### Introduction

**Research Question:**
- What are the economic, political, and sociocultural factors that drive the economics of sex trafficking?

**Background:**
- Sex trafficking is the third largest criminal enterprise in the world. The ILO estimates there are 4.8 million victims of sex trafficking worldwide (3.8 million adults and 1 million children).
- Highly gendered issue—99% of estimated victims are women and girls.
- Changing demographics: victims are increasingly younger, meaning underaged girls are more targeted.
- Average age of entry into minor sex trafficking is thirteen years old.
- Long-term physical, mental, and reproductive-health concerns. Commonly cited ailments and occurrences include forced abortions, physical and sexual violence, contraction of STIs, depression, anxiety, and PTSD.
- Unreliable statistics for sex trafficking, due to sex trafficking’s clandestine nature.

**Literature**

**Economic Drivers of Sex Trafficking**
- Highly lucrative “business” ($33.9 billion in revenue annually: incentives of economic gain).
- Economic models for analyzing choices and labor market utilize a simplified lens, defining sex trafficking as a good and traffickers as sellers.
- Crossing borders for life advancement.
- Comparative profitability of engaging in sex work.

**Political Drivers of Sex Trafficking**
- Collapse of regimes leads to long-term instability, widespread poverty, and increased migration.
- Failures to provide proper remedy for trafficked victims.
- Policies which breed culture of impunity.
- Government collusion with traffickers and widespread corruption among law enforcement and judiciary.

**Sociocultural Drivers of Sex Trafficking**
- Trafficked women typically have low levels of education.
- Physical, emotional, and sexual abuse cited as catalysts for running away from home.
- Marginalization of groups (particularly women and children) rooted in cultural history and practices.
- Race, ethnicity, gender, and social origin are intensified by sex trafficking.
- “Less desirable” groups afforded less safeguards.
- Cultural approaches that devalue/victimize women.

### Findings

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<th>Figure 1: Bulgaria</th>
<th>Figure 2: India</th>
<th>Figure 3: Italy</th>
<th>Figure 4: Thailand</th>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Venn Diagram" /></td>
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<th>Figure 5: the Netherlands</th>
<th>Figure 6: Cambodia</th>
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### Data and Methods

**Methods**
- Adoption of Palermo Protocol’s definition of sex trafficking.
- Comparative case analyses of Asia and Europe.
- Europe: Bulgaria, Italy, and the Netherlands.
- Asia: India, Thailand, Cambodia.
- Analyze differences in economic, political, and sociocultural factors to find similarities which drive sex trafficking.
- Display findings in qualitative Venn diagrams.
- Discover patterns develop conclusions for hypothesis building and future research.

### Findings and Conclusions

**Bulgaria:** Economic drivers are greatest, largely attributed to the fall of Communist regime in 1989.
**Italy:** Sociocultural drivers are greatest (juju), economic incentives are also important to note.
**The Netherlands:** Legislation ultimately has greatest influence on trafficking, though sociocultural and economic drivers are also important.
**India:** Sociocultural and economic incentives are equally important (devadasi and caste system exacerbate economic opportunities).
**Thailand:** Factors are extremely related, sociocultural has the most influence, though not noticeably so.

**Hypotheses**

**Bulgaria and Cambodia share similar Venn diagrams, perhaps due to long histories with communism.**
**The Netherlands and Thailand both have reduced stigma regarding sex work as well as the greatest overlap of sociocultural and political.**
**Where sociocultural determinants are greatest, political processes have relatively minimal influence.**
**Greater overlaps between economic, political, and sociocultural factors in Asian countries (may be attributed to greater levels of corruption).**
**Where economic incentives are the main drivers, countries have greater overlap with sociocultural determinants (feminization of poverty).**
**Bulgaria as a case study: least amount of overlap between three drivers despite pattern regarding corruption.**
**Can sex work be an option with extreme overlaps?**

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