



**GENDER BIAS IN THE MEDIA FRAMEWORK CONSTRUCTED
AROUND THE ISSUE OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS
IN GERMANY**

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ES3-3A

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Date of Completion: 03/03/2017

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Analysis of German news coverage: Is news the framework that is constructed around the issue of trafficking in human beings biased or framed in terms of gender?

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The Hague University of Applied Sciences Dissertation 2016/2017

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Word count:

Around 12,700 words ('Introduction' up to and including 'Conclusion')

Graphics used in this dissertation:

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Executive Summary

This dissertation explores whether the German news media framework that is constructed around the issue of trafficking in human beings (THB) is biased or framed in terms of gender. The past decade has seen major developments in efforts towards the eradication of THB on an international and national level, simultaneous to an increased acknowledgement of many different types of trafficking and the understanding that men fall victim to traffickers just as often as women, if not more frequently. Although Germany is considered as a progressive actor in the combat against THB, only two forms of trafficking are defined by current penal law: trafficking for sexual exploitation and trafficking for labour exploitation. Additionally, all legislation, official documents or law enforcement efforts emphasise on the ‘traditional’ understanding of THB: women who are forced into prostitution by male offenders.

A media frame can be defined as the elevation of a certain aspect of the information, thus not creating a false truth, but obscuring it in a certain manner. Subsequent, a bias can be described as the continuity of patterns in the framing of news coverage. The salience of certain aspects of a social problem influences public perception and understanding of it and, by implication, influences public discourse, how politics discuss it and the actions that are taken to combat it.

Through a quantitative content analysis of 189 news articles, published between January 1st and December 31st 2016, German news coverage is analysed. The selected units of analysis, ‘Significant Actors’, ‘Issue Focus’ and ‘Visualisation’ provide structure and coherence to this research. It is demonstrated that German news coverage on THB is highly gendered regarding victims and villains. Women are portrayed as the typical and most frequent victims, while traffickers and buyers are predominantly reported to be male. News coverage also places great emphasis upon sex trafficking, whilst neglecting the existence and problematic of other forms of THB.

Concerning THB, German news media do not seem to act as an institution of assessment, but rather mirror government standpoints. By providing a limited amount of viewpoints to the public, general discourse and policy debate is restricted. This lack of new angles and competing perspectives is expected to limit alternative policy proposals as well as anti-trafficking programs. However, due to several pivotal limitations to international cooperation, this dissertation does not express great optimism that news coverage or policies will change adequately in the following years. Hopes lie with civil society organisations to provide the public with an accurate, representative information on THB.

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List of Abbreviations

BMFSFJ	Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
BKA	Bundeskriminalamt (Federal Criminal Police Office)
BZ	Bild Zeitung
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
IOM	International Organization for Migration
OCG	Organised Crime Group
SO	Spiegel Online
SZ	Süddeutsche Zeitung
THB	Trafficking in Human Beings
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Introduction

The term “human trafficking” can evoke many different mental images, such as a young girl, abducted on her holiday in Paris and forced into prostitution, as portrayed in the 2008 film *Taken*. It could also conjure the image of five teenagers, who, as victims of sex traffickers, desperately try to escape their situation. This story is described in the bestselling novel *Traffick* by Ellen Hopkins from 2015. However, this only represents a small percentage of the much larger and extensive issue that is trafficking in human beings (THB).

As there is no globally accepted definition of the crime of trafficking in human beings, most institutions, states or organisations have drafted their own definitions. *Interpol* defines trafficking in human beings as the recruiting and trafficking of victims between countries and regions by using deception or coercion, while defining three different types: trafficking for forced labour, for sexual exploitation and for the harvesting of tissue, cells and organs (Interpol, n.d., “Trafficking in human beings” section). The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has determined a more detailed definition, stating that trafficking in persons is “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.” (UNODC, n.d., “What is Human Trafficking?” section). Despite the lack of consensus regarding a definition of trafficking in human beings, these two definitions appear to be the ones that are most frequently and widely accepted by the international community.

Although slavery has been abolished over 200 years ago in Europe, trafficking in human beings, often called modern-day slavery, is still considered one of the most profitable crimes in the world. In 2000 the United Nations (UN) published a Protocol, establishing guidelines on how nations should prevent and combat trafficking. Since then, many countries have adopted anti-trafficking initiatives and initiated multilateral cooperation. The European Union (EU) has adopted the *Directive 2011/36/EU* on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, as well as published the *EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings*. For the first time, these two international documents recognize that men, women and children are trafficked for different reasons and into different situations, hence recognizing the need for a gender-specific approach when combating trafficking in human beings. This recent increase of government activities reveals a growing awareness of the extent of human exploitation.

Taking this new development into account, the question of whether the different dimensions and complexities have been represented in the news media coverage of human trafficking, arises. Because media can influence public debate, thus policymaking processes, it is of immense importance that all viewpoints, critiques or possible solutions are discussed. Herbert J. Gans (2003) states that a “country’s democracy may belong directly or indirectly to its citizens, but the democratic process can only be truly meaningful if these citizens are informed. Journalism’s job is to inform them.” (p. 1, para. 2). However, initial research has shown that, when reporting about human trafficking, the main focus lies on trafficking for sexual exploitation and this misrepresentation of human trafficking has “likely influenced legislative and enforcement efforts” (UNODC, 2012, p.19, para.5).

The overall problem of trafficking in human beings is framed into a problem that almost exclusively pertains women and girls as victims, whilst men are portrayed as the traffickers or buyers, hence the bad guys. Even official reports “may overestimate trafficking for sexual exploitation and, as a result, trafficking of women [...]” (UNODC, p. 19, para. 5). Robert Uy (2011) explains the problematic nature of this discourse, stating that “the popular perception of trafficking as only encompassing “sex trafficking” does a disservice to the overall movement and to the victims of human trafficking who were not forced into the sex trade” (p. 205). Inevitably the question arises of how one of the most comprehensive and most profitable crimes in today’s world can be combatted, if the general public is not aware of its dimensions.

This research examines the media framework constructed around the issue of trafficking in human beings in Germany in terms of gender bias. According to the Eurostat Report *Trafficking in Human Beings* (2015), Germany has the third highest number of identified trafficking victims in Europe, following Romania and France (p. 73). While scholarship has examined the problem of human trafficking in Germany itself, the extent of it, as well as the causes and (legislative) action, academia is lacking research on how trafficking in human beings is presented and covered in German media. The literature review will provide the reader with an understanding of media framing theory and an outline of media framing of public policy, before giving an overview of existing scholarship and previous research in this field. This report will then move on to a quantitative content analysis of all news articles on human trafficking published in 2016 by the three most read online-newspapers in Germany: *Spiegel Online (OZ)*, the *Bild Zeitung (BZ)* and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)*. This study seeks to further awareness as well as scholarly understanding concerning media coverage of human trafficking.

No part of this research is meant to undermine any kind of personal or potentially horrific experience, but rather hopes to examine the narrow scope of reporting. It is neither intended to degrade the importance of combatting trafficking for sexual exploitation, nor to decrease help offered to survivors of this or any other form of THB. Everything that is written in this report hopes to underline the fact that the news media coverage does not reflect the reality of THB, but instead neglects a vast amount of victims, offenders and crimes.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Issue of Trafficking in Human Beings

First it needs to be noted that THB is a global phenomenon, which, in most of the cases involves more than one country, due to internationally operating traffickers or border-crossing victims. Hence, it is not possible to give an overview of THB of just Germany, especially as many anti-trafficking actions are happening on an EU level.

Another aspect that needs to be kept in mind is that empirical research on trafficking in human beings is very limited. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) criticises available research being biased towards sexual exploitation and hence expresses the need for more research on forms of human trafficking that have been less covered (2008, p. 8, para. 2). The World Health Organization (WHO) also accentuates the fact that especially research focussing on male trafficking victims is rare (2012, p. 5, "For researchers and funders" section).

A major step towards criminalisation of THB took place in 2003, when the UN Trafficking Protocol entered into force. Before this date, many states did not include a specific offence of trafficking in their legislation. Through the implementation of new legislation, convictions and data collection have increased worldwide. However, a variety of different definitions by organisations, institutions and governments make it difficult to accurately research, measure and analyse available information. The available data has been collected by national institutions. As national legislation, as well as national justice systems differ from state to state, the volume and type of gathered information are neither coherent nor uniform. This is even further complicated by the absence of uniform data collection processes and thus reduces the reliability of available information in terms of accurate representation of the scope of THB in Europe and Germany.

In Europe

For centuries, trafficking in human beings has been a serious issue in Europe, with Western countries typically being the trafficking destinations and Central and Eastern European states serving as a recruitment platform. In 2012 the EU published its first Statistical Data Report, which included data from 2008 to 2010. The latest report was published in 2015 and contains data from 2010 to 2012. Although the EU has been collecting data from all Member States, plus EU Candidate and EFTA/EEA countries Iceland, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey, none of the heretofore published reports represent the reality or true numbers of human trafficking. The predominant reason for this is the underground modus operandi of Organised Crime Groups (OCGs), which is hard to

track for authorities. Additional aggravating circumstances are different legislations in the different Member States, the absence of a coherent manner of retrieving and processing data in the Member States and simply the fact that some states did not provide any data for certain years.

With 70% of all victims and suspects being EU nationals, THB is mainly a European affair (Europol, 2016, "Key Findings" sections). Between 2013 and 2014, European officials counted around 15 850 identified and presumed victims in the EU, of which 67% were trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation, 21% for labour exploitation and 12% for other forms of exploitation (European Commission, 2016, "Trends and challenges in addressing trafficking in human beings in the EU" section, p.4). Over three-quarters of all registered victims are female, which attributes to the fact that 95% of trafficking victims for the purpose of sexual exploitation are women and girls (p. 6).

The available data suggests that THB is a phenomenon predominantly affecting women, whilst sexual exploitation is the main reason for people becoming victims of trafficking. This perception however, is being confounded by an increasing number of sources. Maarten Abelman, Head of the Bureau of the Dutch National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Violence against Children, said in a speech on THB that the number of people being exploited for labour is estimated to be about nine times the number of those being exploited for sexual purposes (Hague Talks, 2015). Additionally, in recent years, an increasing numbers of critics voiced the objection that politics as well as media have focussed on trafficking for sexual exploitation, while neglecting other forms of THB. David A. Feingold is one of these voices, stating that the worldwide labour exploitation market is much larger than the sex market (2005, p. 26). He claims that trafficking for sexual exploitation has consistently been overrepresented in statistics and reports, leading to the misperception that, when trading human lives, the biggest demand is sexual labour (p. 26). According to Doreen Marchionni, who studied British and US press in regard to THB, sex trafficking has been the dominant focus of the UN as well as of the world press (2012, p. 155, para. 2). She writes that "sex trafficking dominated the trafficking agenda of four major world papers" during the five year period of her research (para. 3). However, it is not just scholarly study that suggests an overrepresentation of trafficking for sexual exploitation and an underestimation of trafficking for other purposes in legislation, research and media. According to the UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, "trafficking for sexual exploitation has for some time been the primary focus of much anti-trafficking work" (p.19, para. 5).

Increased awareness of a certain issue or crime inevitably leads to better recognition of the same. Between 2013 and 2014 Europol received about 6000 contributions regarding OCGs

involved in THB. Of these contributions, 90% concerned sexual exploitation, while less than 6% concerned labour trafficking, which can undoubtedly be traced back to the public misperception of THB.

In Germany

Concerning the number of identified victims of trafficking, Germany ranks third in the EU (Eurostat, 2015, pp. 71-73). According to the most recent Eurostat report from 2015, Germany registered a total of 597 female victims in 2012, 87 of which were minors. The number of registered male victims only amounted to 24, which included 13 minors (p.73). As there was a total of 626 victims registered in 2012, women and girls would make 95.4% of all victims, men and boys would equate to 3.8%, while the victims whose gender is unknown would constitute the remaining 0.8%. These numbers do not mirror the numbers published in the same report, according to which only 70.4% of all registered victims in the EU were female (p.26).

However, Germany is not just a country of destination, but also a source and transit country. Albeit Germany being one of the states that are considered more progressive in terms of anti-trafficking measures, its focus has also been lying on combating the trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation. It was not until 2005 and the amendment of §232 StGB (National Criminal Code on THB) that other forms of trafficking were officially and legally recognized and made punishable by law. However, hitherto a variety of types of exploitation, such as domestic servitude or removal of organs have not been defined by German penal law. Thus, the data made available by German authorities only concerns sexual or labour exploitation (Eurostat, p.121). Nonetheless, if one assumes the accuracy and representativeness of official statistics, the legislative emphasis on female victims is both justified and desirable.

Unlike other EU Member States, Germany does not have a National Action Plan to combat human trafficking, but the *Second Action Plan of the Federal Government to Combat Violence against Women* (Aktionsplan II der Bundesregierung zur Bekämpfung von Gewalt gegen Frauen) which includes anti-trafficking measures. This plan was published by the responsible ministry, the *Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth* (BMFSFJ), next to information on THB provided on their website, the BMFSFJ also offers help to victims in form of a help-hotline. This hotline however is named *Help-Hotline for Violence against Women* and singles out female victims (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, 2016).

Another national authority involved in combatting THB is the *Bundeskriminalamt* (BKA), which is the Federal Criminal Police Office. Their annually published report gives an

overview of the THB situation in Germany, including current numbers, trends and responses. The latest report from 2015 shows an almost draconian focus on sex trafficking and female trafficking victims, by dedicating nine pages to the issue of human trafficking for sexual exploitation, half a page to trafficking for labour exploitation, and not mentioning any other forms of THB (Bundeskriminalamt, 2016).

2.2 Framing Theory

As the news media play an important role in the democratic process, framing theory has been on the academic curriculum for some time now. However, there seems to be a lack of clarity and consistency in literature when referring to frames. Nevertheless, this research is not looking at the most fundamental frames or biases, for instance that German newspapers generally promote a liberal worldview or report in favour of capitalism. This report merely seeks to find out whether press representation of THB is framed in terms of gender.

News media is the most widely used tool to inform on current events and it decides how they should be seen by the public. However media frames stem from different origins; firstly pre-existing prejudices towards a certain topic are anchored in society. Secondly, pre-existing prejudices or favouritism exist in the practices of the media outlet. If the news outlet relinquishes investigative journalism, reliance on biased sources can make for another cause. The effects of media frames on political decisions are explained by Evans: "Media framing affects government decision-making both directly, by supplying information to decision makers, and indirectly, through public opinion" (Evans, 2010, p. 210). In consideration of Evans' findings, it appears crucial to study and analyse news coverage of THB in order to understand strengths as well as shortcomings of government efforts aiming to combat THB.

However, Professor of Journalism, Theodore Glasser has made several critical statements concerning news objectivity: Firstly, he claims it to be biased in favour of the status quo; reporting thus mirrors the worldview created by the prominent and elites (p.13). Simon and Xenos pick up on this point, stating that "the origins of public opinion—the sacred icon of democracy—lay in elite discourse" (2000, p. 363). They define elite discourse as the communication originating from the elites, thus "politicians, government officials, journalists, and interest group activists" (p.364, para.2). Secondly, Glasser describes objective reporting as "biased against independent thinking" and thirdly as "biased against the very idea of responsibility" (Glasser, 1984, p. 13). By implication, reporters mirror status quo, or in this case government standpoints, free of any responsibility for news content. Rather

than creating the news and influencing news coverage, authors are necessitated to report on issues and events.

The first scholar to write about the concept of framing was Erving Goffman, who described media frames as “schemata of interpretation” (1974, p. 21). In the 80s, Gamson & Modigliani explained a media frame to be the words, images, phrases and presentation styles used by a speaker, or in this case news outlet, when providing information on a certain topic to an audience (1987). Thus “a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them” (p.143). The frames suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue. Hence, whatever the speaker considers important regarding this topic, is unveiled in the chosen frame. Gitlin (1980) described frames as “principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters” (p.6). Frames work by emphasizing certain aspects or pieces of information, hence “elevating them in salience” (p. 53, “How Frames Work” section). In regard to Kahneman and Tyversky’s experiment on the effects of framing through emphasising certain features of reality, Entman (1993) explains that through selecting and calling “attention to particular aspects of the reality described, [...] frames simultaneously direct attention away from other aspects” (p.54, para. 3). In conclusion, a commonly cited and comprehensive definition is given by Nelson, Clawson and Oxley, who describe media framing as “the process by which a communication source, such as a news organization, defines and constructs a political issue or public controversy” (1997, p. 567). Framing is just another tool of mass media influence, able to affect the ‘war on human trafficking’ as it is carried out by governments and civil society.

Secondly, one needs to study and understand the term “bias” in the context of media reporting. Entman (2007) distinguishes between slants and biases and their ability to influence the distribution of power through the media. As said by Entman, slant “characterizes individual news reports and editorials in which the framing favors one side over the other in a current or potential dispute” (p. 165, para. 3). Content bias on the other hand, has less to do with individual reports, but can be defined as “consistent patterns in the framing of mediated communication that promote the influence of one side in conflicts over the use of government power” (p. 166, para. 1). By implication, biases in the news media are continuous patterns of slant.

2.3 Media Framing and Public Policy

Newspapers and reporters are confronted with an infinite number of topics, problems or events, worth informing the public about. Some topics must be discussed intensively, such

as a major national political decision, while others remain in the background of public debate. Journalists not only choose what to cover, but also decide on the angle of presenting a certain topic. This starts from including background information, over facts that need to be included, to citing famous and influential persons' standpoints. The salience of certain aspects of a social problem influences public perception of said problem and, by implication, influences how politics discuss it and the actions that are taken. The representation of THB in the news media defines the problem and indicates causes as well as solutions. However, there are also other voices, who challenges the press' ability to provide alternative viewpoints and widen the outer limits of public understanding. Christopher Lasch condemns press standards of objectivity, as it "does not assure a steady supply of usable information. Unless information is generated by sustained public debate, most of it will be irrelevant at best, misleading and manipulative at worst. [...] Much of the press, in its eagerness to inform the public, has become a conduit for the equivalent of junk mail" (Lasch, 1997, p. 85).

However, this dissertation acknowledges the power of news media in influencing public debate and policy making processes. In consequence, attention was aimed at Carol Bacchi's approach for ethical policy making. She argues that, in order to reach ethical policy making, it is necessary to examine the representation of the problem, an approach she named "What's the problem represented to be?" (2007). It combines a set of questions, some of which were selected to be applied to this paper:

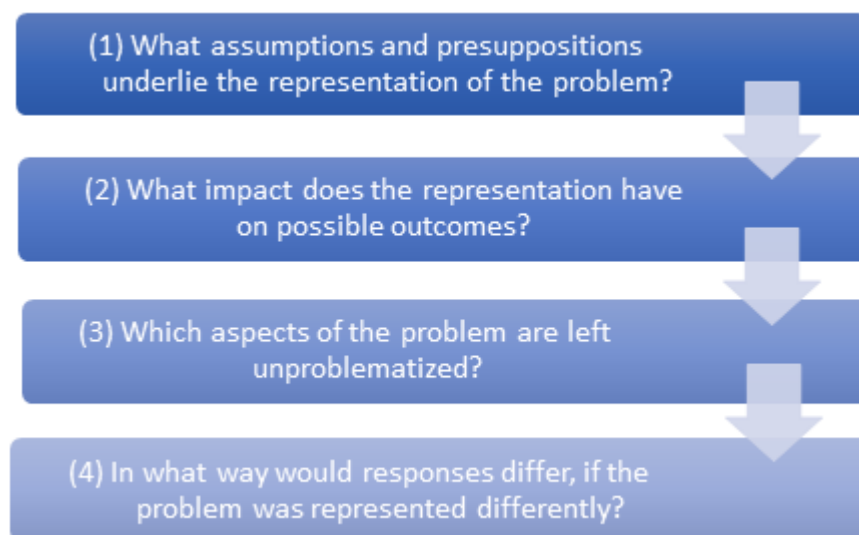


Figure 1: What's the problem represented to be? (Adapted from Bacchi, 2007)

The news coverage of human trafficking is one form of dissemination of problem representation, which influences public perception and understanding of trafficking in

human beings. Thus, the selected questions will be answered in the conclusions of each section: 'Significant Actors', 'Issue Focus' and 'Visualisation'.

In accordance with Theodore Glasser, literature on newsgathering process and the content of news, suggests that news media mostly echoes official or dominant views. In the case of human trafficking, this would mean that the type of trafficking predominantly covered is sexual exploitation, women are the most frequently mentioned victims and men make out a majority of traffickers. The strive for providing stories outside of a certain frame, would hence require the inclusion of multiple viewpoints and reporting on issues, that are not yet perceived as such.

2.4 Media Coverage of Trafficking in Human Beings

Preliminary research has revealed that, although coverage of trafficking in human beings has increased, a majority of articles have reported about sex trafficking. Erin Albright and Kate D'Adamo (2017) published a study, analysing the media portrayal and public understanding of human trafficking in the US. The article is composed of explanations and critiques of five elements of the dominant narrative in the US (p. 365). Their first critique applies to the inadequate media coverage of all forms of human trafficking. They criticise that, although labour trafficking exceeds sex trafficking in numbers of victims, media neglect any forms of human trafficking, other than sex trafficking (p. 365, "Type of Trafficking: Sex in the Headlines" section). Their second critique applies to the focus on white, underage girls, who are portrayed as the typical trafficking victims (p.367, "The Young, White, Female Sex Trafficking Victim" section). Albright and D'Adamo contrast this profile with statistics and empirical evidence to exhibit the falsehood of this claim, as the typical trafficking victim is neither underage, nor white (pp. 368-369). The third element analysed is the sensationalism that is used by the media to attract readers. They claim that reporters "search for the most egregious or outrageous stories, or highlight the most sensational details of stories, regardless of how representative the facts may be" (p.369, "The Sensational" section, para. 1), because "media is a business, and sex sells" (para. 1). The fourth topic of critique is the media's failure to report on the complexity of the issue. According to Albright and D'Adamo, the media not only "misses an opportunity to do meaningful work and prevent conditions that enable trafficking from developing in the first place" (p.372, para. 2), but without reporting on the complexity of rebuilding a victim's life, "communities end up with short-term, reactionary policies and a lack of resources to support survivor needs" (p. 372, para. 4). Their last critique pertains to the media's focus on criminal justice and law enforcement (p.372, "The Story of a Crime" section), whilst neglecting to report on "societal, community, and relational vulnerabilities that need to be addressed to truly decrease trafficking" (p. 373, para. 3).

A study by Gulati (2016), who analysed over 800 newspaper articles that were published over the course of six years in the U.S, Canada and the United Kingdom, also discovered a preponderance of news coverage of sex trafficking. Over 53% of all articles focussed on THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation, whilst labour trafficking was only covered in about one fifth of the articles (p. 207). As government officials, policy makers or other agencies are the most cited sources (p.208), his findings correspond with previous studies that say, reports on human trafficking mostly rely on official and/or dominant views. The heavy reliance on official sources explain that legislation, policy reforms and stricter law enforcement are the most commonly cited solutions (p. 212).

Farrell and Fahy (2009) analysed over 2,400 American newspaper articles from 1990 to 2006 in order to understand how THB is framed in the news media and how the perception of the problem has changed over time. They found out that while human trafficking was relatively unheard of in the early 1990s, this changed in the mid-90s, when society started to perceive trafficking as a human rights violation. However, until the late 1990s, the existence of male trafficking victims was left outside the spotlight (p.620) and THB was portrayed as a Women's Rights violation (p.621 para. 4), while trafficking victims were illustrated as young, innocent, white, and most importantly, relatable girls (p.620). According to Farrell and Fahy's findings, during the early stages, reporting on THB was also very descriptive, painting a vivid picture of the horrors that THB brings to women (p.620). This changed after 9/11, when government officials increasingly described human trafficking as a threat to national security, causing the issues of THB and terrorism to be discussed in relation to each other (pp. 622-624). Consequently, THB was less discussed as a human rights problem, but rather in the context of crime, legislation and law enforcement.

Another study was conducted by Meghan Sobel (2016), who examined the media coverage of sex trafficking in the Former Soviet Republics and Baltic States between 2002 and 2013. Sobel discovered policy changes or NGO efforts to be the main focus of the media coverage, while neglecting a human angle through citing victims or discussing victims' stories (p. 161, "Similarities" section). This is consistent with Gulati's research as well as Farrell and Fahy's findings, considering the timeframe. Even more, traffickers were rarely, and buyers never discussed. These findings lead Sobel to presume that the buyers, who are typically men, "are not viewed as problematic or newsworthy" (p. 162, para. 6). Similarly to Gulati, Sobel uncovered that officials, such as government workers were frequently cited sources (p.161), which demonstrates the heavy reliance on official standpoints in news reports on THB.

Reflecting on previous literature, it can be said that worldwide academia is lacking research on how trafficking in human beings is presented in the media in Europe. Although there are some studies that analyse media representation of THB, the vast majority scrutinises North American media representation over the past two decades. Analysing European news coverage of THB, on the other hand, has mostly been omitted by scholars, resulting in the dearth of available research.

2.5 Conclusion

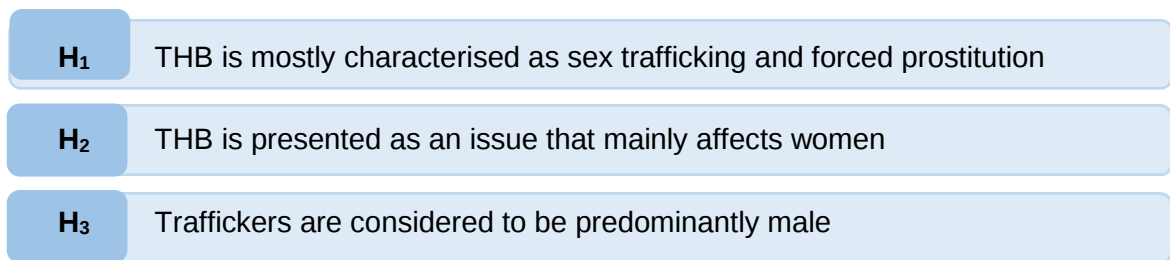
Who, if not the media, can shape public opinion and expand public knowledge on important topics? For this research it is important to understand two things: First, the important role of every citizen in the fight against trafficking in human beings. In an interview with the UNODC, Dr Saisuree Chutiko, an experienced and renowned figure in the fight against THB in Asia, said that “education and knowledge of trafficking in persons among all members of society are key to beating human traffickers” (2011). Second, the power the media have on the public debate. Issues or events do not select themselves. On the contrary, news media can decide on the topics that are covered, on the facts that are included and on the viewpoints that are cited. If the news exclusively report on the horrors that female sex trafficking survivors have lived through, readers will believe that this is the only type of trafficking. If they only report on help or services offered to women who have been exploited sexually, people will believe that there is no need for services that are directed at survivors of other forms of trafficking.

The public relies on news and mass media in general for its political information (Simon & Xenos, 2000, p. 363), which is certainly the case regarding THB, as most people do not get into personal contact with trafficking victims. If the picture painted by the media is true, and THB victims are young girls forced into sexual exploitation, then yes, many people have probably not made personal contact with a THB victim. However, if this is not true, then people probably do make contact with trafficking victims. This could be the workers on the construction site next door, or the kitchen staff that is preparing the food during the next business dinner. Media coverage of THB mirrors Christie’s (1982) construct of the ideal victim, by portraying them as powerless and weak and being oppressed by a powerful offender.

All the research conducted in this field has led to similar results and concluded that news reports do not reflect lived realities and the true extent of the problem. Although Europe is lacking research in this field, as the vast majority of research has been conducted in North America, similarities in the findings are expected. However, one needs to keep in mind that the German media system differs from the one, the US, Canada or Britain belong to.

German media are dominated by a democratic corporatist system, while the North Atlantic system is considered to be more liberal (Örnebring, 2009, p. 3, para. 2). Whether this influences the coverage of THB will be discovered over the course of this research.

The findings of the literature suggests that news media representation of trafficking in human beings has marginalised alternative views and is framed in terms of gender. Based on pre-existing knowledge and the examination of other studies on media coverage of THB, three hypothesis were developed, which the researcher expects to confirm through analysing data in a reliable and numerical manner:



H₁	THB is mostly characterised as sex trafficking and forced prostitution
H₂	THB is presented as an issue that mainly affects women
H₃	Traffickers are considered to be predominantly male

Figure 2: Hypothesis

According to the framing theory, as defined by Glasser, as well as Simon & Xenos, German news coverage should mirror elite and government standpoints on THB. Looking at Germany and the official picture that is painted by the government and law enforcement agencies, one could assume that there is no human trafficking outside the sex trafficking industry. Emphasis is placed upon sexual exploitation and strategies to free and support victims are predominantly targeted at women.

3. Methodology

After relevant literature and theories have been discussed in the previous chapter, this chapter will describe the methodology that was used to attain the findings. First, an outline of the theoretical framework characterising this research report is given, which is followed by a description of the research methods chosen for this dissertation. The main method chosen for this research, a quantitative content analysis, will be described thoroughly, including the sampling and coding processes.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

As all research is theory based, the following section reflects on the theoretical framework that applies to this research. Different researchers have different beliefs or worldviews, regarding ontology, the nature of reality, epistemology, the nature of the relationship between the researcher and what can be known and methodology, the approach to inquiring what can be known (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Researchers of the same specialty area share consensus on the nature of questions and approaches to answer these questions. Usually, a differentiation is made between the four most common worldviews: the postpositivist, constructivist, transformative and pragmatic paradigms (Creswell, 2014). Postpositivism believes in the existence of one reality, which can be studied to a certain extent. Much importance is placed upon objectivism in the research, which is mainly constituted of quantitative research (p. 36). Constructivism believes in the existence of multiple, socially constructed realities, which cannot be measured. Research is primarily conducted in a qualitative manner and in a more subjective way, focussing on the participants (p. 37). The transformative paradigm focuses on political change and social oppression, believing in the existence of multiple realities, depending on social positioning. Transformative researchers have a very interactive relation with their participants and conduct qualitative, as well as quantitative, or mixed research (p. 38). The pragmatic worldview believes in one single reality, which is interpreted by every individual in a different way. The nature of the relationship can vary, depending on the research, as well as the research methods, which are mostly mixed (p. 39).

This research mainly concurs with the postpositivist paradigm as an evaluation model. It agrees that there is only one reality, which it tries to study. This research places much importance on objectivity, through systematic coding of information, gathering data in form of numbers and analysing these numbers accordingly. Emphasis is put on predetermined approaches and closed-ended questions, which are characteristic for postpositivism and ensure that information can be measured in a reliable and numerical manner.

Secondly, academia distinguishes between a deductive and an inductive research approach, which describes the process of generating and establishing a theory. Based on pre-existing knowledge of this field, a theory was generated before the process of theoretical reflection of gathered data. Thus, the essence of this research is based on a deductive research approach.

3.2 Methods

Desk Research

A top-down approach is to be used to answer the central research question. The first method used for this dissertation is desk research, which is necessary to define central terms, in order to fully understand the research question as well as the hypotheses. The defined terms are: 'trafficking in human beings', 'bias' and 'media framing'.

In order to contextualise the data that is retrieved in this research, more secondary data was collected through extensive online and desk research, so to outline in-depth information on the extent of trafficking in human beings in Europe, whilst focusing on the gender dimensions. Especially reports from international organisations and institutions, such as the UN, the EU or Interpol are highly informative and filled with factual information that will help the reader to classify the findings.

Quantitative Content Analysis

The quantitative content analysis examines one year of online news coverage of human trafficking, published in 2016 by the three most read online newspapers in Germany. Berelson defined a content analysis as "a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (Berelson, 1952). This method has multiple advantages, such as being an unobtrusive, as well as highly transparent research method that allows for follow-up studies. Due to its transparency, content analysis is considered an objective type of research (Bryman, 2012, p. 304). However, Bryman also interjects that "a content analysis can only be as good as the documents on which the practitioner work" (p. 306).

Before starting with the actual analysis, a sample had to be selected. Although television is the most common source of news for the German population, before online news, it is very difficult to access a large set of samples (Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2017). Hence, online newspapers were selected as the mass media in focus.

Bryman explains that "with a research question that entails an ongoing general phenomenon, such as the representation of social science research or crime, the matter of dates is more open" (p. 293). As no similar content analysis of news coverage of THB in Germany has yet been conducted, the logical conclusion is for this research to provide a

picture of the current situation and use the year 2016 as a sampling timeframe. An additional factor in choosing this particular timeframe is that the policy landscape regarding THB has only started to develop towards a gender-responsive approach and a pursuit of equality in recent years. In order to achieve a detailed analysis and enhance the representativeness, this research abstained from choosing a systematic sample of dates. Instead, this research identified and analysed all articles on this subject that are made available online by a sample of three widely read newspapers.

In order to select suitable newspapers, the ranking of “Top Brands % Weekly Usage (Online)” by the *Digital News Report 2016* was consulted (Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2017), all irrelevant online brands, such as websites of TV channels, were eliminated and the three online newspapers with highest weekly usage were identified: *Spiegel*, *Bild Zeitung* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. The three selected newspapers are positioned differently on the political map of Germany, ensuring the inclusion of different political viewpoints or angles. While *Spiegel Online* is positioned left-liberal, the *Bild Zeitung* can be found more to the right, as a conservative paper. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* positioned even more left than *Spiegel Online*. While the *BZ* sustains the image of sensationalistic reporting, especially the *SZ* is considered a reliable, unbiased and well researched source of news, which is widely read by political elites and policy makers in Germany. However, all three newspapers enjoy a regular mass audience and are considered influential news providers.

The relevant articles were obtained from the online archives of the selected newspapers, using the search term ‘Menschenhandel’, which translates to ‘human trafficking’. While there are different terms that refer to THB in English, such as ‘trafficking in human beings’, ‘trafficking in persons’, ‘human trafficking’ or terms that identify subcategories like ‘sex trafficking’, ‘labour trafficking’, etc., all these terms fall under ‘Menschenhandel’ in the German language. After removing irrelevant articles, such as duplicates, articles that discuss slavery in a historical context or articles that only mention ‘human trafficking’ as a bullet item in a list of crimes, 189 articles, which were published in the period from January 1st 2016 to December 31st 2016 were identified: 26 articles in *Spiegel Online*, 79 articles in the *Bild Zeitung* and 84 articles in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.

After defining the appropriate samples, different kinds of “units of analysis” needed to be distinguished (Bryman, p. 295). In order to answer the research question in an efficient and systematic manner, three types of ‘units of analysis’ were selected: (1) ‘significant actors’, (2) ‘issue focus’ and (3) ‘visualisation’.

Each of these units was compartmentalised into different dimensions. These dimensions

were then divided into categories, which all correspond to a certain coding number. The dimensions subsumed under (1) significant actors are: 'gender of author', 'gender of victim', 'gender of trafficker' and 'gender of buyer'. However, any of these actors need to be specifically mentioned. If this is not the case, the article will be coded with 'not applicable'. The dimensions subsumed under (2) issue focus are: 'sex trafficking', 'labour trafficking', 'human smuggling/immigration', 'harvest of organs', 'illegal adoptions' and 'other or not specified'. Lastly, the dimensions of (3) visualisation are: 'female victim', 'male victim', 'female trafficker', 'male trafficker', 'person of official authority'.

A detailed coding manual defining the numbers that correspond to the categories of the listed dimensions can be found in the Code Book. However, according to Bryman "it is almost impossible to devise coding manuals that do not entail some interpretation on the part of coders" (p. 306). Through application of constant critical reflexivity processes by the researcher, it is hoped that most, if not all, researcher-bias has been eliminated.

4. Quantitative Content Analysis & Discussion

In the following chapter, the findings of the quantitative content analysis are described and analysed in order to answer the central research question:

*Is the German media framework, which is constructed
around the issue of trafficking in human beings, biased
in terms of gender?*

4.1 Significant Actors

Gender of author(s)

	Spiegel Online N=26	Bild Zeitung N=79	Süddeutsche Z. N=84	Total N=189
Female	2 (7.7%)	12 (15.2%)	10 (11.9%)	24 (12.7%)
Male	6 (23.1%)	17 (21.5%)	13 (15.5%)	36 (19.0%)
Both	0 (0.0%)	3 (3.8%)	1 (1.2%)	4 (2.1%)
Not specified	18 (69.2%)	47 (59.5%)	60 (71.4%)	125 (66.1%)

Figure 3: Gender of author(s)

The data collected on the authors of the articles is not exceedingly representative, as all three newspapers did not publish the author's name the majority of times, hence giving no indication on the gender of the writer. 69.2% of all articles published by *Spiegel Online* do not provide any information on the writer, while this is the case for 59% of all articles by the *Bild Zeitung*, and 71.4% of all articles published by the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. While 24 of the total of 189 articles were written by a female author, men accounted for 36 articles, and 4 articles were composed by multiple authors, including both men and women.

Any conclusions drawn concerning the possible relation between the gender of the author and the essence of the article is purely speculative, and initiated by indications of similarities or differences. However, when examining the relations between the gender of the author and the gender of victims and traffickers, differences leap to the eye. When disregarding articles without an identified author, over 60% of all articles that focus on a female victim are written by a man, while 60% of articles focussing on a male victim are written by a women. While male and female authors seem to place the same amount of emphasis on reporting on female traffickers, male authors account for 67% of all articles that mention a male trafficker, while less than a third are written by a women. According to the data retrieved, men adhere to the traditional, but ignorant, false and over-simplistic framework

of victimised women and criminalised men.

Gender of victim(s)

	Spiegel Online N=26	Bild Zeitung N=79	Süddeutsche Z. N=84	Total N=189
Female	14 (53.8%)	45 (57.0%)	47 (56%)	106 (56.1%)
Male	1 (3.8%)	6 (7.6%)	10 (11.9%)	17 (9.0%)
Both	0 (0.0%)	5 (6.3%)	3 (3.6%)	8 (4.2%)
Not specified	5 (19.2%)	4 (5.1%)	12 (14.3%)	21 (11.1%)
Not applicable	6 (23.1%)	19 (24.1%)	12 (14.3%)	37 (19.6%)

Figure 4: Gender of victim(s)

As shown in the table above, the data collected on the gender of the victim(s) in the examined articles demonstrates a clear emphasis on female victims. In all of the three analysed newspapers, over half of all articles on trafficking in human beings report on a female trafficking victim in their story. When leaving out articles that do not mention a victim in general, the number is even higher, with almost 70% of all victims mentioned being female. While the percentage of the number of female victims is very similar in all three newspapers, this is different for male victims. With 11.9% of all articles mentioning a male victim, the SZ is the newspaper that reports the most on male trafficking victims. The BZ can only account for 7.6% of their articles including a male victim, whilst the percentage for the *Spiegel* is even lower, with only 3.8%. In roughly over one tenth of all articles analysed, victims were mentioned, however without a name or gender reference. The BZ appears more determined to provide the reader with a clearer idea of the victim, as only 6.7% of their articles with a victim mentioned do not include any information on the gender. In *Spiegel Online* on the other hand, the gender of 25% of the mentioned victims remains unclear, whilst this is the case for 16.7% of all victims mentioned by the SZ. Only two of the three newspapers have identified male and female victims in one article. This could have two explanations: Men and women are trafficked for different purposes, whereas traffickers, as any businessman, have a certain area of 'expertise' or of operation, meaning, a person who is trafficking men to work on container ships will probably not traffick children for illegal adoption purposes at the same time. Another reason could be that police raids of locations where trafficking victims are being held, also only reveal one type of trafficking victims. Police will not find strawberry field workers in a brothel or victims of forced organ harvest on a construction site. A large amount of articles however, do not mention a victim at all. This is either the case when the article informs the reader on new political directions or

policy changes, or if the article concerns a person that has been identified as a trafficker, however without reference to his or her victim(s).

When only looking at articles that include one or more trafficking victims, the percentage of articles that mention a female victim accurately mirrors the percentage of female victims, as counted by the EU. This is, however, not the case for male victims, who amount to almost 30% in the EU, whilst only 11.2% of all victims mentioned in the news articles are male. Although international politics are beginning to recognise that the number of trafficked men is much higher than current data reveals, none of the analysed articles give any insight on this realisation. Even more, there is no article based on a journalist's investigative research that uncovered a male victim, who was not identified by official authorities before. Paired with the fact that Germany registered very low numbers of male victims in recent years, this is a vivid example of German news media painting a picture that reflects official data on THB in Germany.

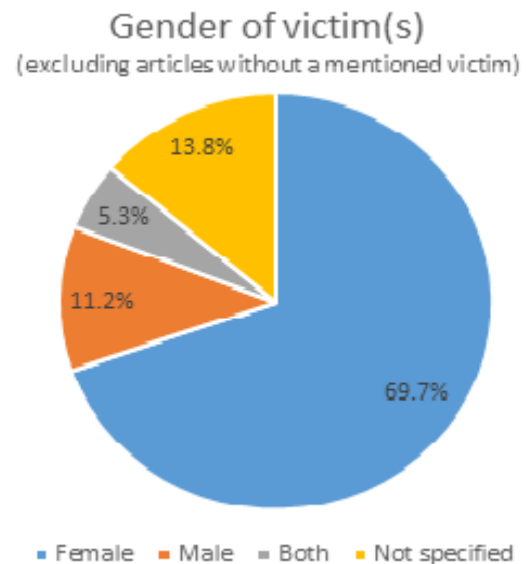


Figure 5: Gender of victim(s) – excluding articles without mentioned victim

The focus on female victims could stem from existent national and international laws and treaties. The title of the UN's international agreement to combat trafficking implies that the majority of victims are women and children: It is called "Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime" (UNODC, 2000). Furthermore, the name of ministry responsible for dealing with human trafficking implies the same, as it is called *Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth*. It is crucial to understand the impact of this representation, which is argued by Hoyle et al.: "By creating 'ideal types' of trafficked women who are 'stolen' from their homes, or coerced into leaving, and imprisoned in brothels, the language of slavery oversimplifies our understanding of the range of causes and experiences of trafficking" (Hoyle, Bosworth, & Demsey, 2011, p. 314).

Gender of trafficker(s)

	Spiegel Online N=26	Bild Zeitung N=79	Süddeutsche Z. N=84	Total N=189
Female	0 (0.0%)	3 (3.8%)	2 (2.4%)	5 (2.6%)
Male	15 (57.7%)	45 (57.0%)	32 (38.1%)	92 (48.7%)
Both	2 (7.7%)	5 (6.3%)	7 (8.3%)	14 (7.4%)
Not specified	4 (15.4%)	10 (12.7%)	22 (26.2%)	36 (19.0%)
Not applicable	5 (19.2%)	16 (20.3%)	21 (25.0%)	42 (22.2%)

Figure 6: Gender of trafficker(s)

As elucidated in the table above, the emphasis lies on men when it comes to identifying and reporting on traffickers. Nearly 49% of all articles include a male trafficker in their story. In 2016, the SO and the BZ reported on a male trafficker in more than half of all articles on THB. The SZ only identified a male trafficker in little over one third of all articles, which is due to the fact that in around 26% of all SZ articles, a trafficker is mentioned, however without indication on his or her gender, and 25% of the articles do not mention a trafficker at all. As 77.8% of all articles mention a trafficker, compared to 80.4% of all articles mentioning a victim, data indicates that German news media have no clear preference for reporting on victims rather than traffickers or vice versa. However, both scenarios, the

Gender of trafficker(s)
(excluding articles without a mentioned trafficker)

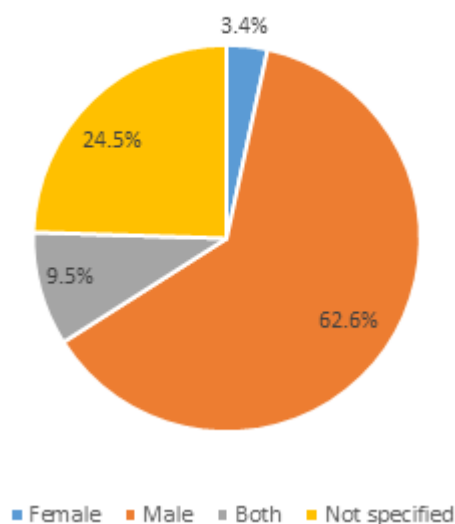


Figure 7: Gender of trafficker(s) - excluding articles without a mentioned trafficker

female victim and the male trafficker support each other. Through association with gender stereotypes these scenarios intensify the image of the powerless victim and the powerful trafficker. However, news media seem to be more open towards the idea of female traffickers than male trafficking victims, as the amount of articles discussing traffickers of both genders is close to double of the amount of articles that discuss victims of both genders. On the other hand, almost a quarter of all articles do not mention a trafficker, which can be explained by looking at the content of the different articles. Firstly, some articles focus on the victim(s) and the trafficker remains unmentioned. Secondly, most articles that report on policy changes do not include any reference to a trafficker as they discuss the issue of trafficking in human beings in general, rather than specifics.

Looking exclusively at the articles that discuss a trafficker, the gap between the assigned roles of men and women the issue of human trafficking becomes even more visible. The Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, states that in Europe “women play a key role as perpetrators of human trafficking” and “make up a larger share of those convicted for human trafficking offences than for most other forms of crime” (UNODC, 2009, p. 10). However, while 62.6% of all mentioned traffickers are identified as male, only 5 cases reported on a female trafficker. Again, this number does not reflect the reality of THB, as also the European Parliament (EP) claims 30% of all perpetrators in Europe to be female (Voronova & Radjenovic, 2016). Nonetheless, the overestimation of sex trafficking and the public perception of women as trafficking victims, does not leave much room for imagining or identifying women, who act as traffickers and exploit other women or men for a personal, financial benefit.

Gender of buyer(s)

	Spiegel Online N=26	Bild Zeitung N=79	Süddeutsche Z. N=84	Total N=189
Female	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Male	4 (15.4%)	17 (21.5%)	19 (22.6%)	40 (21.2%)
Both	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Not specified	1 (3.8%)	15 (19.0%)	3 (2.4%)	18 (9.5%)
Not applicable	21 (80.8%)	47 (59.5%)	62 (75.0%)	131 (69.3%)

Figure 8: Gender of buyer(s)

Similar to the analysis of the author's gender, the data collected on the gender of the buyer(s) is not as representative as the data on victims and traffickers. 69.3% of all articles examined do not include a buyer, who are only mentioned in 58 of the total of 189 articles. However, these remaining 30% are very consistent and identify a clear trend, as none of the three newspapers reported on a female buyer. Nonetheless differences are visible, the *Bild Zeitung* does not give any indication on the buyer's gender in almost 46.9% of all the case. Concerning the *Spiegel* and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, these numbers are significantly lower. The *SO* mentioned a buyer in five of their articles, one without any gender indications. The *SZ* mentioned a buyer in 21 articles, providing information of the gender in 19 of the cases.

The general absence of references to buyers of services of trafficked persons leads to several conclusions: First and foremost, as detected earlier, German news media tend to focus on the victim and/or the trafficker. Secondly, prostitution is legal in Germany, hence

the “Freier”, in English called john or punter, is not breaking the law when engaging with a prostitute. Accordingly, it may not be considered newsworthy to report on these activities. In other cases, trafficker and buyer are the same person, like in the case of maid Akosua Asabea who was exploited as a domestic worker by a Ghanaian diplomat in Berlin (Ludwig, 2016). As Ms Asabea was only providing her services to her trafficker, rather than a third party, the diplomat cannot be considered a buyer. The shortage of references to buyers depicts them as neither constituting a problem, nor as being a part of trafficking in human beings.

Conclusion on ‘Significant Actors’ section

This conclusion attempts to outline and classify the findings by going back Bacchi’s approach to ethical policy making and shortly answering the four questions, which were selected in the second chapter of this dissertation:

- (1) What assumptions and presuppositions underlie the representation of the problem?
 - (2) What impact does the representation have on possible outcomes?
 - (3) Which aspects of the problem are left unproblematised?
 - (4) In what way would responses differ, if the problem was represented differently?
- (Bacchi, 2007).

A clear frame has become visible in German news coverage on THB: Firstly, women are portrayed as the typical victim, while men are the villains, as traffickers and buyers. This representation of the problem is underlined by the assumption that THB is a gendered problem with clear roles of victims and perpetrators. Even more, it suggests that male trafficking victims or female traffickers are exceptions that neither require the attention of the public nor politics. Secondly, this misrepresentation limits public and political discourse. Hence, policymakers do not consider alternative responses to combat THB, but rather stay with traditional actions that only target a percentage, instead of the whole problem. Next, three main aspects are left almost or completely unproblematised: the existence of male trafficking victims, the existence of female traffickers and the role and responsibility of buyers of trafficked persons’ services. Lastly, responses on how to combat THB would differ in the way that they would abandon current exclusive and selective strategies that strongly emphasize on female victims. Strategies would focus on disseminating information regarding the identification of male and female trafficking victims. Victim support and recovery would be offered to men as well as women. Instead of fighting only branches of this crime, by focussing on gendered roles of victims and villains, it would fight the problem at its roots, acknowledging the extent, depth and breadth of THB.

In conclusion, the gendered presentation of trafficking in human beings conforms to Gitlin's description of media frames (1980, p. 6). Examination of the gender of significant actors in the issue of THB, reveals that traditional gender roles in the context of crime are elevated in salience, thus women are presented as victims while men are presented as offenders. These principles of emphasis and presentation paint a clear image of the supposed essence of THB and suggests that female victims are of higher importance than male victims. The consistent patterns in terms of gender representation, as explained by Entman (2007, p. 166), promotes the conglomerated availability of support to be offered to female victims, while law enforcement efforts are focussed on men as felons.

4.2 Issue Focus

	Spiegel Online N=26	Bild Zeitung N=79	Süddeutsche Z. N=84	Total N=189
Sex trafficking	14 (53.8%)	40 (50.6%)	35 (41.7%)	89 (47.1%)
Labour traff.	0 (0.0%)	10 (12.7%)	11 (13.1%)	21 (11.1%)
Immigration	4 (15.4%)	4 (5.1%)	16 (19.0%)	24 (12.7%)
Organ harvest	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Adoptions	0 (0.0%)	3 (3.8%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (1.6%)
Other / n.s.	9 (34.6%)	26 (32.9%)	38 (45.2%)	73 (38.6%)

Figure 9: Issue focus

Different states, institutions or organisations recognize different types of trafficking in human beings. While it is only trafficking for sexual and for labour exploitation that are defined under current penal law in Germany, Interpol distinguishes three different forms of trafficking in human beings: trafficking for sexual exploitation, for labour exploitation and for the harvest of organs, cells and tissue. However, another form of human trafficking that is widely acknowledged refers to trafficking of children for illegal adoptions. Migrant smuggling is also often mentioned in the context of human trafficking, although many sources draw a clear line between trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling. As discussed earlier, many policies and national strategies to combat human trafficking focus on sexual exploitation while only paying a limited amount of attention to the other forms of trafficking. German news coverage mirrors this focus, as 47.1% of all articles that discuss the issue of human trafficking, refer to the issue as sexual exploitation, while only 11.1% of all articles discuss the issue in terms of labour trafficking. The concern about the European migrant crisis of the past two years has also been reflected in the articles, with 12.7% of all articles discussing THB as a migration issue. Only four of the total of 189 articles discuss the issue in terms of illegal adoptions, and even fewer discuss it in terms of organ harvest. 38.6%,

more than one in three articles, discuss human trafficking in general, however without designating a specific type.

Several significant differences in the issue focus can be found between the different newspapers. Whilst the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, with around 42%, reported the least on sex trafficking, over half of the articles published by *Spiegel Online* and *Bild Zeitung* are dedicated to sex trafficking. The SZ also stands out, regarding the number of articles concerning human smuggling and migration. Almost every fifth article published by SZ deals with this issue, while only 15.4% of all SO articles and only 5.1% of all BZ articles concern migration. SO stands out, through the absence of any articles that deal with the issue of trafficking for labour exploitation.

		Type of trafficking					
Gender of victim(s)		Sex trafficking N = 89	Labour trafficking N = 20	Migration / human smuggling N = 24	Harvesting of organs N = 0	Illegal adoptions N = 3	Other or n.s. N = 73
	Female	74	5	1	0	2	31
	Male	3	8	4	0	0	2
	Both	1	2	5	0	0	4
	n.s.	6	4	9	0	1	8
	n.a.	5	1	5	0	0	28

Figure 10: Gender of victim(s) in relation to type of trafficking

The perception that trafficking in human beings is a gendered crime, with women constituting the majority of all victims becomes more visible when cross comparing the data received from the coded articles. Of all 89 articles on sex trafficking, over 84% identify a female victim, 4.5% identify a male victim and 12.4% leave out any gender indication or do not mention a specific victim. The large gap between female and male victims of sex trafficking correspond with the official data on trafficking victims in Germany. However, the numbers concerning labour trafficking do not match the data collected on labour trafficking by German authorities. 52.6% of all articles, which identified a victim of labour trafficking, reported on a male victim and 36.8% on a female victim. This differs to the data provided by the BKA, according to which 81% of all registered victims of labour exploitation in 2015 were male and only 19 % were female (Bundeskriminalamt, p. 12). German news coverage does not only fail to reflect the assumption of many European authorities, who presume that more male than female trafficking victims exist in Europe in general, but also fails to

reflect hard facts, which prove that the number of men who are trafficked for labour exploitation greatly exceeds the number of women. Although trafficking in human beings is widely considered an issue that mostly affects women, trafficking for labour exploitation is the one type of trafficking that is commencing to receive an increased amount of attention by politics as well as anti-trafficking discourse and is proven count a vast amount more male than female victims. By underreporting on this issue and providing a false image of the proportion of male and female victims, German news media promotes the notion of THB as one intrinsically linked to female inferiority and victimhood.

Gender of trafficker(s)	Type of trafficking						
	Sex trafficking N = 89	Labour trafficking N = 20	Migration / human smuggling N = 24	Harvesting of organs N = 0	Illegal adoptions N = 3	Other or n.s. N = 73	
	Female	1	3	0	0	1	0
	Male	45	9	9	0	1	33
	Both	10	1	0	0	0	5
	n.s.	14	6	6	0	1	18
	n.a.	19	2	9	0	0	17

Figure 11: Gender of trafficker(s) in relation to type of trafficking

When cross comparing the gender of traffickers with the different types of human trafficking identified in the articles, it becomes visible that news coverage does not reflect reality. According to the Eurostat report of 2015, 25% of all prosecuted traffickers between 2010 and 2012 in Germany were female, and 75% male (p. 116). A person exclusively receiving their information from news media, would believe that men act as traffickers in almost all cases, sometimes with the help of a female companion. In 98.2% of all articles on sex trafficking, which identified a trafficker by gender, a male trafficker was involved, while a woman was only involved in 19.6% of the cases. Additionally, it needs to be noted that in the cases of men and women working together as traffickers, most attention was paid to the men, whilst female traffickers were merely mentioned as companions. Believing media reporting, a sole female trafficker would be extremely rare, with only a few identified cases. Again, the emphasis on men acting as villains, while the majority of women are presented as victims, does not come close to reflecting official data.

Conclusion on 'Issue Focus' section

Again, this conclusion attempts to outline and classify the findings by shortly answering the four questions selected from Bacchi's approach:

- (1) What assumptions and presuppositions underlie the representation of the problem?
 - (2) What impact does the representation have on possible outcomes?
 - (3) Which aspects of the problem are left unproblematicized?
 - (4) In what way would responses differ, if the problem was represented differently?
- (2007).

The examination of the issue focus of the articles further confirms the existence of a gendered frame, created by German news media. Firstly, the representation of this problem is constructed upon the assumption, that THB is a problem that almost exclusively pertains to the sex industry. However, as explained in the Eurostat Report, "a larger reported number is neither evidence of a greater amount of crime, nor of a more effective police or criminal justice response, nor of more efficient identification and reporting systems" (2015, p. 15). This has the effect that the public as well as authorities remain ignorant of the different types of THB and are thus unable to identify or help most other victims of trafficking. Again, several aspects are disregarded: the existence of a variety of different forms of THB, which leads disregarding male trafficking victims, who are mostly recruited for labour exploitation purposes. Simultaneously, this leads to the disregard of female traffickers who are assumed to be involved in all types of trafficking, mostly however sex trafficking. In Germany, the first response would be for criminal justice policy to stop constructing THB as an issue in which a john enslaves a women or girl for profit. Rather, all types of THB would be recognised and criminalised, while the public as well as authorities would be educated and trained to understand and identify all forms and its victims.

To conclude it can be said that, in accordance to Gitlin, due to exclusion from German penal law and numbers of recorded cases, emphasis is placed on sex trafficking, followed by trafficking in the context of irregular migration and labour trafficking. This results in the misleading suggesting that forms of THB, other than for sexual exploitation, barely or not exist and do not deserve the same amount of attention. Content bias is created through consistent patterns of elevating sex trafficking in salience. This promotes an excessive focus of legislation, law enforcement and civil society action to combat sex trafficking, paralleled by neglecting other forms, victims or traffickers.

4.3 Visualisation

A third aspect that is worth consideration, when examining the media frame constructed around the issue of human trafficking, refers to visualisation or inclusion of pictures in the

article. According to Rodriguez and Dimitrova, images have great impact as framing tools, as they “are less intrusive than words and as such require less cognitive load” (2011, p. 50). Because photographs appear to reflect reality better than words, audiences are more likely to accept these images without scrutinising them (p.50). Rodgers and Thorson explained that the images included in news articles are equally or even more important than the actual article (2000, p. 8). Pictures catch a reader’s eye, even without reading the incidental article and “help readers judge and make sense of news stories” (p.8).

As a vast majority of all images were placed on top of the examined article, naturally it is the first information received by the reader, who can create an image of the issue in their head without actually having read the article.

First, it becomes visible that *Spiegel Online* places the most importance on accompanying the articles with images, as over 80% of all articles examined include a photograph, while this is the case for around 65% of all *Bild Zeitung* articles and just over half of all articles published by the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. However, the examination of this aspect also reveals a coherent and clear trend in the different news outlets: all three newspapers

predominantly include photographs of either female victims or male traffickers. Of all 116 articles that include an image, 93 of these fit into one of the five selected categories: female victim, male victim, female trafficker, male trafficker

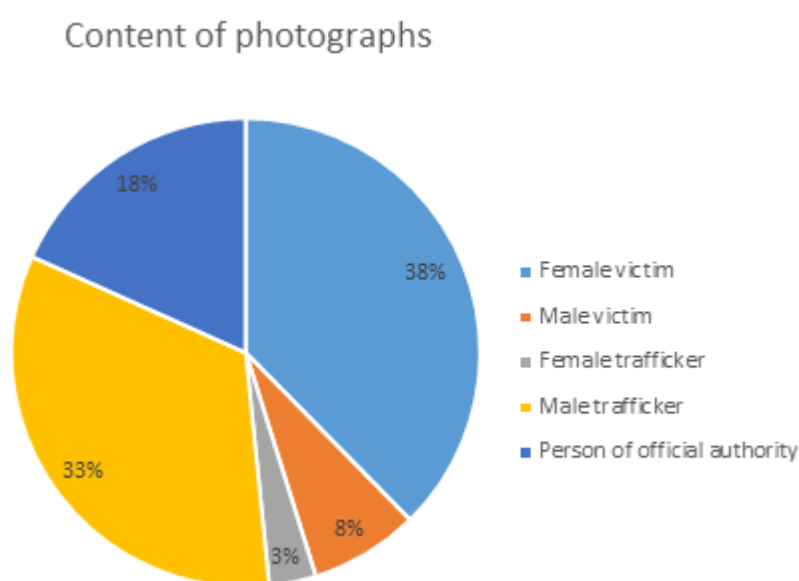


Figure 12: Content of photographs

or person of official authority. Around 38% of these pictures show a female trafficking victim, while 33% show a male trafficker. Nevertheless, around 18% of the photos picture a person of official authority, such as the German Chancellor Angela Merkel or persons of public interest, like George Clooney and his wife, human rights lawyer Amal Clooney. Male victims are shown in less than 8% of all the images that fall into one of the categories and female traffickers are shown in 3%.

A second trend exists, which becomes visible when cross comparing the inclusion of photographs with the gender of the author. Firstly, male authors tend to include pictures

more frequently than female authors. However, the prominent aspect concerns the type of content of the pictures. The percentage of pictures showing male and female victims are relatively similar for both male and female authors. However, around 45% of all articles that have a picture included and written by a male author, show a man as trafficker, whilst this is only the case for 17% of all pictures in the articles with a female author. Even more, 11.1% of all articles written by a women and including a photograph, picture a female trafficker, while this cannot be said for a single article written by a male author. A critical focus on the author's own gender seems visible, leading to the conclusion that, for unknown reasons, male authors, more than female, are prone to mirror the traditional, common and inadequate understanding of gender roles in THB, further delating this perception.

It needs to be noted however, that the content of the images challenge the image of the weak, helpless victim and the strong and suppressive offender. Most female victims are photographed while speaking about their horrific experiences in public, thus confronting the issue and perpetrators in a strong and brave manner. Male traffickers on the other hand are most often pictured as during court hearings, moments of vulnerability and powerlessness. Generally it can be said that, although images accompanying articles on THB most often challenge the traditional understanding of perpetrators and victims, the existence of female traffickers and male victims is still disregarded.

Conclusion on 'Visualisation' section

The conclusion of this section will answer the selected questions of Bacchi's approach to ethical policy making in light of visual framing.

- (1) What assumptions and presuppositions underlie the representation of the problem?
 - (2) What impact does the representation have on possible outcomes?
 - (3) Which aspects of the problem are left unproblematicized?
 - (4) In what way would responses differ, if the problem was represented differently?
- (2007).

The focus on visualising female victims of trafficking and male traffickers coincides with traditional perception of masculinity and femininity in the context of crimes, fostering the notion of men being perpetrators while women are victims. The inclusion of images that show persons of official authority, expresses the validity and integrity of the happenings on which the article reports, which could be court judgements, new legislation, police operations or more. On the other hand, it underlines the importance of the issue that is discussed. However, the image of Angela Merkel, discussing the horrors of sex trafficking with a female THB survivor, does not leave much room for remembering construction workers or kitchen hands, who are victims of the same crime. Similar to what was concluded

before, the exclusion of major parts of the issue limits public as well as political discourse and thus compromises informed policy making through implication of alternative responses. Although most images provide an alternative picture of the momentary nature of victims and traffickers, most of the crime of THB, outside the traditional notion of female sex trafficking victims, forced into prostitution by ruthless men, is still left unproblematised, including all its challenges and actors. The way in which responses would differ, if the problem was represented differently, coincides with the conclusions of the previous two chapters.

5. Conclusion

This report critically analysed the news media coverage of 2016 on trafficking in human beings in Germany in order to answer the following question:

*Is the German media framework, which is constructed
around the issue of trafficking in human beings, biased
in terms of gender?*

This is the first report to examine German news coverage of trafficking in human beings in terms of gender bias. It has been found that media coverage does indeed impart an oversimplification of THB through one-sided and limited representation and framing the issue in terms of gender. Confirming framing theory as defined by Glasser as well as Simon & Xenos, German news coverage mirrors the government's and law enforcement agencies' perception of THB. Additionally, the findings resemble what other researchers have discovered, who investigated similar fields.

The examination of the articles revealed a clear frame, in accordance to Gitlin's definition of "principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation" (1980, p. 6). By giving a very limited impression of the issue of THB, readers are told, in a subtextual manner, which types of trafficking and which types of victims are important and which do not deserve public or political attention. Additionally, content bias in terms of promoting an excessive focus of legislation, law enforcement and civil society on sex trafficking, whilst neglecting other forms of THB was found. The outcome of this research confirms all three of the pre-defined hypothesis: a clear emphasis is placed upon trafficking for sexual exploitation, which confirms the first hypothesis. Secondly, a majority of trafficking victims are identified as women. This was expected regarding sexual exploitation, however the amount of articles that mention a female victim of labour trafficking also exceed official statistical data. The third hypothesis was also confirmed, as the representation of traffickers, predominantly consists of men. Likewise, this number exceeds official numbers collected by German authorities, documenting the issue of human trafficking in Germany.

Although differences in the coverage between the newspapers are visible, the broad and overall framing of THB consist of the same biases in all three examined news outlets.

Nevertheless, the neglect of this crime seems to come to an end with an increasing amount of new legislation and civil society action. However, in order to counter this issue, one needs to be informed on the size of this issue. One needs to know who the victims are and who act as traffickers. One needs to know where it happens and why. Only by having a clear

picture and understanding of the depth of this crime can it be countered efficiently. However, by applying relevant parts of Bacchi's approach to ethical policy making (2007), deeply embedded assumptions and presuppositions regarding gender roles of victims and villains, as well as types of trafficking, crystallise. Relevant aspects and actors are left unproblematised, resulting in responses that are stigmatised by ignorance and not able to possibly combat THB in an effective and gender-responsive manner.

News media do not seem to act as a watchdog or institution of assessment, but rather mirror government standpoints. By providing the public as well as policy-makers with limited amount of viewpoints, general discourse and policy debate is restricted. The lack of new angles, as well as competing perspectives might limit alternative policy proposals or anti-trafficking programs. As indicated by Albright and D'Adamo, the conceptualisation of human trafficking as a sex industry issue, which victimizes women and criminalises men, compromises and tarnishes the process of developing an appropriate policy response. "Each of these failures compound quickly to solidify and institutionalize these, not as individual biases and short-hand, but as truths supported by government policies and social dialogue. Policies are supposed to solve a problem, and when the policies are based on media fuelled biases, resultant laws and actions reflect these biases as well" (p. 374).

Nevertheless, this research acknowledges that trafficking in human beings is an international phenomenon that largely exists and operates underground. Regardless, this does not justify misrepresentative coverage, which places emphasis on female victims and trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. In order to target adequate and representative coverage, much investigative reporting is needed, which consumes both, time and money. Additionally, this research accepts that labour trafficking and other forms of THB are slowly beginning to receive increased attention by policy-makers, which will hopefully pave the way for gender-responsive and carefully targeted responses.

5.1 Recommendations

First, it is crucial to gather more research to understand, the media representation of trafficking in human beings, as well as the media's role in the THB issue. Hitherto, a vast majority of the available research comes from the United States. However, the United States are part of a different media model than Germany or other European countries. Although many similarities can be observed, Germany is part of the democratic corporate model that distinguishes itself through certain characteristics, such as strong political parallelism, journalistic professionalism but also historical strong state intervention in the media (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, pp. 143 - 197). Hence, many findings cannot be transferred

or applied to Germany or Europe, which is why the European research must catch up and eliminate this deficiency.

Secondly, research on previous years of news coverage would be insightful, in order to understand, if news media changed their reporting based on policy changes or if representation has stayed the same. An analysis of previous years would reveal for example, whether news coverage reflects the states changing recognition of male victims and other forms of trafficking. It could also uncover the influential relations between policy changes and media reporting. Has the occasional reporting on male victims or labour trafficking changed public perception and brought along policy changes, or vice versa?

However, it is not just research on the media coverage of human trafficking that need to solicit scholar's attention. Research that emphasises on the gender dimensions of THB and develops gender responsive approaches are indispensable. Additionally, much work is needed to standardise international definitions, national legislation and processes of data collection. Official data is only available on victims and traffickers that have come into contact with state authorities, all else is based on estimations. Only through access to more accurate data, it is possible to fully understand which biases exist in the news media.

Nevertheless, this dissertation does not express great optimism that news media or national and international policies will change dramatically in the near future. Non-comparability of data will continue to be a limitation, due to differing legislations, registration systems and definitions. Changes in the news coverage seem to be a goal more reachable, however still far from the current situation. Thus, hopes remain with civil society organisations, to work for an increase of accurate representation of THB, eliminating biases in terms of gender, which will result in more efficient policies and international strategies.

5.2 Limitations

The academic research on trafficking in human beings is compromised by a number of aspects that limit accurate examination and analysis. First and foremost, the absence of standardised definitions, result in countries counting and measuring different things. This also leads to uncoherent definitions in news coverage, as some authors report on varying situations and, due to uncoherent definitions, problematize different things. As any crime, THB is a hidden phenomenon, meaning that official data and information never covers and mirrors the whole picture. As mentioned earlier, a higher number of reported victims or crimes, do not equal evidence of higher amounts of this type of crime or this specific type of victim. Hence, it is difficult to receive accurate information, to what extent media coverage is in conformity with the actual magnitude of the problem. However, it is possible to detect

the general frame in which THB is reported, as well as broad and coherent misrepresentations.

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7. Appendices

7.1 Quantitative Analysis – Code Book

Var1

Gender of the author

- 1 = female
- 2 = male
- 3 = both
- 4 = unspecified

Var2

Gender of the victim

- 1 = female
- 2 = male
- 3 = both
- 4 = unspecified
- 5 = not applicable

Var3

Gender of the trafficker

- 1 = female
- 2 = male
- 3 = both
- 4 = unspecified
- 5 = not applicable

Var4

Gender of the buyer

- 1 = female
- 2 = male
- 3 = both
- 4 = unspecified
- 5 = not applicable

Var6

In terms of THB, what is the issue focus of the article?

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| Var6_1 Sex trafficking | 1 = yes 2 = no |
| Var6_2 Labour trafficking | 1 = yes 2 = no |
| Var6_3 Immigration/human smuggling | 1 = yes 2 = no |
| Var6_4 Harvesting of organs | 1 = yes 2 = no |
| Var6_5 Illegal adoption | 1 = yes 2 = no |
| Var6_6 Unspecified or other forms of THB | 1 = yes 2 = no |

Var7

Is an image included in the article/section?

- | | |
|---------|--------|
| 1 = yes | → Var8 |
| 2 = no | → end |

Var8

What is shown on the picture/s?

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| Var8_1 Female victim | 1 = yes 2 = no |
| Var8_2 Male victim | 1 = yes 2 = no |
| Var8_3 Female trafficker | 1 = yes 2 = no |
| Var8_4 Male trafficker | 1 = yes 2 = no |
| Var8_5 Person of official authority | 1 = yes 2 = no |

7.2 Quantitative Analysis – Data Matrix (combined)

Art. No.	Var 1	Var 2	Var 3	Var 4	Var 6_1	Var 6_2	Var 6_3	Var 6_4	Var 6_5	Var 6_6	Var 7	Var 8_1	Var 8_2	Var 8_3	Var 8_4	Var 8_5
1	2	1	2	5	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
2	4	5	4	5	2	2	2	2	2	1	2					
3	2	1	2	4	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2
4	4	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	1
5	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2
6	4	1	4	4	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
7	4	1	2	5	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1
8	4	1	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2					
9	4	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	2
10	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2
11	2	3	3	5	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	1
12	2	3	2	5	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1
13	4	2	4	5	2	1	2	2	2	2	2					
14	4	1	2	5	2	2	2	2	2	1	2					
15	4	1	2	5	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
16	4	1	3	5	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1
17	4	5	5	5	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
18	4	1	2	5	2	2	2	2	2	1	2					
19	1	5	5	5	2	2	2	2	2	1	2					
20	1	1	2	5	2	2	2	2	2	1	2					
21	4	1	2	5	2	2	2	2	2	1	2					
22	4	5	5	5	2	1	2	2	2	2	2					
23	4	5	5	5	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1
24	1	1	4	5	2	2	2	2	2	1	2					
25	2	1	5	5	2	2	2	2	2	1	2					
26	2	1	1	5	2	1	2	2	2	2	2					
27	4	1	4	4	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
28	1	1	2	4	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
29	4	1	2	4	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
30	2	1	2	5	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2

31	4	1	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2
32	4	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2
33	4	1	2	4	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	1
34	1	1	2	5	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2
35	4	5	5	5	2	2	1	2	2	2	2					
36	2	1	2	5	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2
37	4	1	2	4	1	2	2	2	2	2	2					
38	1	1	2	4	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2
39	2	1	3	4	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	2
40	1	4	4	4	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2
41	4	2	2	4	2	1	2	2	2	2	2					
42	4	2	2	4	2	1	2	2	2	2	2					
43	1	1	2	4	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
44	1	5	5	5	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
45	3	1	4	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1
46	2	5	5	5	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2
47	4	4	4	5	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	1
48	4	1	4	5	1	2	2	2	2	2	2					
49	4	4	5	5	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2
50	4	1	5	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2					
51	4	4	1	5	2	2	2	2	1	2	2					
52	4	1	2	5	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2
53	4	1	2	5	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2
54	4	5	5	5	2	2	2	2	2	1	2					
55	1	3	2	4	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2
56	4	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2
57	4	1	4	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
58	4	1	2	4	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2
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