.

Human trafficking as a phenomenon has a history that extends decades back in time. It is seen as one of the worst crimes that can be imagined that have a direct effect on human beings. This crime is a hot question all over the world and occurs throughout the globe. In Sub-Saharan Africa, human trafficking was recognized through non-governmental organizations, activists and the media. Furthermore, data have shown that the crime has continued to grow and individuals have been trafficked to and out from Africa in the past years. The aggressive and unethical aspect and treatment of human trafficking is today seen and described as a new form of slavery (modern slavery) by several scholars and organizations. In Sub-Saharan Africa, three primary categories of trafficking have been defined, where one of them is sexual exploitation of women and the other two is farm labour/domestic work by children and the sex industry where women are trafficked to (IOM, 2005:75-76). Human trafficking is often described and known as a process where people are placed or kept in exploitative conditions for the other party to gain economic benefits (Motseki, 2020). Moreover, although human trafficking is widely debated and recognized all over the world, there are still questions of the characteristics and the primary factors that contribute to the crime in South Africa (Pharoah, 2006). As already mentioned, human trafficking is a worldwide problem and occurs in all different forms of situations and in every country. However, Africa is one of the continents that are most affected by this crime, which has been explained by the high amount of poverty, unemployment, crisis, corruption and the instability in the political and economic spheres that Africa suffers from. Due to the instability in many countries in Africa, a large number of people are forced to migrate from their original home country, which leads to vulnerabilities and displacements. Furthermore, traffickers tend to target people that are affected by political
and economic crises since displacement often places people in a vulnerable position (Bello, Paul O & Olutola, Adewale A, 2021).

There have been consistent reports of human traffickers engaging in the exploitation of both South African and foreign victims within South Africa over the past half-decade. These traffickers also exploit victims from South Africa in other countries. Furthermore, the recruitment of victims mainly occurs in neighboring nations and rural regions within South Africa, primarily focusing on Gauteng. Once recruited, victims are subjected to sex trafficking both locally and in major urban centers, including Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg and Bloemfontein. Traffickers employ coercive tactics to force both adults and children into various forms of labor, especially targeting those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and societies. The subject is within peace and development in regard to human rights and addressing human trafficking is of importance for the promotion of peace, stability and the protection of vulnerable populations.

Internally and externally trafficking in South Africa is no new phenomena. The history of internal trafficking goes back the whole way to the late 1800s and early 1900s. To clarify this, Lutya, 2012, gives an example with a gang led by Nongoloza Mathebula that used to abduct and kidnap women and boys from nearby regions to the mine complexes where they were kept as sex slaves and forced to sell their bodies to the workers. Also, between 1980s and 1990s, a gang called Jackrollers was active in South Africa and was known to abduct and kidnap women from lower socio-economic backgrounds who they saw as unattractive. Furthermore, these women had educational goals in common to one another. Thus, a practice called ‘streamlining’ was known to use and coercing women and utilized by a group of men were they not only raped them, but also physically assaulted them (Lutya, 2012 & Parker, 2012).

This research is highly vital to continue study due to numerous reasons such as the tremendous violation of human rights and social justice. The crime deprives individuals of their freedom and forces them into several forms of exploitation which in this study would mainly be sexual exploitation. Furthermore, it is important to address the patterns and factors that contribute to the spread of the crime. Looking in terms of social, political and economic elements, and having a fundamental understanding of these, will help create continued work against an equal and justice society and in the hopefully near future, a prevention of human
trafficking. Thus, in order to implement more legal frameworks that are effective, the
dynamics and elements of the crime need a further and deeper understanding which I hope to
achieve with this paper. Also, continuing studies on Gauteng in South Africa is essential due
to its richness in the province and that this factor seems to, according to several studies that
will be presented above, attracts people there.

My personal decision to write this thesis on human trafficking in Gauteng in South Africa is
based on my previous knowledge that South Africa signed the framework ‘The Prevention
and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act 7 of 2013’ (see ‘2.1. Legalization regarding
trafficking in persons’) and put it in operation in 2015. I found it interesting to investigate this
and form myself a deeper understanding of how and if this crime has decreased in South
Africa since the framework came into operation. I knew from before that Gauteng is the
strongest province in the country regarding economy and infrastructure and this knowledge
made it even more intriguing to investigate how deep the issue is in a province that is known
as the richest. Furthermore, I want to shed more light on human trafficking, and foremost
women’s suffering due to this crime and women’s constantly vulnerable position to men
regarding violence of all forms. It is crucial to continue providing information on the subject
due to the complexity of the crime that I believe needs to be looked at and analyzed even
further from different angles.
1.3 Research Objective

The purpose of this study is to examine how socio-economic factors influence the vulnerability of women to engage in sexual services and potential trafficking in order to help start a process of a comprehensive and effective response to the challenging issue. Furthermore, I hope it will shed additional light on combating human trafficking and sexual exploitation and to further raise awareness of the subject. This study can reach the objective through these research questions:

- How do socio-economic factors influence the vulnerability of women to engage in sexual services and potential trafficking in Gauteng, South Africa?

- Are there any other critical dimensions affecting the vulnerability of trafficking beside socio-economics?

- How do governmental and legal measures, such as the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act 7 impact the effectiveness of addressing and prosecuting human trafficking in South Africa?
1.4 Thesis layout

This paper has several different sections that follow one another. Firstly, in the section of Introduction, a background to human trafficking is undertaken and described, and then this section provides a deeper description of the situation in South Africa. This section also states the importance of continued studies on human trafficking and the author of this research’s own personal decision to write about this phenomena. Furthermore, the research objective and research questions are outlined. The literature review of the subject is presented in the second section below in order to show previous data, where different areas are outlined, for example, the legalization regarding trafficking in persons and the economy behind the crime. The research gaps are also addressed here. Thirdly, the thesis conveys which methodology has been used in the research and an explanation of why this has been used and not other methods. This part is followed in the fourth section by a theoretical and analytical framework that has the aim to guide the research forward, yet also for analyzing the findings that are presented in the fifth section. The chosen theories and approaches are Human Rights-Based Approach followed by the Radical Feminist Theory, the Rational Choice Theory and the V-Dem Approach. This chapter also explains the aspects that will be used in each theory/approach and how these are applicable in the thesis. The limitations and delimitations are discussed here as well. Later in the thesis, the findings section presents eight themes that have been found during the process which address human trafficking from different angles and also the legal framework of the Palermo Protocol. Next to this chapter comes the analysis of the research where the findings here are thoroughly discussed with the help of the chosen theories and approaches. Finally, the conclusion of the research presents the result of the analysis of the findings, yet also a conclusion of the research objective and research questions. Recommendations to further research are also presented here, yet also what the author of the thesis hopes to achieve with the conducted paper.

2 Literature Review

A significant amount of studies on human trafficking have been conducted, both internationally and in South Africa. The intricate and widespread problem of human trafficking has caught the interest of academics and policy-makers all around the world also due to the complexity of the phenomenon of trafficking. For example, UNODC conducted a
report in 2020, which is called ‘the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020’. Data from 148 nations were collected in the report. The report looked at several factors that contributed to the crime, where one of them was a socio-economic element. According to the research, 50 percent are victims of sexual exploitation through trafficking. Related to this, out of every ten victims found worldwide, half of these are identified as adult women, while two are young girls (UNODC, 2020; Petrilli, 2022). Moreover, a minimum of fifty percent of the cases the UNODC looked at had victims who were targeted out because of financial difficulties, which connects the socio-economic elements that were looked at in the research. Additionally, the report points in the direction of migrants where the result showed that in most regions, victims of human trafficking are mostly migrants (UNODC, 2020).

Furthermore, the Global Slavery Index (GSI), which is founded by the Walk Free Foundation, is used to measure estimated people from 160 countries who live in modern slavery, also recognized as human trafficking. They measure through conducted interviews with survivors from a significant number of countries. One result that has been established is that there were 50 million people in 2021 that lived in modern slavery, which showed an enormous acceleration compared to 2016. Between 2016 and 2021, 10 million more people have become victims of modern slavery (Walk Free Foundation, n.d).

2.1 Social inequalities

Throughout human history, disparities in wealth and fairness, both within and among societies, have consistently been integral aspects of human civilization. Moreover, the affluent individuals used their wealth to exert control and have been doing so since the earliest of human societies. This could include practices like owning slaves and was enabled to utilize their power and control. Furthermore, social inequality originates from a persistent system of beliefs established by political elites to safeguard their authority and dominance over those who are less privileged and lack influence. Social inequality can have a detrimental impact on an individual, potentially leading to a range of negative consequences, such as exposure to violence and being victimized. It is furthermore discussed that aside from poverty, the phenomenon of the worldwide sex trade or human trafficking for sex reasons constitutes one of the most significant current consequences of disparities between and within nations (Barner JR, et.al, 2014).
Various documents, articles, and reports have been written to define human trafficking. Contemporary slavery is equal to “social and economic relationship in which a person is controlled through violence or paid nothing, and economically exploited.” (Bales, 2000). Barner JR, et.al, 2014, points in the same direction trying to decompose the definition of human trafficking and how it evolves. The similarity lies in the socio-economic division of the individual exposed to this crime.

The Gauteng province, South Africa’s most prosperous province where most migrants live (South Africa Gateway, 2018), has a department, more specifically the Department of Safety and Security in Johannesburg, which took steps to initiate the decriminalization of prostitution in the 1990s. The majority of proponents supporting the legalization or decriminalization of prostitution prior to the abolition of apartheid primarily emphasized the positive impact on public health that would result from more tolerance and tenderness. This perspective was influenced by the historical tradition of tolerating prostitution in the Cape Colony and the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR), (Wojcic, 2003:84). Moreover, there is a common tendency to mix up or blur the distinction between sex work and human trafficking in South Africa. It is argued that the outcome of this is that migrant or mobile sex workers are frequently portrayed as victims of trafficking (Yingwana, et.al. 2019).

2.2 Economy

Human trafficking is a trade that profits organized crime with a large amount of money every year. IOM (2003) published a report discussing how much money human trafficking is estimated to bring each year, although the number is not yet established due to several hinders such as for example the coercion into silence of the victim from the trafficker, a reasonable estimate in 2003 were about US$7 billion annually, which frames the crime as one of the biggest source to profit organized crime. Moreover, looking at only trafficked women who are victims of sexual exploitation, this kind of trafficking gains the biggest profit for the networks that operate as it is a very low risk of getting caught (IOM, 2003).

Although there is no direct number that shows how much money human trafficking ‘brings’ each year, there are, however, approximately 27 million slaves and 12.3 million victims of human trafficking all time. Human trafficking has always been an issue but has in the recent time increased severely and despite the fact that human trafficking is in some way covert in terms of a lot of victims being hidden and coerced into silence, it is impossible to pinpoint its
precise extent. Here, human trafficking is being recognized as modern slavery (Mollema, 2013:1).

In 2006 human trafficking was seen as the third largest crime in the world and was described as ‘one of the most lucrative criminal enterprises globally’ (Mollema, 2013:1). Furthermore, human trafficking has emerged as the most rapidly expanding source of income for international organized criminal operations due to the data that were provided by the United Nations in 2010 explaining that trafficking in persons is now seen as the top two most profitable criminal operations, where drug trade is most profitable and then human trafficking is the second (Mollema, 2013:1).

2.3 Definition of Human Trafficking versus Human Smuggling

It is essential to clearly define human trafficking and human smuggling as the two terms are different to each other but are related. Both entail human movement, however, they differ in responses, enforcement tactics and legal ramifications. Comprehending these terminologies prevents misunderstanding for the reader. Thus, a definition of the two terms is provided below.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, human trafficking is defined as the act of obtaining individuals by coercion, fraud or deception for the purpose of exploitation for financial gain and is done by recruiting, transportation and transfer of individuals. This crime occurs all throughout the world and can impact people of all ages and socioeconomic situations, including men, women and children. When trying to deceive and manipulate their victims, traffickers frequently resort to assault, dishonest job agencies, and false assurances of education and work possibilities (UNODC, n.d.).

However, human smuggling is somewhat alike, but differs in the act of one's own will, in some way, from the migrants themselves. Those who are left with no other choice but to migrate illegally, such as those who need to flee from poverty, a catastrophe of any kind, conflict, persecution, or a lack of economic and educational prospects, are targeted by smugglers. The crime is often characterized frequently by the possibility of utilization, violence and abuse by the smugglers. The smugglers impose on these people with the change
for financial benefit and making them an illegal immigrant in countries where they aren’t yet citizens (UNODC, n.d.).

2.4 NGO A-21

A21 is an anti-human trafficking organization that is non-profitable and works worldwide to abolish modern slavery as they refer to human trafficking as (A-21, n.d.).

2.5 Research Gap

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the research gap in Gauteng in terms of how the high inflow of migration intersects with the high level of human trafficking and women being forced into the business. Also, there is a gap in previous literature of why, despite South Africa’s try to combat human trafficking, the country still after years has not seen remarkable changes in the statistics on people who interact with this crime. The aim is to investigate more in this gap, which later on can help provide a more extensive approach to the crime and where policymakers and scholars hopefully can develop a more understanding and further embracing more strategies regarding the crime. Prior literature has studied several elements that impact the vulnerability to the crime, and showed figures how these elements interact with one another, therefore, the research gap presented above is highly important in order to understand the phenomenon even deeper. Furthermore, although there are several studies on human trafficking, there is little on Gauteng and thereby, an important region to examine further.

3 Theoretical/Analytical Framework

This study's theoretical and analytical framework takes a multifaceted approach to investigating the elements that contribute to women’s vulnerability to human trafficking and sexual services in Gauteng, South Africa.

3.1 Human Rights-Based Approach

In order to provide an extensive analysis of the socio-economic factors influencing women’s vulnerability, Human Rights-Based Approach has been adopted in this research as it can guide the process by emphasizing women’s rights to life, economic opportunities and a freedom from violence. Thereby, the aim is to assess how socio-economic factors either
support or hinder these rights. This conceptual framework seeks to recognize the fundamental inequalities that underpin development issues as well as to correct unfair behaviors and uneven power dynamics that impede advancement that may result in the marginalization of particular groups. In this research, women could be seen as that group due to the developed vulnerability throughout history. Furthermore, HRBA serves as a framework with the aim to protect and promote human rights (UN SDG, n.d.). National Human Rights Institution (n.d.) address that there are five principles (PANEL) that are required from HRBA which are the following: Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination and equality, Empowerment and Legality. Two of these are extra relevant to this issue, which are:

- **Non-discrimination and equality** - Without any form of discrimination, everyone has the right to exercise their constitutional rights. Discrimination of any kind ought to be prohibited, stopped, and eliminated.

- **Empowerment** - Every person has the right to assert and utilize their legal rights. People and communities must be aware of their rights and take part in the creation of laws that impact them every day.

Furthermore, in development cooperation, HRBA prioritizes the human rights of people who are subjected to multifaceted poverty and oppression, particularly those who are most vulnerable, marginalized and disadvantaged against. By making people and organizations responsible for protecting, defending and achieving fundamental human rights, this strategy aims to enable those who are oppressed or living in poverty to overcome their situation (SIDA, n.d.).

### 3.2. Radical Feminist Theory

Radical feminism draws attention to the regularity of men’s abuse and coercion of women, children and vulnerable men within patriarchal societies, such as rape, domestic violence and sexual harassment. In harsh patriarchal societies, women’s sexuality and reproductive power are held by men where they often also claim a form of control of women. This is done in connection of violence and coercion. In the most extreme patriarchal societies, men exercise possession of their partner and children, moreover, their access to women’s bodies for sexual relations is determined by agreements with other men. However, the dominance that men possess over the women, comes in subtler aspects in modern liberal society (Jensen, 2021). Furthermore, in an effort to protect women from exploitation, many radical feminists support
making the purchase of sex illegal in order to end sex work. They argue that the practice of selling sex is part of a patriarchal system that commodities women’s sexuality rather than being seen as an isolated incident. Sex workers are being characterized by radical feminists as victims of male control and oppression, viewing sex work as the pinnacle of sexual subjugation. The women, who have economically disadvantaged backgrounds, are often a victim of sex work and therefore a victim of a patriarchal society according to the radical feminists. From a RadFem stance, MacKinnon (a former active Radical Feminist) claims that women’s ability to offer consent is constantly restricted (Spies, 2021).

The history of radical feminism brings us back to the mid 90s. This ideology emphasizes and demonstrates the dominance of men. Historically, men have had primacy of domination over women and the supremacy exercised by men being the oldest and most fundamental type of dominance. Within RadFem, it is said that oppression and exploitation such as racism and imperialism is yet an additional supremacy from men. Men are beneficiaries of all power dynamics in society. Furthermore, it is argued that a model was formed in relation to the oppression of women once discussing oppression of various forms since it was the first form of oppression in human history. While there are many forms of enslavement today, women were the initial group being subjected to enslavement by men in control. THE FEMINISTS, a community of RadFem expressed in their manifesto (Thompson, 2001):

‘Women, or “females”, were the first class to be separated out of humanity and thus denied their humanity’ - THE FEMINISTS (Redstockings, 1970).

As mentioned before, this theory speaks for an end of sex work through making the purchase illegal, and many speaks for the same approach to the problem, one of them is Hughes (2000), making this statement:

‘Evidence seems to show that legalized sex industries actually result in increased trafficking to meet the demand for women to be used in the legal sex industries’ (Hughes, 2000).

3.3. Rational Choice Theory
In order to analyze and understand the motivation behind the traffickers, Rational Choice Theory will be covered in the thesis. The theory typically starts by examining the decision-making behavior of one or several entities. Then theorists frequently assume that a single decision-maker is a standard or representative example of a broader group, for example buyers or sellers in a specific market. The research first defines individual behavior, before examining how individual decisions are combined in order to generate overall outcomes. The rational choice theory’s central principle is that individuals respond as they fit best and the best way they can in the context of the situation (Green, S.L, 2002). The theory is relevant for the research because of the rational calculations of costs and benefits from the women that have been victimized in the crime yet also from the traffickers side. The rational choice perspective’s proponents examine factors such as opportunity, benefits, and costs in their analysis of an offender’s choice to engage in crimes. Various factors might impact the decision to engage in crime, including unemployment, poverty, socio-economic situations, and social circumstances (Motseki, et.al, 2022). This theory will be used with a hope to provide insight into the motivation of traffickers and how they take advantage of opportunities in South Africa by comprehending the logical calculations that underlie their actions. Rational choice theory serves as a framework for comprehending human behavior by social scientists. Furthermore, this method was first widely used in economics and has in recent time gained traction in a number of disciplines, including sociology, political science, and anthropology (Green, S.L, 2002). Thereby, the theory will also guide this research by identifying elements that contribute to the continuation of human trafficking.

Scott (2000) stresses that many people believe that economics has been the most competent of social sciences and this view is based on the presumption that financial incentives and the possibility of making money and profit are what motivates individuals the most. This made it possible for it to create formal, frequently anticipated descriptions of human behavior. Furthermore, Ogu (2013) cites Jon Elster (1989) with the following quote:

‘When faced with several courses of action, people usually do what they believe likely to have the best overall outcome’

According to Ogu, the Rational Choice Theory can be seen as a single, comprehensive framework for analyzing all human behavior (Ogu, 2013). Moreover, it highlights certain parallels among criminals and non-criminals, rather than focusing on their disparities. Crime is the outcome of deliberate decisions in relation to rewards and costs. The actual criminal
incident is argued by some theorists for a need to have more weight on it, and that this should be in addition to the contextual, and historical elements that the conduct are influenced by. Motseki stresses that those who engage in human trafficking make logical decisions after considering various environmental conditions, legal requirements and legislative measures (Motseki, 2022).

3.4 V-Dem

V-Dem (Varieties of Democracy) is necessary in this research when measuring and discussing corruption in South Africa. V-Dem classifies as an approach to define, evaluate and measure democracy which makes distinctions between the electoral, liberal, majoritarian, consensual, participatory, deliberative and egalitarian essential principles (V-Dem Institute, 2022, V-Dem Institute, 2022).

3.5. Summary of criteria’s

The section below will emphasize the guidelines from the theories and approaches that will be used in order to analyze the findings in this research.

The Radical Feminist Theory points in the section of socio-economic, claiming that women who have economically disadvantaged backgrounds make a ‘perfect fit’ for the patriarchal society and therefore tend to be more vulnerable to fall a victim of sex work. This theory will help the research to untangle the issue that socio-economic factors bring to human trafficking by examining the patriarchal society and highlighting the influences. Moreover, The Rational Choice Theory will aid the research of how social, economic, and environmental factors affect people’s decisions to use sexual services and their vulnerability to human trafficking and analyze the motivation of traffickers and their following actions. HRBA will guide this research by emphasizing women’s rights to life, economic opportunities and a freedom from violence. Thus, three of the five principles of the PANEL will be extra relevant to serve as a possible framework for this research. Furthermore, the V-Dem approach will help resolve the question of how corruption impacts human trafficking and to what extent.

4 Methodology
This thesis will use an abductive qualitative method, more particularly a content-desk study and will involve collection of literature from various reports and official documents from internet sources and books with the aim to answer the question: *How do socio-economic factors influence the vulnerability of women to engage in sexual services and potential trafficking in Gauteng, South Africa?* Abductive analysis is a methodological approach that entails drawing conclusions and developing hypotheses from data or patterns that have been observed and studied. This type of study is commonly used once trying to analyze complicated occurrences. Abductive reasoning, which generates logical explanations for observed patterns or events, has a close connection with abductive analysis (Bryman, 2018:478-479).

Secondary research will be conducted in the thesis in order to build on existing knowledge in the subject and to gain a broader understanding and perspective on the chosen subject. The chosen methodology in this thesis will help me entail the thorough analysis and interpretation of preexisting textual content-based data. It blends aspects of secondary research and qualitative research. The primary goal of this type of study is to identify vital themes, patterns and interpretations from qualitative data, such as documents, written texts, literature and various types of content (Bryman, 2021:349-351). By doing this, one is doing a thematic analysis, which is a method that is used in order to find themes within the subject. This method gives a more nuanced view of an understanding in the subject one is researching. Therefore, this thesis will embrace and use this method in terms of advancing and achieving the most ideal outcome (Clarke & Braun, 2017:297-298). Furthermore, I will use this to compare several documents and literatures in order to collect a broader understanding and hopefully discover new perspectives and insights that can contribute to further richness in the topic. This methodology will help me understand what factors contribute to women’s vulnerability to trafficking rather than focusing on the variables and measuring their frequency. Furthermore, this thesis will not lay ground in a quantitative research due to the already knowledge of the amount of victims of human trafficking that are coerced into silence, which makes it more difficult to collect numerical data. Also, the aim of this study will not involve a generalization of the result that can be applicable to each case in every country, which a quantitative research of this kind can help do, but will instead focus on the province Gauteng with elements of South Africa as a whole. By looking at Gauteng, it is necessary to look at the country where the province is placed due to several factors such as frameworks and legislations. Therefore, the literature that has been used in this thesis includes...
both literature of Gauteng and South Africa as a country. Why this thesis does not include a quantitative research which would help it generalize the result, is due to the fact that the crime is highly complex and needs to be addressed separately whilst each country has or has not implemented legislations regarding the crime. Moreover, since the crime consists of limited data to access due to the sensitivity of the crime, the method choice in this thesis will allow the research to utilize existing information and analyze this to form a more nuanced understanding while at the same time identifying key themes (Bhandari, 2020).

Moreover, this research will not provide any in-depth interviews of any forms from the researcher, however, the thesis will consist of extract of already existing interviews by other publishers. This is due to several reasons, for example, the tight time-pressure of 10 weeks that the thesis has to be completed within, obstruct the chance to collect and conduct interviews of high quality, which is already hindered due to the minimal amount of people that can come forward and tell their story because of the extreme threats from the traffickers. Secondly, the thesis will have a chance to provide a more nuanced understanding of the subject when analyzing already existing documents and reports from different scholars, governments and NGOs. This is due to the fact that it allows for a comparative analysis of the previous literature, which will reduce the risk of conducting a biased paper, and therefore, a more reliable thesis.

4.1 Collection of data and Case study

The province Gauteng in South Africa was chosen due to its high migrant inflow and cases of human trafficking. Since it is a case study, it will enable me to gather a deeper understanding of the complexity of the crime. According to Raikar (2023), a case study additionally places the audience in a practical setting and makes the principles real rather than abstract by showing concrete examples. Moreover, a case study is explained as a ‘naturalistic environment’ by Raikar, which implies that the chosen field of subject is looked at in their natural setting and environment, making it more difficult to manipulate the findings and generalize it. Additionally, by doing a case study, it provides an opportunity to research a subject that has little or no study at all, which opens up for additional data and research to be presented (Raikar, 2023).
The data have been collected through governmental documents along with reports from scholars and policy-makers. For example, several studies and reports were retrieved from the United Nations.

### 4.2. Ethical considerations

Since I will not have any direct contact with women within the subject and no interviews will be held, I will be using pre-existing literature and reports on the subject and compare these. Therefore, no research ethics will be considered. However, since the thesis will use already published articles, reports and documents, the identities of the victims and survivors who were interviewed will not be disclosed. While using this concept, there will be an ensurement of the least harm as possible.

### 4.3 Limitations & Delimitations

Cases of Trafficking in Persons are infrequently reported due to the victims who are often coerced into silence by those who exploit them which lead to difficulties to examining human trafficking by the extent of the secretive character of the crime. Additionally, human trafficking may vary significantly from different regions and cultures, which means that this research has been narrowed down to South Africa, with a focus on the Gauteng province due to the limited time of 10 weeks. This prevents me from generalizing the results to get a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. Thus, it is important to get a full grasp of the subject due to the criticalness, however, each case of each region is individual and should therefore not be generalized.

Delimitations in this thesis would be the chosen province Gauteng instead of focusing on South Africa as a whole, this guides the research to specify more on one section, which interacts more with the timeline of the thesis. However, the findings of which factors that impacts the vulnerability of human trafficking will not be delimited to Gauteng but will instead be presented as variables overall which will later on be connected to Gauteng and how the province correlate with this.
5 Findings

The objective of this study was to examine how socio-economic factors influence the vulnerability of women to engage in sexual services and potential trafficking in Gauteng, South Africa, among two other research questions.

5.1 Legal Framework

South Africa gave its signature to the Palermo Protocol “protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime” (UNTC, n.d.), and was entered into operation in 2003. The purpose of the protocol is to encourage alignment among different countries in how they create their own criminal laws. This alignment aims to enhance international collaboration in the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking cases, making the process more effective and efficient. This is the first universally binding document that establishes a commonly accepted description of human trafficking (UNODC, n.d.).
There have been several studies on this subject, however, similar to many nations, South Africa has no exact statistics on the number of persons who have been or currently are a victim of human trafficking besides estimated numbers (Pharoah, 2006).

5.2 Legalization regarding trafficking in persons

According to Beatri Kruger (2016), South Africa implemented its initial extensive law aimed at preventing and combating human trafficking in 2015, known as the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act 7 of 2013. Moreover, South Africa has been recognized as a country that is both a source, transit point, and destination for this illegal activity and therefore the country plays a crucial role with regard to the issue of human trafficking. Kruger states further information of South Africa that points out the extremely low number of convictions regarding human trafficking during 2013 and 2014 which marks to be only three. Kruger describes that the inability to effectively address human trafficking in

**Article 3 – Use of terms**

For the purposes of this Protocol:

(a) "Trafficking in persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;

(b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;

(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in persons" even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;

(d) "Child" shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

Source: UNODC, n.d.
South Africa in previous years could largely be due to the absence of comprehensive legal measures that are specifically designed to efficiently prosecute those responsible for this crime (Kruger, 2016).

The Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2013 (Act No 7 of 2013):

South Africa signed this protocol that is a framework with an aim to prevent and combat trafficking in persons with the support of UNODC and IOM and began its operation in 2015 (DOJ&CD, 2019 & Government of South Africa, 2014).

Yet, another framework was developed together with other government departments with a close collaboration with Act 7, this one is called National Policy Framework (NPF). Since the report was published in 2020, the government of South Africa has seen a significant growth in terms of reporting of the crime and increased charges and arrests on TIP cases (DOJ&CD, 2019).

5.3 Socio-economic factors

The majority of reports regarding human trafficking in South Africa occur internally within the country. There have been reports of children being abducted and trafficked from poor socio-economic areas in South Africa to provinces that have richer economies and are more developed, these would include the provinces Gauteng and Western Cape. Moreover, there have been several reports of human trafficking and sexual exploitation in Johannesburg which is the capital of Gauteng. Sexual exploitation is the most common cause of human trafficking in South Africa (Lutya, T.M., 2012). Further, Johannesburg is one of the two primary destinations for migrants and trafficked people (Aransiola, et.al, 2014; Nkosi, 2018).
Additionally, the U.S Department of State (2023) also reports that there have been cases of human traffickers exploiting local and foreign victims in South Africa within the past five years. The traffickers often recruit victims from nearby countries and rural parts of South Africa, concentrating on provinces such as Gauteng. Thus, the victims are subsequently subjected to sex trafficking, where they often are transported to cities like Johannesburg and Cape Town. Those who are targeted by the traffickers often come from poor socioeconomic backgrounds. Poor socio-economic backgrounds often result in vulnerability, making sexual exploitation and human trafficking one of all forms of control of women who are victimized due to their socio-economic status. The article further states that one of the factors to vulnerability of exploitation is unemployment. Kangiwa (2015) conducted a study interviewing prostitutes on several topics where one of them were on educational qualifications. His findings showed that the percentage of the women who lacked education were 80 percent. Kangiwa further states that the vast majority of the participants had a lower socio-economic background.

Ngwira (2011) notes that Eastern Cape in South Africa is one of the poorest provinces and that a large number of people migrate to Gauteng who has a very strong economy in comparison to other provinces. Numerous of the people who migrate fall into the hands of the traffickers as they migrate for job opportunities that some also are promised.

Nkosi (2018) gives examples of two reports that have been made regarding human trafficking where both have occurred in Gauteng. The first case involved two women being held in captivity and forced to work as prostitutes in the province, and the second case was a woman who got rescued from sexual exploitation, also in the Gauteng Province.

Although data shows that most of the human trafficking occurs internally in South Africa, there are also numerous cases of external victims of human trafficking into the country. According to Martens et al. (2003), Mozambican victims are targeted and promised jobs in Johannesburg as either waitresses or sex workers, these women and girls are within the span of 14-24 years old. Once they enter Johannesburg, the report states that:

‘They are sexually assaulted as an initiation for the sex work that awaits them’
At this point, some of the victims are being sold to brothels whilst others are being sold as slaves. Depending on where they are being sold- the traffickers sell the victims for a specific amount of ZAR. Traffickers earn roughly 1 million ZAR each year by trafficking nearly 1000 Mozambicans within the year.

Moreover, UNESCO (2007) also brings forward the Mozambican women who are trafficked to South Africa. They state that the traffickers are based in the capital of Mozambique and that they regularly seek for young women, who often work in the unofficial sector such as local marketplaces. They are targeted for sex work by these traffickers. The interesting part that it presented is that many of the victims know those who target them. These provide assistance including proposing jobs as housekeepers or waiters in South Africa. Additionally, the victims are actively sought out to be sold to brothels in provinces such as Gauteng. There is existing trafficking networks in the region between Swaziland, Mozambique and South Africa that are used to transport and smuggle women to cities such as Johannesburg who then requit the women and puts them in sex work often to help their male relatives who already is in the region as a refugee where they usually encounter unemployment, and therefore a battle for survival.
Below is another example from UNESCO showing air or sea routes from Asia to South Africa, more specifically Johannesburg.
5.4 Pull & Push factors

Bales (2007) explains that there are several push factors and pull factors that contribute to human trafficking, although there is no universal explanation to human trafficking. Vulnerability and poverty would be such factors that would indicate the push factors and the employment were to serve as a pull factor. Thus, Bales tries to identify which amongst these are most significant in order to define the factors that contribute to human trafficking. The result presents that corruption, conflict and poverty along with the pull factor are all important indicators. One of the most apparent ways to halt trafficking, based on Bales' study, would be to decrease the push factors and one of them regarding this topic is corruption that represents the government.

Many scholars agree with the phenomena of push and pull factors when discussing human trafficking. It is well argued that several of these factors impact the risk of being a victim of human trafficking and sex exploitation. To clarify, IOM (2003) does not distinguish between the ongoing persistent political and societal instability, together with the extreme economic
inequality in Southern Africa, but instead see both of these as a combination between push and pull factors for migration.

Bales argue that the profitable and the limited and low risk aspect of human trafficking is one of the reasons why organizations opt to engage in it. Humans can be exploited several times and human trafficking does not require a substantial initial capital investment (Bales, 2007).

5.5 Men’s violence against women

Zinyemba & Hlongwana (2022) produced a study with the subject gender-based violence (GBV) with a direct focus on Alexandra Township in Johannesburg. The authors did semi structured face-to-face interviews with chosen men over the age of 18 years, they were all residents of Alexandra Township. According to Zinyemba & Hlongwana, several studies have before mapped out some of the characteristics that contribute to a high prevalence of GBV from a legal, socio-cultural and socio-economic standpoint. GBV is acknowledged to oppress women physically and sexually. The authors of this study further explains that women are left vulnerable due to the patriarchal standards that decrease women’s right to make her own decisions, thereby, the authors point in the direction of the legal and sociocultural systems to operate against women. Some of the biggest elements that contribute to GBV are presented in the study as socio-economic factors, which would include poverty and unemployment for example. Also, cultural dynamics are viewed as an essential component of GBV that are associated with the patriarchal system (Zinyemba et.al, 2022). The definition of GBV was described by the United Nations (1993) which states that Gender-based violence is a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women’s ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men.’

5.6 Lobola as a cultural practice

Lobola is a payment system that is still practiced today in South Africa, where men pay in lobola (or money today due to hinders such as families in cities not being able to obtain cattles) for a wife. She is now the man’s property, and this brings her to a vulnerable position where the men (groom, and often in-laws) instantly get a dominant position in the relationship (Zinyemba et.al, 2022; Parker, 2015). If buying a wife can be seen as trafficking will be looked at through Warria (2017) who discusses the subject in her article Forced child marriages as a form of child trafficking.
Warria states that trafficking is, among several other once, the paragraph attached below:

“... or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person. (...) or of a position of vulnerability”
(United Nations, 2000)

This could be connected to a news article with the title “Mother who allegedly forced daughter, 14, to marry older man faces human trafficking charges”. It is a case where a grown man who worked in the Gauteng province traveled to the girl’s house with the aim to talk to the mother of the girl. However, the man thought that she was too young, afterwards, the girl was sent by her mother to the man’s city in Gauteng with the intention of giving him money. The article then brought up that she was taken captive by the man’s family. Furthermore, the money that the girl was sent to deliver has been shown to be lobola money (Nini, Asanda & Dispatch, Daily, 9 July 2019).

5.7 Forced marriage as human trafficking?

There is no direct link between human trafficking and forced marriage, however, UNODC (2020) means that there have been reports of human trafficking in several countries of forced marriage. Additionally, the danger that women may be exploited in marriages - a practice that is closely connected to sexual slavery - has been recognized by UNODC research on trafficking in persons in armed conflict as a particular kind of exploitation. The result of the paper shows that forced marriage and forced prostitution, among others (historically present in a lot of conflicting scenarios), indeed could be counted as a form of trafficking in persons, which are explained by a report of The Secretary-General on trafficking in persons.

[...The report of the Secretary-General on trafficking in persons in armed conflict pursuant to Security Council resolution 2388 outlines that trafficking in persons continues to be increasingly identified as a feature of armed conflict.]
Source: UNODC (2020)

The ideal environment for human trafficking to grow occurs by conflict's violent patterns that frequently foster criminality, exploitation and abuse (UNODC, 2020:18). Moreover, the
Global Slavery Index marks that forced marriage is a form of modern slavery and that this is shown particularly in countries or regions who work by patriarchy standards. It is further argued that this is one of the factors that creates discrimination and inequality between the genders (Walk Free Foundation, n.d).

According to UNESDOC (2007), cultural norms and standards that are founded on ideas often discourage women from asserting their right to equality in South Africa. Therefore, trafficked women and sex workers among other groups need to be addressed through the disparities. Desperation typically occurs once poverty strikes and it is at this point many girls are being sold by their family to an older man into marriage due to the extraction of lobola from the groom which will help the family’s economy. Research has indicated that there might be a connection between early marriage and human trafficking when men are unable to locate girls within their village.

UNODC (2020), uses the recommendation from the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action that was embraced by the Fourth World Conference of Women which includes that suitable steps need to be taken to be able to end women’s trafficking. It is necessary to study the underlying causes to find what promotes trafficking in girls and women for prostitution as well as forced marriages, and commercial sex. UNODC means that there is a connection between forced marriages and trafficking concerns.

Yet, no definition of international law has been established of forced marriage, nevertheless, it is regarded as a violation to human rights by United Nations Bodies (UNODC, 2020).

5.8 Corruption

Motseki (2022) claims that the increasing number of human trafficking in South Africa could be explained by corruption, which he states is a significant factor. The results from interviews by Motseki did show that safe houses and shelters seem to have been places where corruption occurs, in forms of abduction of the victims staying there by officials. According to Motseki’s findings, some of these shelters are in the government officials' responsibilities and thereby, it is a connection between these officials and traffickers where they exchange services and cooperation. This has resulted in several victims finding themselves back in the traffickers hands.
Motseki did his study focusing on three areas in Gauteng Province, the participants in the study were officials and victims of human trafficking. The officials that were interviewed were from the departments of: DPCI, SAPS, DSD, DHA and NPA (see list of abbreviations). Many of the participants in the study recalled an issue regarding brothels, prostitution and massage parlours in Gauteng that is used for human trafficking. Girls between ages 13-27 seem to be most common in the province to be a victim of human trafficking. The majority of the participants argued for Gauteng as one of the provinces in South Africa that has the most problems in terms of human trafficking. The paragraph below is from Motseki (2022) were he tries to entangle how policing human trafficking is being hindered in South Africa:

[...corruption from the SAPS in terms of leaking confidential information to the traffickers about the planned operations, corruption from Home Affairs in issuing documents illegally, and ensuring that the victims are transported in and out of the country illegally, corruption from Social development in handing the victims of human trafficking back to the traffickers as they are being rescued to the safety homes.]

According to Ivar Kolstad and Arne Wiig, the ‘traditional’ definition of corruption is the misuse of official position for personal benefit or the misuse of authority granted to oneself for personal benefit. They argue for democracy to limit corruption. They discuss that a good stable democracy will mean a more transparent political system and that this will further lead to a reduction of the amount of private knowledge about how the system operates and thereby will reduce the information leakage severely. Secondly, frequent checks and balances will alter and limit the authority of officials to stray from unbiased standards, which the authors means that it loses value to know someone in a position of authority. Lastly, in conclusion, by diminishing the personal gains and raising anticipated costs from corrupt conduct, corruption has the potential to decrease (Kolstad & Wiig, 2011:3).

Furthermore, according to V-Dem, South Africa is now an electoral democracy and between 2012-2022 there has been changes in the numbers regarding the stability of the regime, it has been noticed that South Africa has experienced a decrease within the nation. From 1996-2012, South Africa was a liberal democracy from 1996-2012 (see figure 1), meaning that all requirements for an electoral democracy have been reached, which would include an indication of a vision that is somewhat ambitious and where for example, in several institutional elements would ensure free and fair elections. However it goes deeper as it also
allows a securing of individuals freedoms and maintaining institutional checks (V-Dem Report, 2023:50, 39-41).

Figure 1

![Image of a diagram showing the correlation between social trust and corruption]

Source: V-Dem Report 2023:41

Furthermore, it has been discovered that having a moderate democracy increases the risk of corruption significantly. Conversely, if the country is a dictatorship or is classified as the ‘best’ democracy, findings have shown that these countries have the least corruption. Thus, ‘the rule of law’ is badly affected by corruption (V-Dem, 2022). Moreover, Bo Rothstein describes the correlation between social trust and corruption where he argues for countries to have lower numbers of crime and corruption if the nation has trusting citizens as this could generate better democratic institutions (Rothstein, 2013:1010-1011).

5.9 Hotspots

Several news articles and documents have identified and reported Gauteng as South Africa’s ‘hotspot’ for human trafficking. A campaign by A21 and two other organizations, #TheTraffickYouNeedToKnow showed that especially Gauteng is the most affected province by trafficking. The campaign aims to raise awareness of the issue and to display that most of the victims and cases go unnoticed due to the very low knowledge to recognize human trafficking in the ‘every-day-life’. Furthermore, the campaign listed several
areas in Gauteng where most of the selection of the victims occurred by the traffickers (Mahamba, 2022). Thus, in 2022, SAPS found a house in the area Springs in Gauteng where 45 people from Ethiopia were held for human trafficking, additionally, 5 more Ethiopians were secured and rescued by the SAPS once they were found in a house in Brixton (suburb to Johannesburg, Gauteng), all five of them were victim of trafficking (IOL News, 2022).

According to a report by Statistics South Africa, data that have been released show that between 2016 and 2021, the country is expected to attract a net migration of around 1.02 million individuals. The research speaks for Gauteng to receive the most migrants from other countries, and this percentage were expected to be as high as 47%, making Gauteng a huge hotspot for migrants. This is because of the fine economic stability in Gauteng that generates an inflow of migrants both internally and externally (Statistics South Africa, July 20, 2018).

5.9.1 Combating Human Trafficking

As already stated above, The Republic Of South Africa signed the protocol ‘Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons, 2013 (Act No. 7 of 2013), that came into operation in 2015 (DOJ&CD, 2019). Increased numbers of reports regarding trafficking have occurred and the government has seen a growth in terms of conviction and arrests. However, a study from 2018 by Nkosi (2018) have shown that trafficking is still on the rise and in addition to this, the author continues to argue for the failure by South Africa with a report that was published by the US Department of States in 2018 that revealed the inadequate response to the crime by South Africa. Nkosi uses a figure from the US Department of State that will be attached below. The figure is argued to be a clear indication of how unsuccessful South Africa is in terms of combating human trafficking and how it has downspirled. Furthermore, Nkosi states that the SAPS is a significant part of this with regard to identifying and preventing human trafficking.
Looking at how South Africa tackles the phenomena of human trafficking, the Bill of Rights should be examined. It is a framework that looks after human rights in connection to trafficking. The aim of the framework is to provide each citizen in South Africa rights which here would call for ‘respect, protect, promote and fulfill’. The constitution is required to obtain these rights for their citizens, however there is no specific paragraph that is directed towards human trafficking (Motseki, 2022).

UNODC (n.d.) states that there is a visible link between human rights breach and corruption and that this has been recognized by many scholars for several years, meaning that it is not a new phenomenon. It is mentioned that human rights breaches affect the level of corruption in the government and vice versa. Furthermore, corruption is seen as a major contributor to political instability and societal discord since it fosters a sense of mistrust for the government. To clarify, the paper provides a quote, which is:

‘When there is corruption, human rights disappear’

Source: UNODC, N.D.

Looking at a legalization of sex work and if this would help combat human trafficking have been argued as followed; a legalization of sex work will reduce the risk of women falling into human trafficking and forced into sexual services, such as bordells (Weitzer, Roland, 2021 July 21 & Harvard Law School International Studies, 2014 June 12). However, on the other hand, if sex work is a criminal activity and clients face a realistic change of consequences due to this, some might refrain from using commercial sex services. This is due to the fact that
engaging in such activities comes with a higher total cost due to the potential of indictment. Therefore, it is argued that the demand of using commercial sex services will thereby increase severely if it would be legal (Cho, et.al, 2012). Moreover, it is also stated that:

‘Wherever prostitution is legalized, trafficking to sex industry marketplaces in that region increases’ Source: Cho, et.al, 2012

Although the paper discusses two sides of the subject, they present that there is more inflow of human trafficking in those countries that have legalized prostitution. This has been seen through the amount of reports of the crime in the country (Cho, et.al, 2012).

6 Analysis/Discussion

The findings of this research were interesting, showing that socio-economic factors play an important role along with cultural practices and political struggles in forms of corruption in the Republic of South Africa. The findings on the subject allow this research to go further into an in-depth analysis while utilizing the chosen theories and approach.

The following section below will repeat the aspects of each theory and approach that will be utilized in the analysis in order to go deeper into the findings: The Radical Feminist Theory points in the section of socio-economic factors, claiming that women who have economically disadvantaged backgrounds make a ‘perfect fit’ for the patriarchal society and therefore tend to be more vulnerable to fall a victim of sex work. This theory will help the research to untangle the issue that socio-economic factors bring to human trafficking by examining the patriarchal society and highlighting the influences. Moreover, The Rational Choice Theory will aid the research of how social, economic, and environmental factors affect people’s decisions to use sexual services and their vulnerability to human trafficking and analyze the motivation of traffickers and their following actions. Human Rights-Based Approach will guide this research by emphasizing women’s rights to life, economic opportunities and a freedom from violence. Thus, three of the five principles of the PANEL will be extra relevant to serve as a possible framework for this research. Furthermore, the V-Dem approach will help resolve the question of how corruption impacts human trafficking and to what extent.
The following section will provide further themes that are combining the results from the section of findings.

6.1 Internal/external trafficking

In terms of internally and externally trafficking, the findings showed that although South Africa has most reports of human trafficking internally from different provinces, there were findings that indicated that trafficking from outside the country to South Africa is also a severe problem. However, an interesting discovery was that Gauteng is one of the strongest economies provinces in the country, and numerous people both inside the country and outside, are migrating specifically to this province often with ‘help’ of trafficking networks that operate in the region between Swaziland, Mozambique and South Africa. Findings indicate that Gauteng is an urban area and is often one of the primary reasons why people migrate here and in some cases also falling into the hands of traffickers who then requit them and force them into sex work. The Rational Choice Theory is a theory that is well applicable in this situation in order to understand this movement and will be extra utilized showing how different elements and factors contribute to people’s decision to migrate and the traffickers motivation to victimize women in this crime, looking at costs and benefits.

The theory underpins the rational choices from both the victim and trafficker in this case. Since Gauteng is an urban area, and people that migrate here often come from rural areas, the prons here would perhaps therefore be that the individual sees a better future for themselves in Gauteng in terms of job opportunities for example, and where the trafficker sees an opportunity to target a woman and lure them into sex work as they know they are in a vulnerable position. This also lies in favor when we investigate closer in the 47.5 % people that migrate to Gauteng internally and externally; as the number could explain even deeper how common it is to migrate to the province. In addition to this, results proved that there are criminal trafficking networks that constantly work in Gauteng and target women who get there. The result of Gauteng being an enormous hotspot in South Africa regarding human trafficking, shows the importance of concentrated effort in the province. Thus, the reason why Gauteng is a hotspot is also best explained by the Rational Choice Theory as people often take a rational decision to migrate to this province in search of job opportunities due to the province having the strongest economy. In order to try to understand why many criminal networks have their roots in Gauteng could also be described with this theory as they
probably have made rational calculations of benefits with being placed in Gauteng as they realize the migration inflow in the province. Furthermore, human trafficking is seen as a low-risk crime to engage in from the traffickers side, thus, this could thereby be analyzed as a reason why it is one of the most common crimes in South Africa, the benefit outweighs the costs.

6.2 The correlation between GBV and Pull & Push factors

Looking at the section ‘Men’s violence against women’ in connection with the section ‘Pull & Push factors’, there seems to be a clear correlation between these topics. GBV against women has several background factors that drive women into a vulnerability to men which further puts them in a situation where the women have difficulties making their own decisions in their every-day life. However, the women can in some cases find themselves in a ‘submission’ to the men and if she is unemployed, the woman fills up two of the classical factors that contribute to the push and pull system which here would be unemployment and vulnerability. These are two clear elements that would spark a migration by the woman. Several studies that have been outlined above have shown that a large number of women who lack education are in a worse socio-economic place and The Radical Feminist Theory is significant once trying to understand and analyze this. This research has previously stated that the theory will guide this study regarding looking into the socio-economic factors and how that causes a vulnerability to human trafficking and that this will be looked at through the patriarchal system. Going back in history, the patriarchal system has dominated for decades which naturally puts the woman into a vulnerability. GBV is recognized for its control of the women, both sexually and physically and could therefore be marked as a ‘harsh patriarchal matter’. Additionally, the quote ‘They are sexually assaulted as an initiation for the sex work that awaits them’, is another clear view of both GBV and the patriarchal system where the men here claim some sort of control over the women’s body and an access to it where it fits them the best.

Furthermore, the whole phenomenon of human trafficking and selling women to brothels where they are forced to work in the sex business in order to please and be bought by other men is yet another clear picture that it lies in favor of the patriarchal system where women are constantly in a vulnerable position. Selling women to brothels is seen as a business as the
Traffickers earn money out of it, which is a further indication that the women at this point are in a submission to the men and thus a victim of the patriarchal system.

Moreover, other elements to be analyzed with the Radical Feminist theory and the Human Rights-Based Approach are the cultural practices that serve an important role in South Africa. This study has earlier indicated that lobola as a cultural practice is and has historically been a fundamental practice in terms of earning money to the family of the girl that is being a victim of coercion marriage and of the man that chooses to buy a girl for her to be his wife. Beside applying the Radical Feminist theory and HRBA, this situation could be comprehended through the Pull & Push ‘theory’. As stated in the section ‘Forced marriage as human trafficking?’, poverty often equals desperation, and desperation in many cases equals girls being sold to a man for marriage due to the extraction of lobola that will help the family’s economic situation. Thus, some would argue that this can be seen as human trafficking due to the girl being sold to a man’s possession against her will which makes her the man’s property and puts her in a vulnerable position. Poverty within the family can be seen as the push factor where they make the decision to sell their daughter in order to exchange lobola or money. If lobola in connection with forced marriage could be seen as human trafficking is discussed by different scholars, however they do not appear to agree with one another. Furthermore, this extract from the Palermo Protocol, article 3, a), 2000:

‘... or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person. (...) or of a position of vulnerability’

Could be seen as a potential definition that would place the girl in the line of human trafficking/trafficking in persons. The girl could also be considered as a victim of exploitation as she is perceived to be a property of the man. On the one hand, not every part of the definition may be fulfilled in the subparagraph (a), but on the other hand, the subparagraph c) marks that it shall be considered ‘trafficking in persons’ if one is transported and received for the interest of exploitation (see the extract of the protocol in literature review). Besides this, the UNODC’s perspective on forced marriage and whether it can be seen as trafficking or not, marks the importance of having a comprehensive understanding. This research has marked that poverty, cultural dimensions and desperation for example are found to be critical factors that points to a complicated integration of problems.
Nevertheless, in circumstances such as this, human rights are being violated and are extra visible by two of the principles by the HRBA. There is a clear view of discrimination and inequality when one is being forced into marriage as she will not have a say in it. The other principle that has been violated is ‘empowerment’ in terms of her not being able to utilize her legal rights making own decisions of who to marry.

Moreover, research has shown that cultural dynamics is closely linked to GBV and therefore also the patriarchal system, making lobola and forced marriage one of these dynamics which is reinforced with the Global Slavery Index that clearly argues for forced marriage to be recognized as modern slavery and that forced marriage is an impact of the patriarchal system.

6.3 Governmental corruption extending human trafficking

In terms of the findings regarding the extensive diffusion of corruption within different departments in the government, it is obvious that this is a problem in South Africa that hinders the work towards anti-trafficking. South Africa has made progress in the subject, having more victims of trafficking issue reports against its perpetrator, nonetheless, there is no data that have demonstrated the number of women who are being trafficked to be fewer over time.

Hence, this will be analyzed through V-Dems latest report on Democracy that will guide this analysis in terms of understanding how and to what extent corruption fosters human trafficking in a country.

As previously mentioned, South Africa has made a downturn regarding the scale of democracy in the latest years. The high levels of corruption in South Africa could thereby be discussed through the reality that the country now can be seen as a moderate democracy, which makes them more vulnerable to corruption. There is no exact data of how corrupt the nation is in relation to human trafficking, nevertheless, by using V-Dems approach in this case, the statistics that shows a downturn in the scale is clearly interesting once investigating if this has an impact on the issue. It is safe to say that the numbers are unambiguous and the findings of this research is best described through V-Dems definition of how corruption and democracy correlate together. However, one should be careful making this assumption as there are several other factors combined that can answer the question of why South Africa,
despite its signing of the Palermo Protocol, have not yet solved the massive issue of human trafficking. On the contrary, according to some scholars, this crime seems to be on the rise, which makes it somewhat defensible to demonstrate it with democracy as corruption fosters crimes. Furthermore, V-Dem’s approach also strengthens Kolstad and Wiig discussion on corruption where they also argue for more democracy to decrease corruption. Moreover, they go deeper in the phenomena as they address what the practical outcome will be if the nation has a stable democracy. It becomes evident that the information that is leaked between officials and traffickers will decrease significantly according to Kolstad and Wiig if there is a stable democracy. This can easily be discussed through the Rational Choice Theory due to their discussion of personal gain from the officials that choose to trade corrupt. Moreover, they stress that corruption is traditionally defined as when a person of authority misuse their position for personal benefit. Furthermore, this is argued to be the root of information leakage.

The data presented from V-Dem can be strengthened with the help of Bo Rothstein’s article of Corruption and Social Trust. Rothstein's view of how these two variables connect to one another could describe the findings from Motseki regarding several South Africa’s citizens, more specifically, citizens of Gauteng, that have described how deeply corrupt governmental departments such as SAPS, DPCI, DSD, DHA and NPA are. This could be drawn to a mistrust that particularly citizens of Gauteng have in these official government departments.

The Bill of Rights is aimed to protect citizens in South Africa along with respect, promote and fulfill. Although the framework is framed for human rights as a whole and not specifically for human trafficking, the Republic of South Africa seems to have difficulties to obtain these in terms of human trafficking. One conclusion to this can be drawn to the extract:
‘When there is corruption, human rights disappear’ - Source: UNODC, n.d.

This shows that corruption in the government could have the potential to exterminate human rights even if it is seen as a fundamental right in the country. Therefore, it is arguable to state that corruption is the root for human trafficking, or at least to combat and prevent the crime.

When it comes to the legalization of sex work and whether it will help reduce the number of the women who falls a victim of human trafficking has been argued for both ways. The Rational Choice theory can once again be utilized in this context for analyzing and explaining
the question. In the last paragraph of findings it is clearly stated that no reduction of the crime will happen, but instead the crime will increase due to the fact that the demand will accelerate. This could be looked at from the perspective of the individuals that chooses not to buy sex might rethink their choice if it would be legal. Therefore, if the demand increases, the amount of women to provide this service will automatically have to grow. Which further leads to a growing business for the traffickers and thereby they would have to expand the number of women they either kidnap or lure into the business. The theory would help explain the demand effect and thereby the traffickers' choices to further victimize women to human trafficking. Moreover, if it remains illegal, there is a higher total cost due to the possible risk of being prosecuted by the buyer, which also would serve as a rational choice not to engage.

7 Conclusion

The aim for this study was to examine how socio-economic factors influence the vulnerability of women to engage in sexual services and potential trafficking. In order to reach the research objective, three research questions were formulated. The research questions that guided me were the following;

• How do socio-economic factors influence the vulnerability of women to engage in sexual services and potential trafficking in Gauteng, South Africa?

• Are there any other critical dimensions affecting the vulnerability of trafficking beside socio-economics?

• How do governmental and legal measures, such as the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act 7 impact the effectiveness of addressing and prosecuting human trafficking in South Africa?

In summary, the chosen theories and approaches in this research have all contributed to an understanding of the themes that have been found during the process. Socio-economic factors and GBV have been analyzed through The Radical Feminist Theory as the theory argues for
the constant patriarchal structures that are on going and is especially clear in cases such as lobola. Findings have shown that lobola is still practiced in South Africa, where Gauteng is one of the provinces where it still frequently occurs. One reason for this could perhaps be that Gauteng is still in a patriarchal society and women’s position in that society in terms of economic and societal oppression thus is one of the underlying causes for what contributes to women’s vulnerability, which then leads to a higher risk for them to fall a victim for human trafficking.

Hereafter, although the patriarchal system still is an on-going phenomena that puts women in a lower position in society than men, it is vital to see how corruption and the democratic stability in South Africa affects human trafficking. The V-Dem approach highlights the link between growing corruption and moderate democracy, pressing on the argument that corruption weakens democratic institutions and thereby the social trust from the citizens. This approach makes it easy to argue that measures regarding anti-corruption are fundamental for work towards preventing human trafficking.

Furthermore, the Rational Choice Theory has also been applied with regard to the Push and Pull Factors that contribute to human trafficking. The analysis has stressed several factors that influence rational decisions determined by costs and benefits, one of which is corruption. As previously stated, corruption fosters crime, which makes it the ultimate arena for traffickers. Evidence has indicated that several departments in the government are corrupt and cooperate with the traffickers with leaking documents for example. It is highly important to alter this in order to deter participation in human trafficking. This also goes in line with the Human Rights-Based Approach that has been utilized in order to analyze forced marriage in South Africa. This research has not argued that forced marriage is equal to human trafficking, nevertheless, documentation from UNODC have indicated that there might be a connection between forced marriage and human trafficking. Therefore, this approach is fundamental when discussing women’s right to their own decisions and choices. Despite the fact that there is no established definition of international law of forced marriage, it is highly important to look at the perspective that it is regarded as a violation to human rights by United Nations Bodies.

The theories and approaches viewed as a whole, offers an advanced perspective on the complex dynamics of human trafficking in South Africa, Gauteng. This research indicates that
no factor should be considered as the only element to contribute to human trafficking. The themes that have been found have demonstrated a link between them and the crime. However, addressing corruption within the different departments appears to be the initial point of intervention, therefore, it is clear that more research and studies need to be evaluated on the subject and especially in Gauteng which is the wealthiest and richest province in South Africa and thereby would have the potential and resources to address the issue closer. However it can also be seen from the perspective which have been stressed before in the research; that it is easy to understand why there are most cases of trafficking in this province which can be seen through just the wealthiness and that people are drawn to it in order to increase their chances for job opportunities for example.

The results of this research have shown that there is no single factor that is behind human trafficking, however, some factors play a bigger role and are deeper rooted in the society. It can be confirmed that women’s lower position in relation to men’s is still a problem in Gauteng, South Africa and data have confirmed that the patriarchal society impacts human trafficking tremendously from different angles. This thesis will hopefully bring a more nuanced understanding to human trafficking and the factors behind it, and show that not only a person’s socio-economic background affects their vulnerability to falling a victim of the crime, but also factors of political nature such as corruption in governments and also cultural factors that is still a on-going practice in Gauteng and South Africa such as lobola. Further recommendations would therefore include continued studies in the issue and hopefully a future goal to prevent human trafficking of all forms and the exploitation of women through a universal legislation, which could include something similar to the 2030 Agenda (Sustainable Development Goals).

Working on this paper has been an interesting journey. The findings and result shows that urgent measures in Gauteng are highly required in order to combat human trafficking in South Africa and while this paper have distinguish the themes that have been found and thereby the different factors that contribute to human trafficking, is it important to encourage more and deeper studies in the subject, and not only in Gauteng, but also in different countries and different areas since the crime is universal. This implies that although the crime is universal, it is not equal to the factor/factors to be universal. Acknowledging this indicates that each nation may need to address human trafficking separately and differently.


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