REGULATING THE OLDEST PROFESSION:

DRIVERS OF PROSTITUTION POLICY OVER SPACE AND TIME

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Abstract

As one of the world's oldest and most controversial professions, prostitution has withstood diverse and ever-changing policy approaches over space and time. In some countries, prostitution is illegal in all forms, while in others the market is left unregulated. The question arises: how can we explain these differences in prostitution policy cross-nationally? Variations in policy are accompanied by a gap in research accounting for the role that different cultural beliefs and socio-economic factors play in the complex web of interactions between prostitution policy, human trafficking, and public attitudes toward the latter. In this paper, we have attempted to use an original data set and modern statistics to begin shedding some systematic light on the subject. We began by raising the question of *why* prostitution policy varies cross-culturally and cross-nationally. Then, we developed a measure of prostitution policy and set out to identify how those policies developed historically. Finding few clues in current geographic patterns, we identified five broad clusters of influences that historically appear to have driven the development of prostitution policies across the world. These drivers are religion and religiosity; health concerns especially regarding sexually transmitted diseases; modernization, migration, and immigration; democratization and human rights; and female economic and political empowerment. We subsequently collected data to find the effect to which these drivers influence contemporary prostitution policy. Our data demonstrate that religion has played the greatest role historically and in present times in shaping prostitution policies. However, religion has had a complex relationship with prostitution, variously promoting and prohibiting it at different times and in different contexts. Moreover, while religion has historically been a significant factor in shaping prostitution policy, more recent drivers such as democratization and the increasing role of women in policymaking have become increasingly relevant. Our study provides valuable insights into the historical and contemporary drivers of prostitution policy and provides a solid basis for additional, in-depth work to follow. Understanding the impact of these drivers is crucial for shaping effective prostitution policy that addresses the needs and rights of all stakeholders involved.

Introduction

Prostitution endures a long history of efforts by governments variously to abolish, regulate, decriminalize, or legalize it. Spurred by normative debates over whether prostitution subjugates or empowers women and promotes or undermines public morals, there are empirical debates about the cultural and socio-economic factors that underlie the legal regimes regulating prostitution and the effectiveness of those laws in restricting or facilitating prostitution and helping or hurting those involved in the profession.[1] In recent years, debates about prostitution have become entangled with feminist efforts to empower women. Complicating the matter further are recent concerns about human trafficking, especially the relationship between sex trafficking and prostitution policies.

Some feminists, seeking to empower women, have pushed to legalize or decriminalize prostitution and to treat it as a legitimate occupation, providing sex workers with legal protections and workplace benefits including worker's compensation and social security. Debates about human trafficking, however, have raised concerns about whether prostitution is more appropriately viewed as forced labor, and therefore sex trafficking, even if many prostitutes perceive the work as voluntary and the product of free will.

These debates are accompanied by a gap in research accounting for the role that different cultural beliefs and socio-economic factors play in this complex web of interactions between prostitution policy, human trafficking, and public attitudes toward the latter. Although laws governing prostitution vary substantially cross-nationally, it is essential to clarify that prostitution refers to the act of exchanging sexual services for money, services, or other goods. Human trafficking, on the other hand, can manifest in many forms and can consist of the trafficking of humans for the objective of sexual exploitation. In the middle is the question of when the need for money and the absence of alternative opportunities pressures women into a business that they abhor, forcing them to take unwanted health and safety risks.

The obscure network of interactions between prostitution law and human trafficking has cultivated an international debate regarding sex work and its relation to forced labor, resulting in the formation of two opposing camps: neo-abolitionists and non-abolitionists.[2] Neo-abolitionists advocate for laws combatting prostitution, arguing that prostitution is an inherent form of violence against women and that it propagates norms associated with patriarchal societies. Moreover, they argue that the legalization of prostitution will result in increased rates of human trafficking to fulfill an open demand for sex. Non-abolitionists, on the contrary, promote prostitution as a legitimate occupation and emphasize the notion that there is no evidence of a

[1] While prostitution is clearly not restricted to one sex in particular, women dominate the profession and are the focus of this study in only to limit the study to manageable proportions.
[2] Some scholars refer to neo-abolitionists as abolitionists. Moreover, non-abolitionists are sometimes referred to as people championing the view of sexual liberalism.

causal link between legal prostitution and human trafficking. Furthermore, they hold that the criminalization of sex work can leave prostitutes vulnerable to human trafficking by failing to provide them with resources and assistance (Swanson, 2016). While both camps oppose the implementation of laws that lead to the extortion, corruption, and discriminatory targeting of prostitutes, it is the complex nature of human trafficking as a crime that has resulted in the formation of differing beliefs and approaches to prostitution law.

Prostitution laws vary substantially cross-nationally. In some countries, prostitution is illegal in all forms, while in others the market is left unregulated. Generally, there are four legal approaches to prostitution: criminalization, partial criminalization, decriminalization, and legalization. The criminalization legislative framework makes sex work and all activities associated with sex work a crime. It targets and penalizes all actors engaged in prostitution (brothel owners, pimps, johns, and prostitutes). Partial criminalization of prostitution penalizes some, but not all, actors engaged in sex work. Oftentimes, this legal framework excludes prostitutes from the legal penalties that are applicable to all other actors. The decriminalization legislative framework does not punish sex work or any activities and third parties associated with sex work. This framework leaves the relationships between prostitutes and clients, pimps, brothel owners, and other actors completely unregulated. Lastly, while legalization also follows a nonpenal approach to sex work, it imposes various state regulations pertaining to prostitution, such as zoning restrictions or licensing requirements, among others (Chuang, 2010).

The question arises: how can we explain these differences in prostitution law cross-nationally? As previously discussed, asymmetries in belief regarding prostitution and its relation to human trafficking have laid the foundation for the formulation and implementation of differing prostitution laws on a global scale. However, these opposing beliefs are overgeneralizations that detract from and ignore the underlying drivers of prostitution policy. Religion, health, modernization, democratization, the role of women in society, and other socio-economic and cultural factors can help explain the national differences in prostitution law. In the first part of our evaluation, we will trace the historical evolution of prostitution policy back to its roots in efforts of gaining a better understanding of the formation of various policy approaches over time. Next, we will conduct a survey of the differing prostitution regulatory models cross-nationally and search for any regional patterns explaining differences in legislation. Finally, we will compare these legal frameworks with existing qualitative and quantitative data about various cultural and socio-economic factors. Ultimately, this will provide us with a clearer awareness regarding the implications and consequences of the relationship between various cultural and socio-economic drivers and prostitution law, deriving and separating stronger influences from weaker ones.

Modern Theories of One of the Oldest Professions

Historical Evolution of Prostitution Policy

Contrary to the opprobrium often associated with prostitution today, historically, prostitution has been legal, or at least tolerated, in most societies. The earliest evidence of prostitution can be traced to the list of occupations delineated in the Sumerian Records, which dates back to 2400 BCE. Not only do the records list prostitution as a bona fide occupation, but they also indicate that it may have been associated with temple service work (Lerner, 1986). The status of prostitution as a legitimate occupation was solidified in Hammurabi's Code, which granted sex workers various legal rights (Luckenbill, 1917). The first evidence of prostitution policy and regulation appears in the Code of Assura, enacted in 1075BCE. This legal code required women to wear veils in public. The exception was prostitutes, who in fact were prohibited from veiling themselves as a means of differentiation (Jastrow, 1921). Legal brothels were established in China in the 600s BCE as a method for increasing the state's revenue, and shortly after in ancient Greece (Bullough et al., 1978). The historian Herodotus wrote not just of legal, but of "sacred prostitution" in ancient Greece and the near east (Anagnostou-Laoutides et al., 2018). Moreover, prostitution is mentioned, sometimes favorably, in the Hebrew Bible and other sacred texts.

Accompanying the widespread acknowledgement of prostitution as an occupation was a cross-national wave of regulations that still ebbs and flows in modern times. The link between prostitution and religion reappeared in the late 500s, when the Visigoth King of Spain criminalized sex work and implemented severe punishments for those involved in the profession, using its alleged dissonance with Catholic values as justification (Roberts et al., 1994). Sex work by women was punished, however, the purchase of sex work by male clients was not. While the prophet Muhammed forbid prostitution in the Seventh Century, this did not apply to sex slaves which were common in Arab harems throughout the Middle Ages (Khan, 2009). The Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa called for the mutilation of prostitutes caught travelling with the Holy Roman Army in 1158, Henry II of England enforced legislation that prohibited forced prostitution in 1161, Alfonso IX of Castile enacted policies that punished brothel owners, pimps, johns, and prostitutes in the 1200s, and King Louis IX of France abolished prostitution entirely in 1254 (Bullough et al., 1978; Evans, 1979; Rossiaud, 1988). These early legislative efforts to regulate prostitution frequently resulted from attempts to preserve healthy armies by reducing the proliferation of venereal disease as opposed to imposing moral control over sex work.

Over time, prostitution was progressively regulated, though less often outlawed, on the grounds of religious principles, public morals, and to an increasing extent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. The spread of syphilis began in the 1490s and devastated Europe for upwards of a century. This resulted in an escalation of disapproval regarding prostitution amongst the public (Bullough et al., 1978). Several centuries later, Britain's Contagious Disease

Act of 1864 placed harsh regulations on prostitutes, authorizing the police to arrest prostitutes and impose compulsory tests for venereal disease. The law, however, was repealed in 1886 amidst controversy surrounding the forced medical examinations and hospitalizations of women who were not actually prostitutes (Fisher, 1997).

Prior to World War I, prostitution was not criminalized in either English or American common law. It was, however, implicitly regulated under laws against nightwalking, fornication, or adultery. Nevertheless, prostitution blossomed in Colonial New York during the late 1700s and early 1800s (Marques, 2019). The Page Act of 1875 criminalized the importation of unfree laborers and women into the states for the purposes of prostitution (Page Act, 1875). While this policy did not directly address human trafficking, it represents one of the first examples of legislative action that addresses the complex relationship between prostitution, immigration, and human trafficking. Subsequently, the United States Supreme Court ruled that deporting a resident alien who engaged in sex work after entering the country was unconstitutional in *Keller v. United States* (Keller v. U.S., 1909). In the early years of the United States, prostitution was commonly perceived as a savior of marriage and families, granting men an outlet for their sexual energy when their wives were unable or unwilling to meet their needs. Even as states began implementing regulations pertaining to prostitution, laws were often ignored or laxly enforced as prostitution was viewed as a necessary evil. The Mann Act, or White-Slave Traffic Act, was enacted in 1910 and created a federal law against prostitution in the United States, particularly regulating forced prostitution, the harboring of immigrant prostitutes, and the transportation of sex workers across state lines (Mann Act, 1910). In practice, however, prostitution flourished.

The 1970s witnessed the emergence of a highly politicized sex worker's rights movement throughout the international community, particularly in Europe and North America. COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics), the first sex worker's rights group in the United States, was established in 1973 and championed prostitution as a legitimate occupation (Jenness, 1990). The 1975 French sex workers' strike catalyzed the European sex workers' rights movement and inspired the formation of the French Collective of Prostitutes and the English Collective of Prostitutes the same year (Aroney, 2018). The first international meeting of prostitute's rights groups was held by the International Committee for Prostitutes' Rights in 1985, culminating in the creation of the 1985 World Charter for Prostitute's Rights. This charter called for the decriminalization of all prostitution resulting from free will and addressed topics such as human rights, working conditions, health, services, taxes, and public opinion in relation to prostitution (Ringdal, 2004; World Charter for Prostitutes' Rights, 1993).

In modern times, many societies regard prostitution as a social evil - a threat to the sanctity of marriage and family, a source of sexually transmitted diseases, and a threat to men's dominion over women. There are exceptions, of course, and more than a little hypocrisy, as many of the same men (legislators, of course, are mostly men) who enact anti-prostitution laws have been

found to skirt the laws of their making as both customers and occasional employers of one of the oldest professions. Prostitution in the United States and Europe increasingly make both the sale and purchase of sex illegal, but with rare exceptions laws forbidding the sale of sex are more frequently enforced.

While this brief historical exploration of prostitution illustrates some of the varied and ever-changing approaches to prostitution policy on an international scale over the course of millennia, it is by no means a comprehensive summary of the evolution of prostitution policy. It will, however, provide us with a historical basis when examining the complex cultural and socio-economic factors that underlie the legal regimes enacting prostitution policies. The interests of this study do not revolve around prostitution policy itself, but rather *how* and *why* legislation pertaining to prostitution has developed on a cross-national basis.

Types of Prostitution Policy

As illustrated by the previous section on the historical evolution of prostitution policy, there have been several approaches to establishing policies pertaining to sex work. These approaches have varied cross-nationally and domestically over time. It is important to note that these approaches to prostitution policy, as well as the data that will be examined within this study, are characterized as *de jury* and not *de facto*, meaning that they investigate what the law states as opposed to what extent the law is enforced and/or practiced.

On one hand, a number of countries at certain times have followed a policy of decriminalization, which "leaves the relationships between prostitution and pimps, brothel owners, clients, and others outside the criminal framework and punishes only acts illegal under generally applicable criminal law, such as rape and assault" (Chuang, 2010, p. 1669). Others have opted for legalization, which also implements a nonpenal approach to sex work but actively controls the prostitution industry through regulations such as licensing requirements, zoning restrictions, and public health measures. Some countries have adopted a policy of partial criminalization, otherwise referred to as toleration, in which legal punishments are only applicable to certain parties. Oftentimes, this approach excludes sex workers from the legal punishments that are applicable to all other actors, such as clients, pimps, and brothel owners, thus making it legal to sell sex but illegal to buy it. In other cases, this approach excludes both sex workers and their clients from the legal punishments that are applicable to third parties, such as pimps and brothel owners. Lastly, complete criminalization, also known as prohibitionism, adopts a penal approach that targets all actors in the prostitution industry, including sex workers, clients, pimps, and brothel owners (Chuang, 2010)

These approaches to prostitution policy are each propagated by unique policy perspectives. People have developed various opinions of sex work and its relation (or lack of relation) to sex trafficking, gender inequality, and other controversial topics. Diverging opinions about sexuality, gender roles, and government involvement provide even more grounds for debate. This has prompted the formation of various policy perspectives that champion certain prostitution policy frameworks over others. The current state of discussion, knowledge, and responses pertaining to prostitution have culminated in the formation of two predominant camps: neo-abolitionists and non-abolitionists.

Neo-abolitionists seek to criminalize all actors involved in the prostitution industry except for prostitutes themselves, thus advocating for a policy of partial criminalization (toleration). These individuals equate prostitution with human trafficking, negating the notion of voluntary prostitution and suggesting that sex work inherently exploits women. Perceiving sex workers as victims of male domination and/or social deviance, they support rehabilitation and rescue efforts for prostitutes and penalization for all other actors, such as clients, pimps, and brothel owners. This camp is largely composed of radical feminists, neoconservatives, and highly religious

individuals. However, these groups vary in their justifications for their united prostitution policy perspective. While neo-abolitionist feminists advocate for laws discouraging prostitution on the grounds of protecting women from an institution of male patriarchy, neoconservatives and highly religious people rely upon reasons of conscience and morality. Ultimately, neo-abolitionists accept and promote the power of criminal law to eliminate prostitution (Chuang, 2010).

Non-abolitionists, on the other hand, reject the complete or partial criminalization of prostitution, thus supporting policies of decriminalization or legalization. These individuals accept the notion of voluntary prostitution and repudiate any direct link between human trafficking and prostitution. Moreover, they do not perceive prostitution as an institution of male patriarchy, but rather as an expression and manifestation of women's rights and sexual self-determination. This camp is composed of diverse individuals and groups, such as sex workers' activists and feminists who embrace liberal or postmodern principles (Swanson, 2016). Nevertheless, non-abolitionists are divided in their support of decriminalization or legalization. Those who support decriminalization, including many sex workers' rights groups, stress the consequences arising from overregulation by the state, including the use of public health and zoning laws to target and stigmatize prostitutes. On the contrary, those in favor of legalization claim that these laws are necessary to protect prostitutes and other actors in the industry from exploitation and/or disease (Chuang, 2010). Some scholars refer to non-abolitionists who champion legalization as neo-regulationists (Swanson, 2016).

While most of the modern literature addressing prostitution policy perspectives primarily centers upon the differentiation between neo-abolitionists and non-abolitionists, it is also important to consider the position of prohibitionists. These individuals support complete criminalization, with the final objective of eliminating all forms of prostitution by punishing sex workers, pimps, brothel owners, and other actors in the sex work industry. Prohibitionists, however, do not necessarily seek to punish clients (Scoular, 2010). While neo-abolitionists generally seek to protect women from exploitation and social deviance, and thus exclude them from any punishments, prohibitionists seek to protect society from sin, opting to penalize prostitutes and other actors alike.

Prostitution Policy Patterns

Our data show the distribution of 184 countries across the four predominant prostitution policies described above (complete criminalization, partial criminalization, legalization, and decriminalization), as well as the percentage of countries from each region who fit each of the four prostitution policy types. It is critical to understand that significant discrepancies exist between written law (*de jury*) and what occurs in practice (*de facto*), especially when considering laws pertaining to prostitution. Our study is limited in that it only investigates *de jury* prostitution policies, focusing on the law itself as opposed to its enforcement and implementation in society. Nevertheless, by examining patterns of prostitution policy on a cross-national basis, we hope to gain a better understanding of the socio-economic and cultural factors that influence the adoption of certain prostitution policies over others.

Before analyzing our data, is important to acknowledge and clarify several gray areas pertaining to the classification of countries into their respective prostitution policy categories. These gray areas arise when a country's legal framework does not readily conform to the existing set of requirements used to categorize each country into one of the four prostitution policy frameworks. In coding, we relied upon currently prevailing national laws on the buying and selling of sex, as well as on the third-party organization of sex. In several countries, such as the United States and Australia, prostitution laws are handled at state, provincial, or local levels. In others, such as China and Thailand, prostitution is prohibited at the national level, but remains legal in certain tourist "hot spots". In all these cases, we have coded the predominant national prostitution policy and have ignored state, provincial, and/or local laws, including legally inconsistent "hot spots". Furthermore, countries in which sex work itself is not explicitly criminalized in law, but soliciting in public spaces and living off earnings of prostitution are both criminalized, have been placed in the partial criminalization category. These countries include the Bahamas, Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, and Mozambique, among others. Lastly, countries in which sex work itself is not explicitly criminalized, but extra-marital sex is criminalized, often through Islamic Zina Laws in countries such as Iran and Syria, have been placed in the complete criminalization category.

Figure 1: Prostitution Policy by Region

	Africa	Asia-Pacific	C&E Europe	Middle East	North America	South America	Scandinavia	Western Europe	All Countries
Criminalization	20.8%	43.2%	55.6%	73.7%	33.3%	3.4%	0%	6.3%	31.5%
Partial Criminalization	75.0%	51.4%	37.0%	15.8%	66.7%	75.9%	100.0%	56.3%	57.6%
Legalization	0%	2.7%	7.4%	10.5%	0%	13.8%	0%	31.3%	7.6%
Decriminalization	4.2%	2.7%	0%	0%	0%	6.9%	0%	6.3%	3.3%
Number of Countries	48	37	27	19	3	29	5	16	184
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

A quick overview of the data suggests that partial criminalization is the most popular prostitution policy (106 countries), followed by complete criminalization (60 countries), legalization (14 countries), and lastly, decriminalization (6 countries).[3] Geographic differences in prostitution policy appear to be diverse, with regional patterns being difficult to identify. Figure 1 reveals that the highest percentage of complete criminalization occurs in the Middle East, where Islamic Zina laws in some countries criminalize extra-marital sex and simultaneously prohibit prostitution. Moreover, it is interesting to note the USA's peculiar position as the only North American country to completely criminalize prostitution, and as one of the few advanced western democracies to implement prohibitionist policies. The highest percentages of partial criminalization occur in Scandinavia, where all countries have implemented this framework, followed by South America and Africa. While most countries in these regions do not explicitly criminalize prostitution, their legal frameworks penalize buyers and/or third parties, ultimately seeking to abolish prostitution through methods that protect women from legal consequences. Legalization is most prevalent in Western Europe, with Switzerland and the Netherlands pioneering legalization policies that have prompted countries such as Germany and Greece to follow suit. North America, Africa, and Scandinavia tie for last for the smallest percentage of countries implementing legalization frameworks, failing to contain any countries that have legalized sex work. Countries that have decriminalized prostitution are few and far between, and the decriminalization policy framework does not show any noticeable regional patterns.

A significant amount of variation exists between the prostitution policies adopted on a cross-national basis. While some regional patterns exist, they are not pronounced when examining the distribution of countries across the four predominant prostitution policy models. The lack of any obvious patterns suggests the need for a deeper analysis examining why some countries adopt a certain prostitution policy approach while others adopt different ones. The question arises: What factors account for the variation in prostitution policy cross-nationally? We believe that the answer to this question lies in the historical evolution of prostitution policy, which illuminates various socio-economic and cultural drivers that can influence the adoption of one prostitution policy over another.

[3] See Figure A1 in Appendix A.

Drivers of Prostitution Policy

Through a multi-faceted investigation of the ever-changing legislation pertaining to prostitution over several millennia, we can derive various cultural and socio-economic factors that have driven prostitution policy changes. Thus, the implementation of a historical lens will not only enable us to illustrate the different and changing legal approaches to prostitution over time, but also to identify reasons underlying *why* these varying approaches were taken on a cross-national basis.

1. *Religion*

While there are several principal drivers of prostitution policy historically and geographically, these begin with religion. Interestingly enough, religion has both promoted and prohibited prostitution in different places and times. In the modern day, neo-abolitionists and non-abolitionists alike conceive sex as a commodity and prostitution as the commodification of the human body. In ancient times, however, sex work transcended the confines of commerce and played a more significant role within spirituality and religion.

As documented by Herodotus and other ancient scholars, early forms of sex work were predominated by "sacred prostitution", or the participation in sexual acts with a person other than one's spouse for religious purposes (Luckenbill, 1917). The relegation of prostitution to religious temples, particularly among the Sumerians and ancient Greeks, illustrates the strong connection between prostitution and religion dating back to its roots. Although the true extent of sacred prostitution in ancient times remains unknown, Herodotus claimed that women in Mesopotamia were required to engage in sexual activities at the temple of Aphrodite once in their lifetime as a form of religious offering (Anagnostou-Laoutides et al., 2018). While some scholars have argued that sacred prostitution is a myth, the undeniable evidence that links ancient sex work with religious temples suggests that, regardless of the existence or prevalence of sacred prostitution, religious and spiritual values and norms in Ancient Near East societies were more tolerant towards prostitution, and even promoted it at times.

Moreover, prostitution was increasingly associated with temple work and religious offerings to various deities in Ancient Greece and the Hellenistic world. During this time, historical evidence suggests that a direct link between religion, sex work, and human trafficking appears, as some women involved in temple prostitution were slaves, and in some cases were even owned by the temple. Ancient Greek poems, such as those written by Pindar, illustrate the complicated web of interactions between religion, prostitution, and involuntary sexual servitude (Kurke, 1996). Nevertheless, for the purposes of our study, it is important to note that early prostitution, although sometimes regulated and taxed by the state, was predominately decriminalized and/or legalized in part due to its connection with and prevalence in religious offerings or acts. During

ancient times in which religion mingled with law and sex work simultaneously, laws pertaining to prostitution were lax or nonexistent, while others merely served to differentiate prostitutes from other women, as indicated by the Code of Assura.

While prostitution was not heavily regulated in the societies of the Ancient Near East, the increasingly negative characterization of prostitution in various sacred texts such as the Hebrew Bible, Christian Bible, and Quran propagated the spread of religious values that condemned sex work. Although prostitution is discussed numerous times in the Hebrew Bible without condemnation, Deuteronomy forbade sacred prostitution in ancient Israel (English Standard Version Bible, 2016). Jesus showed ambivalence towards prostitutes and adulteresses, but his mercy did not translate into an acceptance of sex workers within the Christian Bible, which regards prostitution as immoral (Jang, n.d.). And while sex workers were common in Arab harems throughout the Middle Ages, the Quran also forbade prostitution and sex outside of marriage (Khan, 2009). While the condemnation of prostitution in these sacred texts did not immediately translate into legislative policies proscribing it, their explicit denunciation of sex work created a remarkable estrangement between prostitution and piousness, marking a distinct departure from the ancient practice of sacred prostitution.

The spread of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam throughout the international sphere, whose sacred texts proscribe prostitution and extra-marital sex, and their increasing influence on legislation correlates with the implementation of stricter laws and regulations pertaining to sex work over time. While many nations implemented policies criminalizing or partially criminalizing prostitution during the Middle Ages on the grounds of its incongruence with religious principles, the enforcement of these laws was questionable at best and sex work was tolerated as an alternative to the immoralities and sins of masturbation, sodomy, and rape. Nevertheless, prostitution, as an antagonist against the religious values proposed by the world's most practiced religions, faced an increasingly negative public perception which arguably translated into legislation disfavoring sex work. While religious beliefs have become increasingly privatized, giving rise to a growing number of secular societies beginning in the early modern era, religious values have inherently become ingrained within broader societal values and still guide legislation pertaining to prostitution in modern times.

Perhaps societies that are less religious enact legislation that favors the decriminalization or legalization of prostitution, or maybe the deep-seated values disseminated by the most popular religions have penetrated widespread public morals, ultimately blurring the lines between levels of religiosity and laws pertaining to prostitution. Whether a nation is secular or nonsecular, it is possible that certain religions have a greater impact on prostitution policy than others. Moreover, it is reasonable that other cultural and socio-economic factors further complicate the link between religion and prostitution policy. One thing is certain: prostitution itself has substantial

connections to religion dating back to ancient times, and as the harmonious relationship between prostitution and religion fractured, so did the relationship between prostitution and the law.

2. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*

Another driver of prostitution policy is the proliferation of sexually transmitted diseases, beginning with the spread of syphilis in the 1490s. The acknowledgement of the sexual spread of the infection, combined with a growing fear of disease amongst the general public, and especially amongst sixteenth-century Reformers, culminated in a public and legislative reaction against prostitution (Toulalan et al., 2013). Occurring at the same time as many Catholic cities adopted policies championing a return to more rigid religious principles, the emergence of syphilis challenged any remaining tolerance towards prostitution. Moreover, the association between the spread of syphilis and the increase in promiscuity and prostitution amidst the growth of densely populated areas sparked the formation of increasingly negative societal attitudes towards sex work. During a time in which syphilis was believed to be an incurable disease, the fear of contagion heavily contributed to the implementation of stricter regulations pertaining to prostitution.

As various countries implemented legislation explicitly regulating prostitutes in the company of soldiers, it is probable that the spread of venereal disease, at least initially, resulted in the implementation of harsher consequences for prostitutes in efforts of preserving healthy armies (Deady, 2011). As syphilis ravaged Europe for centuries after its discovery, regulations and punishments increased in severity cross-nationally. While causation cannot be implied regarding the discovery of venereal disease and the subsequent implementation of increasingly regulatory prostitution policies, the fear of disease undoubtedly tainted the public perception of prostitution.

Modern strides in scientific inquiry and medical technology have eased fears of widespread contagion amidst the discovery of various cures. However, these same strides have provided public officials with numerous tools to regulate sex workers in efforts of preventing the spread of venereal disease. While a direct connection cannot be confirmed from the prohibitory prostitution policies adopted in the wake of syphilis's discovery, as laws did not explicitly address links between prostitution and venereal disease, the medical regulations that have been codified in modern-day legislation pertaining to prostitution suggest a strong relationship between efforts to reduce the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and the implementation of medical sex work regulations.

With the globalization of Western medicine, the role of sexually transmitted diseases in the criminalization of prostitution has reduced drastically. Furthermore, sex work catering to Western military personnel and tourists has flourished in many countries in Asia (Peterson-Iyer, 1998). As documented during the Vietnam War, Thailand agreed to provide sex work services

for American military troops, who were not discouraged from purchasing sexual services but were warned about sexually transmitted diseases (Robinson, 1993). As modern medicine has spread to all four corners of the world, sex tourist locations have become increasingly acceptable and publicized within modern-day society.

Alongside religion and other cultural and socio-economic factors, sexually transmitted diseases have influenced attitudes and laws pertaining to sex work since their discovery. Although sexually transmitted diseases undoubtedly have implications on prostitution policy, several questions arise: Are countries with higher rates of sexually transmitted diseases more apt to prohibit or heavily regulate prostitution in efforts of reducing the spread of venereal disease? On the contrary, given that prostitution still flourishes even in societies where it is prohibited, is it conceivable that countries with high rates of sexually transmitted diseases are more likely to decriminalize or legalize prostitution in hopes that sex workers will be more willing to seek medical attention without the fear of facing legal repercussions?

3. *Modernization: Economics, Urbanization, Industrialization, and Migration*

While the earliest forms of prostitution mingled with spirituality and religion, sex work has inherently commodified the human body since its origination. According to Chinese tradition, the seventh century BCE witnessed the emergence of the first documented commercial brothels, which legitimized prostitution as an occupation and taxed it in efforts to increase the state's income (Bullough et al., 1978). However, it is conceivable that temple prostitution in ancient Mesopotamian times, which was evidenced millennia before the establishment of brothels in China, served the same function as commercial brothels, taxing sex work and commodifying sexual acts in the form of religious offerings. Regardless of the controversial origination of commercial brothels, the historical taxation of prostitution, whether by religious institutions or state governments, inextricably links ancient prostitution policy with the economic ambitions of religious and/or state authorities.

While ancient prostitution was oftentimes relegated to the countryside or religious temples, the accumulation of people in more densely crowded areas ensured that towns and cities became nodal points of prostitution. This phenomenon is evidenced as early as the mid-fifth century BCE, when Athens became a hub of prostitution in Ancient Greece (Mark, 2021). The formation of cities, and particularly the concentration of people and services, increased both the supply and demand of prostitution (Van Nederveen Meerkerk, 2017). While the rise and expansion of sex work in cities is not directly applicable to our investigation into drivers of prostitution policy at first glance, the urbanization of prostitution and its interrelationship with factors such as a growing middle class, venereal disease, religion, and industrialization have implications for legislation pertaining to sex work.

Until around the sixteenth century, sex work was tolerated and/or explicitly regulated in many cities throughout the world. Parallel to the urbanization and religious revival that characterized the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a growing number of unregulated prostitutes appeared. As cities became hubs of the growing sex trade, they also became focal points of venereal disease. The combination of the cultural and socio-economic changes arising in part due to increased urbanization changed public perceptions of sex work and, most importantly, government responses to it.

It is important to note that migration and modernization are closely intertwined and can have significant impacts on each other. Modernization can lead to migration by creating economic opportunities in urban areas and industrialized countries that attract people from rural areas and less developed regions. Moreover, modernization can propel migration by fostering cultural and social changes that may motivate people to seek new opportunities and experiences and by bringing new ideas, skills, and perspectives to societies (The Wilson Center, 1999). For example, the growth of the manufacturing industry in Europe and North America during the 19th and 20th centuries led to significant waves of migration from rural areas to urban centers, and the rise of feminism and the women's liberation movement in the 20th century encouraged many women to pursue education and career opportunities that were not available to them in traditional societies, leading to increased migration by women to urban areas and other countries (Hirschman, 2009; Ware, 2015).

Nevertheless, migration can also pose challenges to modernization, especially in cases in which it leads to social and economic inequalities or cultural conflicts. For example, migrants may face discrimination or difficulty accessing education or employment opportunities, which not only limits their ability to contribute to the modernization of their new societies, but also promotes prostitution as a source of income (Van Nederveen Meerkerk, 2017).

Therefore, migration and prostitution policy are often linked, as migration assuredly has an impact on both the demand for and supply of sex work, which in turn influences the development and implementation of prostitution policies. Migrants, especially those who are undocumented or have limited economic opportunities, may be vulnerable to exploitation and may be more likely to engage in sex work in order to support themselves or their families. Migration can also lead to greater awareness and activism around issues related to prostitution and sex work, which can challenge existing stereotypes and assumptions about the industry and influence prostitution policy (Van Nederveen Meerkerk, 2017).

The expansion of urban areas occurred in tandem with the growth of the economy, the expansion of the middle class, and the increase of supply and demand in the industrial and service sectors. The middle class championed a more mature and secure social structure that valued both dignity and stability and simultaneously condemned prostitution (Cao et al., 2013). Although the growth

of cities and economies enabled prostitution to flourish, the growth of middle-class values and their increasing association with religious morals ensured the intense persecution of sex work by both civic and religious authorities. Thus, combined with the brewing fear of the spread of venereal disease, prostitution policy transformed to criminalize or heavily regulate sex work. The development of the nation-state and the rise of industrialization in the nineteenth century catalyzed urbanization and enabled people to communicate more effectively, mobilize resources, and ignite social movements. Over time, these socio-economic changes associated with modernization resulted in prostitution policy changes.

Therefore, while not immediately apparent, modernization and its numerous connections to various cultural and socio-economic factors, including migration, are critical drivers of prostitution policy, especially in the late fifteenth century and onward. While economic growth and urbanization initially provided environments in which prostitution thrived and was exploited by various religious and/or legal authorities through taxation, its byproducts, such as the growth of the middle class and the mobilization of various social movements that sought to eradicate sex work, ultimately resulted in changed government responses to prostitution.

Perhaps urbanization, which creates an ideal environment for the proliferation of sexual services, motivates governments to take a non-abolitionist perspective towards prostitution, championing the legalization or decriminalization of sex work. Or, it is also possible that the various cultural and socio-economic factors which inherently accompany modernization drive governments to impose neo-abolitionist or prohibitionist legal frameworks pertaining to prostitution. It is also feasible that both aforementioned possibilities occur asynchronously, depending upon the differing levels of economic and social development that accompany modernization on a state-by-state basis. Although the implications of modernization on prostitution policy are situational and dependent on other factors, they are nonetheless important when considering a holistic approach to identifying the drivers of prostitution policy.

4. *Democratization*

As a determinant of any policy, democratization assuredly weaves a complex web of interaction with both prostitution policy and the aforementioned drivers. First and foremost, it is important to note that democratization refers to the process of increasing the political power of citizens within a society, typically through the expansion of democratic institutions and the protection of individual rights and freedoms. The process of democratization is nonlinear, and therefore began at different times and in different ways cross-nationally (Kauffman, 2023). In a similar manner, the history of democratization with respect to prostitution policy also varies across different countries and regions. However, some broad trends and historical developments suggest that democratization and changes in prostitution policy are inherently linked.

To begin, the Enlightenment was a philosophical and cultural movement that emerged in Europe in the 18th century, and promoted ideas such as reason, individualism, and the importance of human rights and freedoms. These ideas helped to lay the intellectual foundation for many later democratic movements, including the American and French Revolutions, which occurred in 1776 and 1789, respectively. As both events challenged the authority of monarchies and established new forms of government based on principles of popular sovereignty and representation, they undoubtedly mark significant moments in the history of democracy (Thornhill et al., 2009).

Next, the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century brought about significant changes in the economy and society, catalyzing the growth of the middle class and increased demand for political representation and participation (Hays, 1995). Furthermore, the 20th century witnessed the decolonization movement, in which many countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America gained independence from colonial powers, and sought to establish democratic governments that represented the interests of their citizens (Bradley, 2010). Coinciding with this wave of decolonization was the establishment of new laws and regulations concerning prostitution. In parallel with other socio-economic and cultural prostitution policy drivers, this involved the establishment of licensing systems for brothels and sex workers, as well as medical examinations and other health regulations aimed at controlling the spread of venereal disease (Brents et al., 2001).

Another important event with respect to democratization is the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, which marked the end of the Cold War and the spread of democratic ideals and institutions to many countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Coincidentally, there has been a growing recognition of the need to address the human rights and health needs of sex workers in recent years (Outshoorn, 2005). Some countries have shifted towards more liberal policies of decriminalization or legalization, while others have implemented harm reduction measures such as outreach programs and access to health services (Kilvington et al., 2001).

Overall, the history of democratization with respect to prostitution policy has been marked by shifting attitudes and approaches towards the regulation and criminalization of prostitution. While early movements were often focused on eliminating prostitution entirely, more recent developments have placed emphasis upon the importance of protecting the human rights of sex workers and involving them in the democratic policymaking process. While the relationship between democratization and prostitution is complex and multifaceted, it is evident that connections between the two exist. As democratic participation and decision-making are integral components of democratization, the crossroads between democratization and prostitution policy involve balancing the needs and interests of various stakeholders, including sex workers, clients, law enforcement officials, and the broader community.

Just like prostitution policy, democratization is an ongoing process that continues to evolve and change in response to political, economic, and social factors. Perhaps democratization leads to a greater awareness and recognition of the rights of sex workers, who are often marginalized and stigmatized in many societies. While some argue that prostitution can be a legitimate form of work and that sex workers should be empowered to make their own choices about their livelihoods, others view prostitution as inherently exploitative and argue that it violates human rights and equality by perpetuating violence against women. Thus, it is also possible that democratization has echoed the concerns of these neo-abolitionists, resulting in more conservative prostitution policies. In any case, an intersection between democratization and prostitution policy is evident.

5. *Feminism and the Role of Women in Society*

Prostitution experiences a highly gendered division of labor, as a significant majority of sex workers are female, and almost all of their clients are male. Coupled with being a stigmatized line of work that leaves some women vulnerable to violence, harassment, and exploitation, it is not surprising that prostitution raises questions for feminists cross-nationally. Nevertheless, debates surrounding the adoption of moral and warranted legal approaches to prostitution yield varied and subjective answers amongst those seeking to empower women (Peterson-Iyer, 1998). Due to the complex and ever-changing objectives of the feminist movement, together with the controversy surrounding prostitution law amongst feminists themselves, it is impossible to decipher a comprehensive and united feminist approach to prostitution. However, by investigating the four waves of feminism and their individual crossroads with sexuality and prostitution, we can gain a better understanding of feminism and the empowerment of women as drivers of prostitution policy.

The first wave of feminism occurred during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and emerged from an environment increasingly characterized by urbanization, industrialism, and a push for more liberal, socialist politics. It is no coincidence that this wave of feminism was overwhelmingly propelled by the growing middle class in the wake of mass urbanization, and particularly Western, middle class, white women. Feminists during this time focused on equality and suffrage and aligned their efforts with those of the temperance and abolitionist movements (Rampton, 2015). For this reason, first-wave feminism likely denounced prostitution as a legitimate profession but was more concerned with legal rights and political equality as opposed to the eradication of sex work.

The second wave, which took place from the 1960s to the 90s, grew to include a variety of minority groups throughout the world and increasingly addressed issues associated with prostitution. Moreover, the subjugation of women became a central topic related to sex work, with broader criticisms of patriarchy, capitalism, and family dynamics being utilized as tools for

reform. Feminists during this time formed women-only organizations that enforced a variety of objectives pertaining to prostitution, some claiming that sex work furthers the oppression and exploitation of women while others arguing that sex work is a legitimate form of labor (Outshoorn, 2005).

The third wave of feminism started in the mid-1990s and propelled objectives associated with female empowerment, largely destabilizing the previous approaches that centered on sexuality and heteronormativity. Viewing themselves as powerful and able beings, not as victims of a sexist patriarchy, these feminists generally fail to acknowledge themselves as part of a collective movement with common grievances against a male-dominated society. Accordingly, this wave evolved into a sex-positive feminist movement that understood prostitution more in terms of a legitimate form of labor oftentimes performed by marginalized people, and less in terms of social decay or sexual exploitation. Therefore, the third wave witnessed the emergence of feminists reinforcing the rights of sex workers and encouraging anti-restrictive policies (Klinger, 2003).

The fourth wave of feminism, which is ongoing in present times, has placed emphasis upon approaching issues in an intersectional manner. In other words, these feminists argue that sex work can only be comprehensively understood in a larger context of marginalization that addresses racism, classism, sexual orientation, and other factors. These feminists explore prostitution in terms of its relationship to a broader range of social forces, including, but not limited to, colonialism, racism, and globalization (Shrug, 2001). The modern neo-abolitionist movement largely equates prostitution to human trafficking and has also become increasingly associated with social conservatives who oppose non-marital sex on religious grounds. Nevertheless, some feminists strongly reject any parallels between prostitution and human trafficking.

As previously discussed, neo-abolitionists argue that prostitution contributes to a male-dominated social order that involves excessive risks for sex workers and relies upon the economic coercion of women. Moreover, they claim that prostitution normalizes the subordination of women, especially in environments characterized by high levels of social inequality. Many emphasize links between prostitution and human trafficking, while some even consider all prostitution to be human trafficking (Swanson, 2016). It is important to note that most modern-day feminists who oppose prostitution advocate for partial criminalization as opposed to prohibitionism, supporting the criminalization of the purchase of sexual services or third-party involvement but not the prosecution of women engaging in sex work. Numerous feminist campaigns against trafficking and prostitution have assembled to advocate for neo-abolitionist policies. Although a few countries have decriminalized or legalized sex work, the larger cross-national trend has been towards the criminalization of prostitution.[4]

[4] See Figure 1.

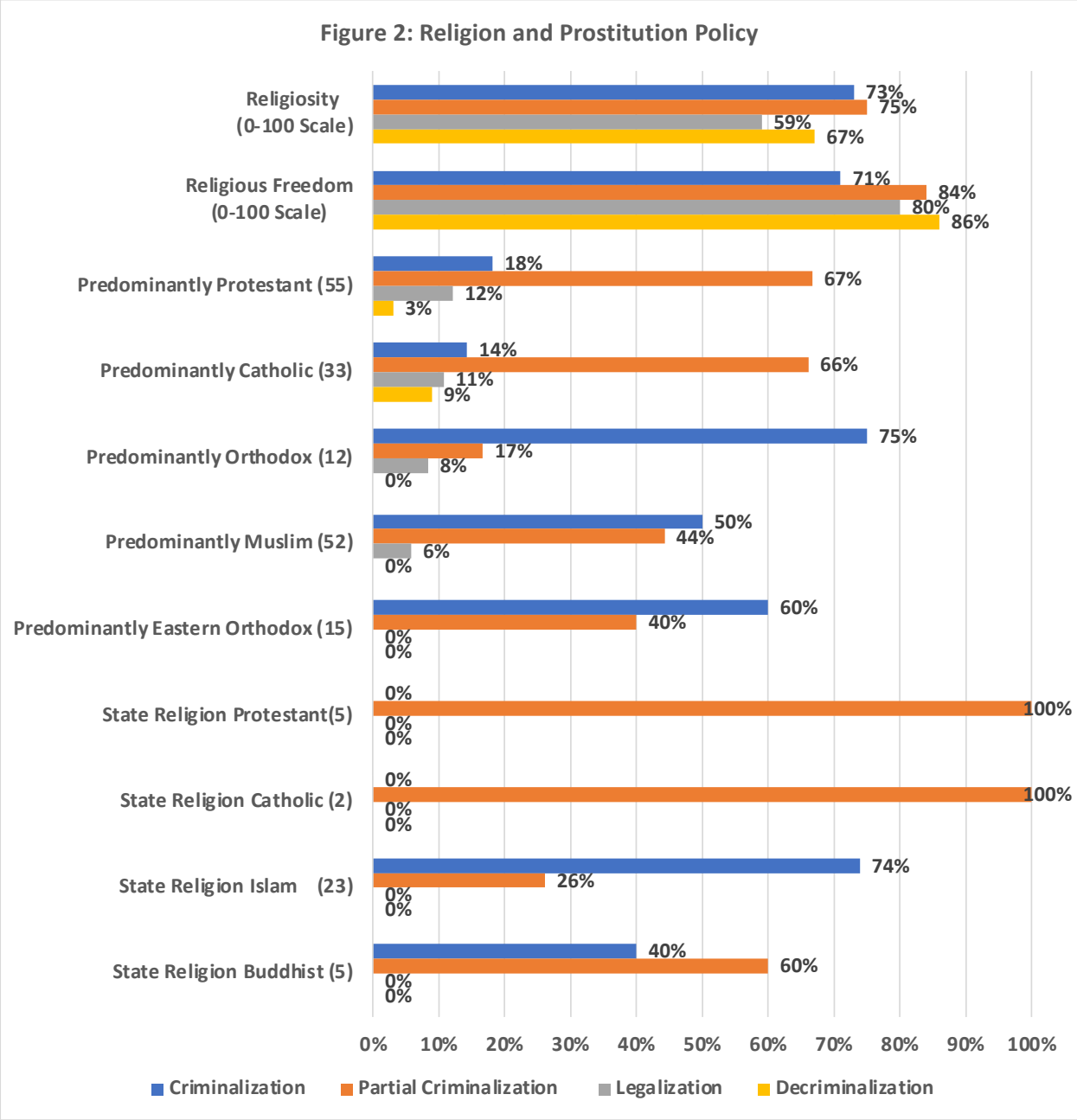
Non-abolitionists, on the other hand, argue that negative connotations of prostitution are sexist themselves and suggest that the interpretation of sex workers inherently serving subservient roles is repressive and stigmatizing. This approach challenges the stigmatization of sex work as opposed to challenging prostitution for its role in the stigmatization of women. Thus, sex worker activists claim that anti-prostitution laws place women in dangerous situations while undermining their sexual autonomy. However, these feminists are divided over whether to support legalization or decriminalization (Chuang, 2010). Some feminists, and the majority of sex-worker's rights groups, support decriminalization on the grounds of a moral right to self-sovereignty and the protection of women from third parties, overregulation by the state, and stigmatization. On the contrary, those who support legalization, otherwise known as neo-regulationists, argue that policies should be implemented to protect sex workers and reduce exploitation (George et al., 2010). In the present day, numerous feminists supporting sex worker rights have mobilized to advocate for the decriminalization and/or legalization of prostitution.

As the role and status of women in society have evolved over time, so have feminist approaches to prostitution law. While modern-day feminists hold opposing views regarding the relationship between prostitution and human trafficking, and consequently legal frameworks pertaining to sex work, the mobilization of feminist campaigns both for and against restrictive policies continues to have a marked influence on legislation. Perhaps feminist neo-abolitionists have succeeded in convincing government authorities to implement restrictive policies in efforts of reducing human trafficking and the suppression women. Simultaneously, it is possible that feminist non-abolitionists have encouraged states to decriminalize or legalize prostitution with hopes of reducing the unregulated exploitation of women and/or granting women the freedom to capitalize upon their erotic capital. Moreover, the role of women in government and various factors pertaining to female empowerment could also play a role in determining legislation. Whatever the case, it is evident that feminism and the role of women in society are critical drivers of prostitution policy in the modern era.

Results

1. Religion

Religion can have a significant impact on prostitution policy, as it can shape attitudes towards sex, gender, and morality, and influence the ways in which policymakers and society approach the issue of prostitution. Therefore, religion plays an important but varied role in the development of prostitution policy, having both prompted and prohibited prostitution at various times.



Consistent with expectations that prostitution laws are driven substantially by religious beliefs, Figure 2 shows that countries with higher levels of religiosity (i.e., those who are more likely to claim that religion is important to them) are more likely to have the most conservative prostitution policies.[5] Among countries that fully or partially criminalize prostitution, 73% and 75% of citizens on average expressed high levels of religiosity, respectively. In comparison, only 59% of citizens in countries where prostitution is legal, and 67% where it has been decriminalized, reported that religion is important to them.

Conversely, prostitution policies are more liberal in countries with higher religious freedom. Religious freedom in countries practicing full criminalization have a reasonably high level of religious liberty of 71%, but this compares to religious liberty levels of over 80% in all other countries and nearly 86% in countries that have decriminalized prostitution.

Aside from religiosity and religious freedom, more nuanced aspects such as the predominant religion of each country were also found to be important factors influencing prostitution policy. By predominant religion, we mean the one observed by the greatest number of citizens – a plurality and not necessarily a majority. In a review of the differing drivers of prostitution over millennia, we noted that religion has both promoted and prohibited prostitution, and that even the same religion may perceive prostitution in different ways at different times for various reasons.

Figure 2 examines the relationships between the predominant religions in countries today and their prostitution policies. It shows that Orthodox, Muslim, and Eastern Orthodox countries are much more likely to maintain more conservative policies. In fact, 75% of predominantly Orthodox countries maintain full criminalization policies and another 17% have partial criminalization policies. Similarly, 50% of predominantly Muslim countries maintain full criminalization policies and another 44% have partial criminalization policies. All 15 of the Eastern Orthodox countries in the data have full or partial criminalization policies, with 60% practicing full criminalization.

In contrast, predominantly Protestant and Catholic countries are less likely to practice full criminalization, with only 18% and 14% of these countries having such policies respectively. Instead, two-thirds of both these groups of countries have partial criminalization policies and are more likely to embrace legalization or decriminalization.

In addition, countries with official state religions tend to have more prohibitory prostitution policies. There are no countries with state religions in the data, for example, that have legalized or decriminalized prostitution. This is likely due to the fact that state religions supplement the effects of predominant religions with direct control of law-making institutions, which increases the conservative effects of religion on prostitution policy. This pattern dates back to the 6th

[5] See Figure A2 in Appendix A for variable definitions and sources.

century, when the Visigoth King of Spain utilized Catholicism as a policymaking vehicle to implement increasingly prohibitory legislation.

In countries with Catholic or Protestant state religions, all maintain partial criminalization policies, while Buddhist state religions are about equally divided between full and partial criminalization. Finally, Islamic state religions embrace criminalization policies by almost 75% to 25%. Countries with Islamic state religions are more likely to criminalize prostitution because sex out of marriage is generally considered haram (forbidden), and sex work is viewed as a sinful and immoral act.

Therefore, the data reinforce our initial prediction that religion weaves a tightly knit web with prostitution policy. Moreover, the emergence of a relationship between various religion-based variables and prostitution policy ensures that religion as a driver of sex work legislation transcends the confines of both space and time.

There are limits to the conclusions we can draw from simple, bi-variate analyses, however, since a considerable amount of overlap exists among the several religious variables which means they share explanatory power. Countries with state religions are likely to have less religious freedom and religiosity may be higher in some religious traditions than others, both of which may disguise the independent effects of the different variables.

To address these possibilities, we entered the several religious variables into a multivariate ordinal logit analysis, with the results summarized in Figure 3.[6] Models 1-3 analyze the separate effects of predominant religions, state religions, and religious qualities, in that order. Model 4 combines the significant independent effects of all three categories of religious variables in a summary model.

[6] The multivariate ordinal logit assumes a liberalization scale and makes the dependent variable (type of prostitution policy) ordinal. This means that in the multivariate analysis, we have a 4-level ordinal dependent variable: criminalization, partial criminalization, legalization, and decriminalization. The coefficients in the table show effectively where a particular variable tends to encourage more (positive) or less (negative) "liberal" prostitution laws. Within our study, decriminalization is the most liberal law, followed by legalization, partial criminalization, and lastly, criminalization as the least liberal law. The columns labeled "Sig." show whether the coefficient is statistically significant and, if so, at what level. Our alpha, or significance level, is set to 0.10.

		Figure 3: Ordinal Logit Analysis of Potential Religious Drivers of Prostitution Policy Types													
		Predominant Religion				State Religion				Religious Qualities				All Significant Variables	
		Est.	Std. Error	Sig.		Est.	Std. Error	Sig.		Est.	Std. Error	Sig.		Est.	Std. Error	Sig.
Threshold	1	-0.97	1.44	0.502		0.89	2.03	0.661		2.38	1.01	0.019		2.67	1.13	0.018
	2	2.33	1.43	0.103		3.93	2.04	0.054		5.44	1.08	0.000		6.03	1.17	0.000
	3	3.68	1.47	0.012		5.23	2.07	0.011		6.74	1.14	0.000		7.38	1.21	0.000
Factors	Protestant	0.77	0.50	0.129												
	Catholic	1.64	0.51	0.001										1.20	0.38	0.002
	Muslim	-0.43	0.48	0.366												
	Orthodox	-1.48	0.76	0.051										-1.75	0.71	0.013
	State Protestant					0.48	0.92	0.605								
	State Catholic					0.48	1.44	0.741								
	State Muslim					-2.11	0.51	0.000						-1.50	0.62	0.016
	State Buddhist					-0.78	0.89	0.380								
Threshold	Religiosity									0.00	0.01	0.577				
	Religious Freedom									0.04	0.01	0.000		0.02	0.01	0.145
Model Fit	X^2		34.60				22.10				19.90				82.32	
	Sig		0.001				0.001				0.001				0.001	
	Nagelkerke R^2		0.201				0.130				0.118				0.258	

Model 1 confirms that predominantly Catholic and Protestant countries tend to have more liberal prostitution policies, while predominantly Muslim and Orthodox countries tend to be more conservative. However, the effect is only statistically significant for predominantly Catholic (positive) and Orthodox (negative) countries.

Supporting the notion that state religions bolster the effects of predominant religions on prostitution policy, Model 2 shows that countries with Islamic state religions have significantly more conservative policies than other state religions.

In Model 3, religious freedom is shown to have strong and significant effects on prostitution policy, leaning towards more liberal legislation, while religiosity lacks both strength and significance.

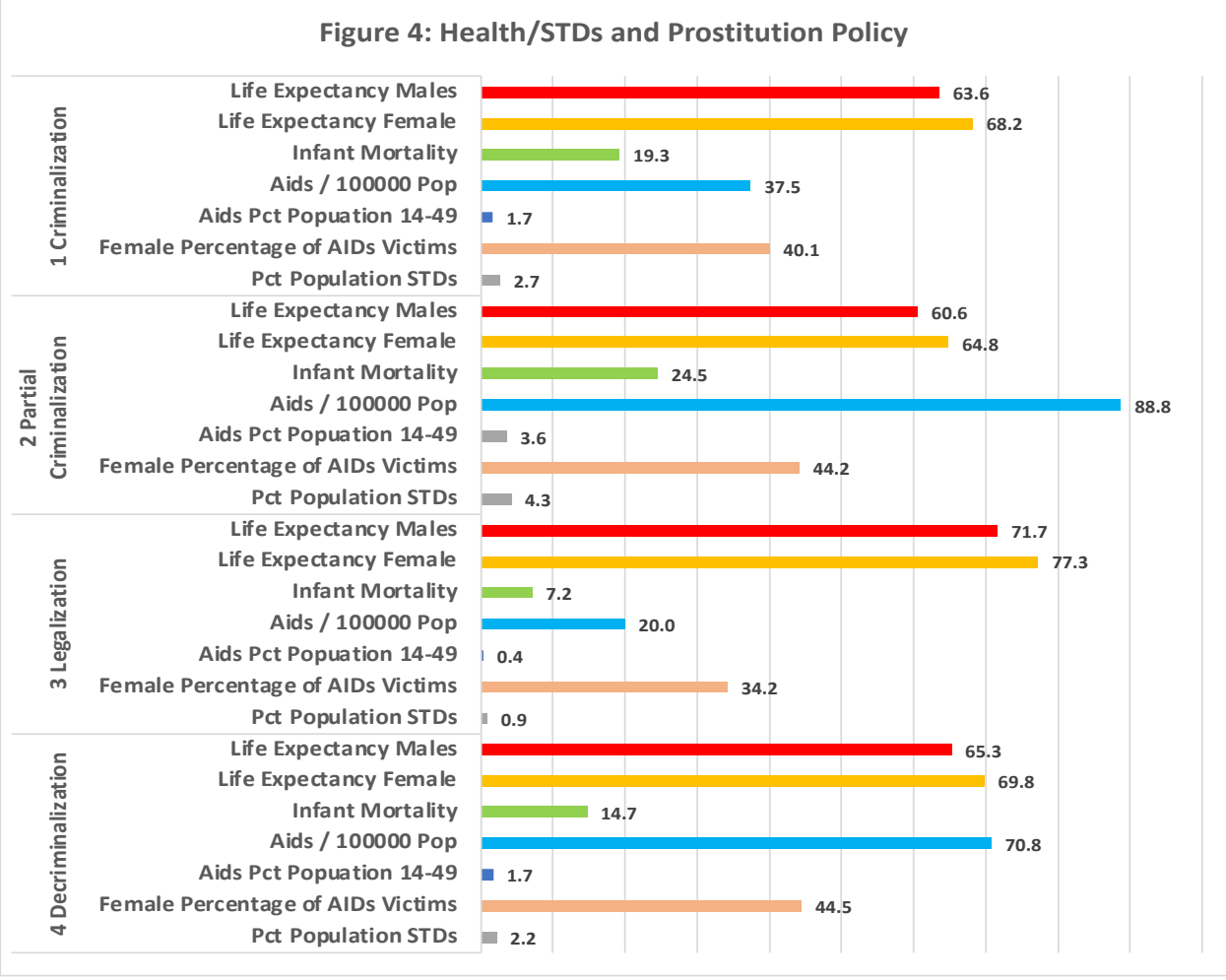
Finally, Model 4 combines the significant variables from the previous models and confirms their independent effects on prostitution policy. The model fit confirms that the combined model performs better than the other three individually and reinforces the contemporary importance of religion in shaping prostitution policy.

Nevertheless, the goodness-of-fit statistics show that all four models have an acceptable fit to the data, with the X^2 being significant in all cases and the Nagerkerke R^2 being modest.

Ultimately, while the initial bivariate analysis solidified the contemporary implications of religion on prostitution policy, the multivariate analysis accounts for the complexity and overlap of various religious variables. The results confirm the critical importance of specific religious factors such as Catholic and Orthodox as predominant religions, Islam as a state religion, and religious freedom as drivers of prostitution policy.

2. Health and Sexually Transmitted Diseases

While our initial predictions revolve around the historical implications of sexually transmitted diseases on sex work legislation, it is important to note that indicators such as life expectancy and infant mortality can also provide insight into the overall health of a population. Moreover, STDs can have a significant impact on life expectancy and infant mortality rates, especially in populations that are already vulnerable or marginalized, such as prostitutes.



According to the data presented in Figure 4, countries with more liberal prostitution policies tend to have higher life expectancies for both males and females. Specifically, among countries with legalization or decriminalization policies, males have an average life expectancy of 73 and 65 years, respectively, while the corresponding figures for countries with partial or full criminalization are only 61 and 64 years. Similarly, females in countries with legalization or decriminalization have an average life expectancy of 72 and 70 years, respectively, compared to only 65 and 68 years in countries with partial or full criminalization.

Many countries enjoying higher life expectancies view prostitution as a public health issue and believe that legalizing and regulating the industry can help reduce the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. By providing sex workers with access to healthcare and education, countries practicing legalization or decriminalization can improve public health outcomes.

Moreover, data pertaining to infant mortality rates support the notion that more liberal prostitution policies can improve the health of populations. Countries with higher rates of infant mortality tend to have more conservative prostitution policies. For instance, infant mortality rates are 19% and 25% in countries with full and partial criminalization, respectively, compared to only 7% and 15% in countries with legalization or decriminalization.

However, contrary to historical findings that sexually transmitted diseases influenced prostitution policy on a cross-national basis, especially during the initial discovery of venereal disease, there is little evidence to suggest that sexually transmitted diseases, such as AIDS, are drivers of contemporary legislation. For example, while countries with partial criminalization have the highest occurrence of AIDS per 100,000 people (89), countries with legalization have the lowest (20), and countries with full criminalization and decriminalization fall in between (38 and 67, respectively). Similar patterns emerge when measuring the percentage of the population between 14-49 years of age with AIDS. Additionally, the percentage of female AIDS victims is not significantly related to prostitution policy, with countries with decriminalization having the highest percentage (45%) and those with legalization having the lowest (34%).

When it comes to all sexually transmitted diseases, however, the data suggest that countries with more conservative policies tend to have slightly higher levels of STDs. Specifically, the percentage of the population with STDs is 3% and 4% in countries with full and partial criminalization, respectively, compared to only 1% and 2% in countries with legalization or decriminalization.

Overall, while there is some evidence of a connection between the various health variables and prostitution policy, the relationship is complex and disappears when other factors are taken into account. Contrary to the hypothesis that sexually transmitted diseases are of high importance to the implementation of one prostitution policy over another, the data suggest that the influence of

venereal disease on prostitution policy remains in the distant past. Furthermore, the modern-day relationship between prostitution policy and STD measures is influenced by a range of factors, including cultural norms and access to healthcare.

The multivariate ordinal logit analysis of the various health and illness variables are summarized in Figure 5. Model 1 examines the separate effects of various health and illness variables, while Model 2 focuses on the effects of the general health index of countries and sex-related illnesses.[7] However, none of the variables in either model achieve statistical significance, further contradicting our initial hypothesis that venereal disease is a contemporary driver of sex work legislation.

Figure 5: Ordinal Logit Analysis of Potential Health-Related Drivers and Prostitution Policy

		Est	Std. Error	Sig.		Est	Std. Error	Sig.
Threshold	[ProsType = 1]	3.36	2.37	0.157		-0.74	0.16	0.000
	[ProsType = 2]	6.29	2.41	0.009		2.12	0.24	0.000
	[ProsType = 3]	7.57	2.44	0.002		3.41	0.42	0.000
Covariates	Female Life Expectancy	0.01	0.08	0.854				
	Male Life Expectancy	0.03	0.08	0.687				
	Infant Mortality	0.01	0.01	0.528				
	Pct Pop with STDs	-0.01	0.01	0.606				
	Aids Victims / 100000 Pop	0.00	0.00	0.218				
	Aids Pct of Pop 14-49	0.04	0.05	0.379				
	Female Pct Aids Victims	0.02	0.02	0.320				
	General Healt Index					-0.02	0.14	0.899
	Sex-Related Illnesses Index					0.11	0.14	0.456
Model Fit	X^2		5.61				0.68	
	Sig		0.60				0.71	
	Nagelkerke R^2		0.06				0.00	

[7] The general health index is an index constructed based on a Principal Components Analysis of all eight health, wellness, and life-expectancy variables. The analysis produces a single factor with an eigenvalue greater than 1.0 and on which seven of the eight variables have factor loadings greater than 0.50. The weighted index that is derived from the analysis provides a summary measure of a country's relative health and wellness.

Moreover, neither model has an acceptable fit to the data, with small and non-significant X^2 and Nagerkerke R^2 values. This suggests that health-related impacts on prostitution policy occurred in the past are not significant in modern-day policymaking decisions.

As noted, previously, venereal diseases, such as syphilis, played a significant role in promoting the development of increasingly conservative prostitution policies. The discovery of syphilis in the 1490s was followed by the implementation of more prohibitory prostitution policies, with the Contagious Disease Act of 1864 in Britain serving as a more recent example of this trend.

However, health conditions related to venereal disease have since changed and stabilized, and there have been significant improvements in medicine on a global scale. As a result, sexually transmitted diseases have lost their influence on modern-day prostitution policy. While health-related factors may have been crucial in the past, our data eliminate venereal disease as a contemporary driver of prostitution policy and urge us to investigate the influence of other potential drivers.

3. Modernization

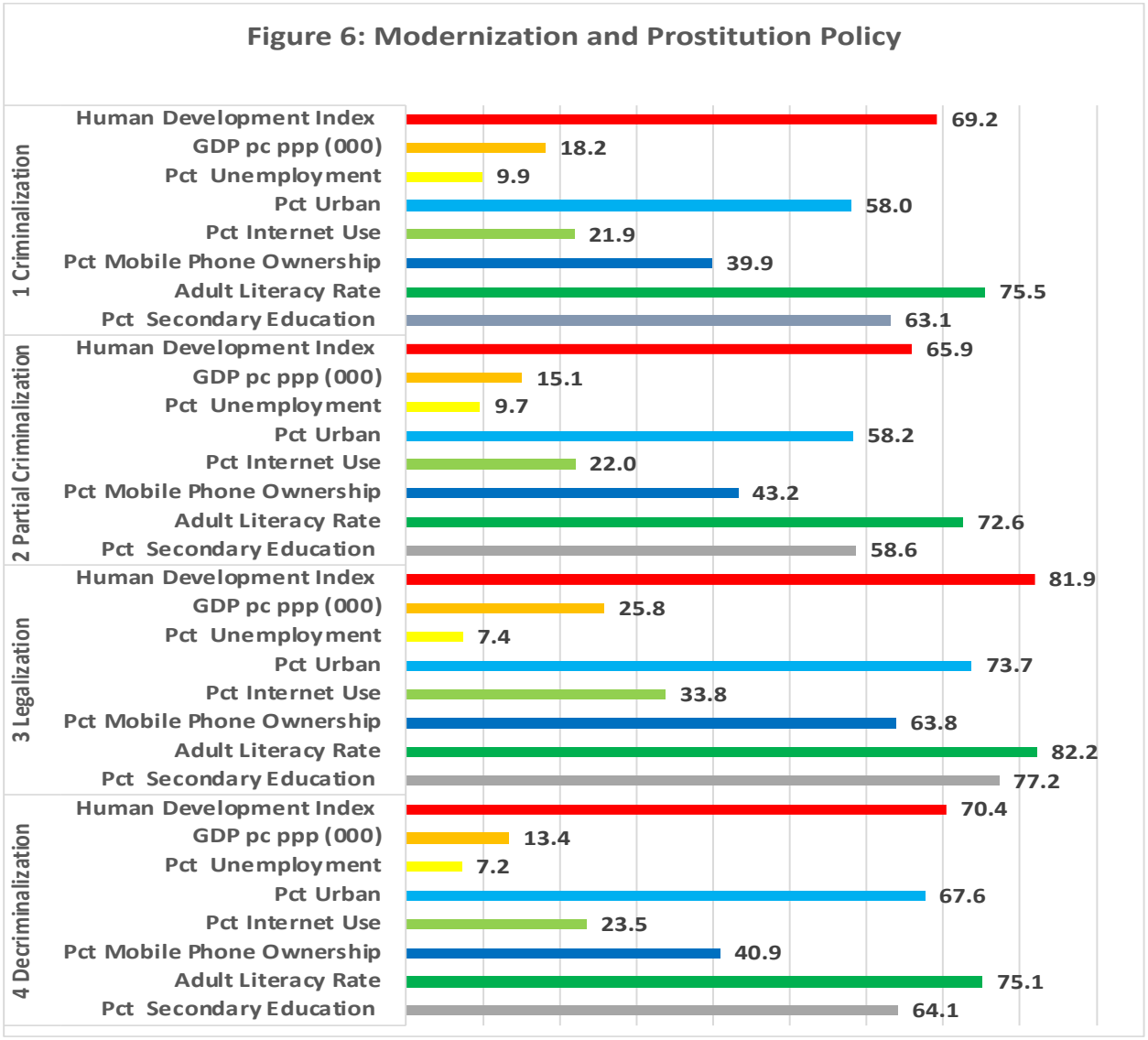
As previously described, there is a complex relationship between modernization and prostitution policy. Moreover, the connection varies depending on the specific country and/or time period being examined. While modernization initially influenced more conservative prostitution policies due to the simultaneous proliferation of prostitution and the growth of middle-class values, it has become increasingly associated with increased individualism and a focus on personal autonomy and freedom. Modernization can be measured in a variety of ways, including the use of economic indicators, technological indicators, and social indicators.

According to the data presented in Figure 6, countries with higher Human Development Index (HDI) values tend to have the most liberal prostitution policies. The HDI measures life expectancy, per capita income, and education, among other indicators, and countries with legalized prostitution have the highest average HDI score of 82 points out of 100 (United Nations Development Programme, n.d.). Countries with decriminalization policies follow closely behind with an index of 70, while countries with partial or full criminalization policies score 66 and 69, respectively.

Economic indicators, such as gross domestic product (GDP), broadly reflect the degree to which a country has modernized its economy and integrated into the global market. Interestingly, GDP per capita does not show any clear patterns in relation to prostitution policy, but countries with decriminalization policies tend to have the highest average GDP per capita at 26. On the other hand, countries with the most conservative prostitution policies of full criminalization have an average GDP per capita of only 13.

Countries with higher unemployment rates are also more likely to have more conservative prostitution policies, with 10% of citizens on average being unemployed in countries with full or partial criminalization policies, compared to only 7% in countries with legalization or decriminalization policies.

Moreover, urbanization and modernization are closely linked, as urban areas are often seen as centers of economic, social, and cultural modernization. Accordingly, prostitution laws vary based on the level of urbanization, with more liberal policies being associated with higher percentages of urbanization. Countries with legalized prostitution have the highest average percentage of urbanization at 74%, followed by countries with decriminalization policies at 68%, while countries with partial or full criminalization policies have lower percentages of urbanization at only 58%.



Indicators such as internet usage and mobile phone ownership reflect the degree to which a country has adopted and integrated new technologies into its economy and society and are consequently critical measures of modernization. Countries with more liberal prostitution policies tend to have higher percentages of internet usage, with countries with legalized prostitution having the highest average internet usage at 34%. Countries with full criminalization policies have the lowest percentage of internet usage at only 22%. Although percent mobile phone ownership does not show a clear pattern in relation to prostitution policies, countries with legalized prostitution have the highest percentage of mobile phone use at 64%, followed by countries with partial criminalization at 43%, decriminalization at 41%, and full criminalization at 40%.

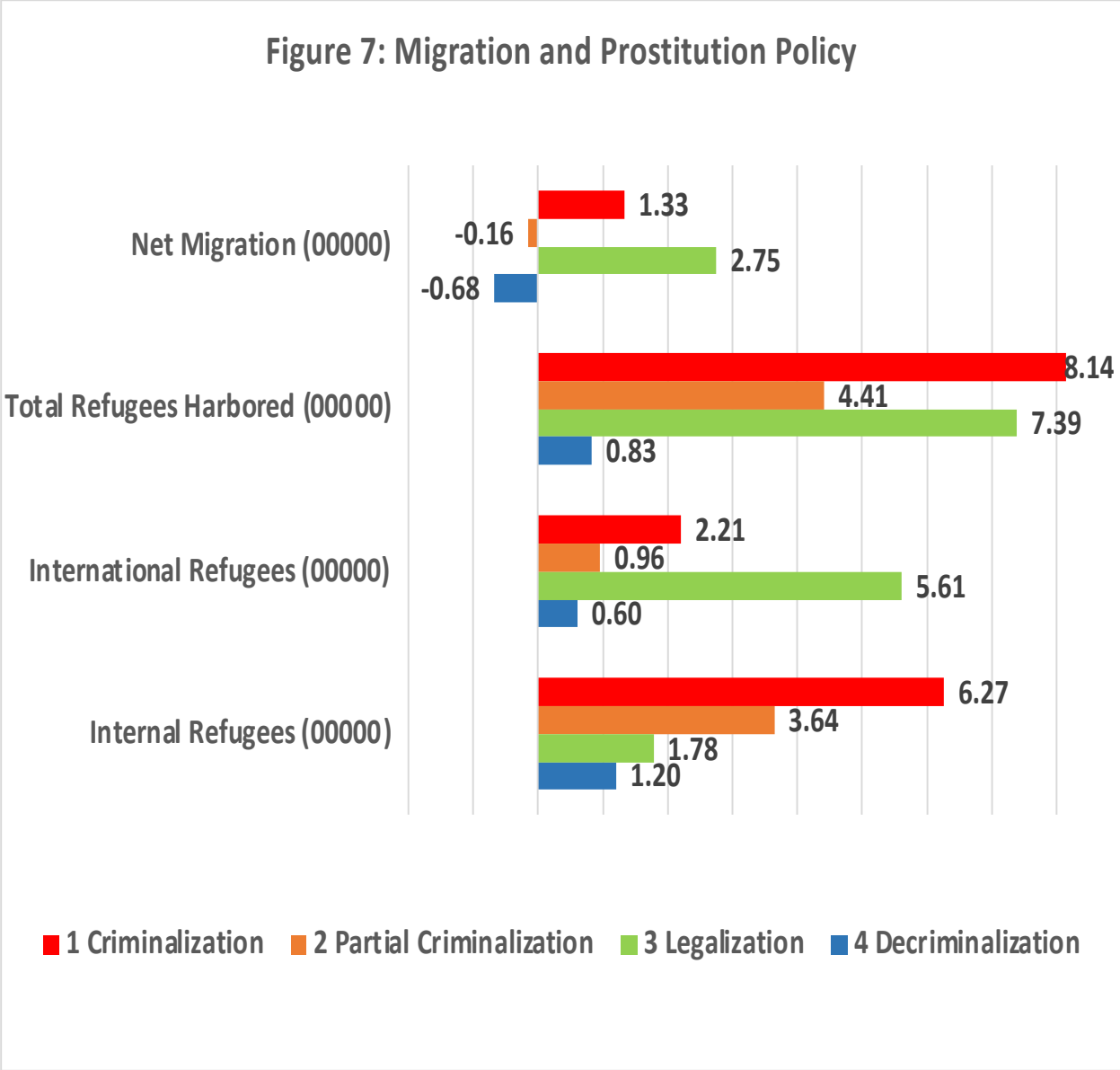
As important social indicators of modernization, education levels can reflect the degree to which a country has modernized its social systems and invested in human development. While measures of adult literacy rates fail to illustrate any noticeable patterns pertaining to prostitution policy, countries with more women completing secondary education tend to have more liberal prostitution policies. In fact, countries practicing legalization having an average of 77% of women completing secondary education, compared to 64% in countries with decriminalization policies, 63% in countries with full criminalization policies, and 59% in countries with partial criminalization policies.

On Migration

As both a cause and consequence of modernization, migration is in important factor when considering the relationship between modernization and prostitution policy. Although the majority of the modernization variables examined show a clear connection to prostitution policy, the data pertaining to migration does not.

As evidenced in Figure 7, net migration, total refugees harbored, and numbers of international refugees harbored do not correspond with more liberal or conservative prostitution policy. Factors including cultural values, political and legal frameworks, public opinion, and economic factors may complicate the relationship between migration and prostitution policy.

When considering internal refugees, however, it is evident that prostitution policies are more conservative in countries with higher numbers of internal refugees. Internal refugees refer to people who are often forced to flee their homes due to conflict, violence, or other forms of persecution, but who have not crossed an international border (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, n.d.). Countries employing full criminalization have a much larger number of 627,000 internal refugees than those with other prostitution policies. These countries are distantly followed by those with partial criminalization at 364,000 internal refugees, legalization at 178,000 refugees, and lastly, decriminalization at 120,000 refugees.



It is important to note that IDPs are a vulnerable population who may be at an increased risk of exploitation and abuse, including sexual exploitation and trafficking. Our data, which provides evidence to suggest that countries with more IDPs have more conservative prostitution policies, can reflect increased efforts by governments facing internal conflict to regulate and control activities such as sex work.

Figure 8 provides a multivariate analysis of the various modernization indicators, including indicators measuring migration. While the bivariate analysis supports our hypothesis that both modernization and migration have (at least some) impact on prostitution policy, the results of the multivariate analysis indicate that modernization has, at best, a weak relationship.

Figure 8: Ordinal Logit Analysis of Potential Modernization & Migration Drivers of Prostitution Policy Types

		Modernization			Migration			All Significant Variables Qualities		
		Est	Std. Error	Sig.	Est	Std. Error	Sig.	Est.	Std. Error	Sig.
Threshold	1	-0.45	0.96	0.641	-0.84	0.18	0.000	-0.582	0.971	0.549
	2	2.52	0.98	0.010	2.06	0.25	0.000	2.425	0.993	0.015
	3	3.82	1.04	0.000	3.35	0.42	0.000	3.732	1.051	0.000
Covariates	Index	-0.38	2.47	0.879						
	GDP per Cap PPP	0.00	0.00	0.113						
	Percent Urban	0.02	0.01	0.127				0.017	0.010	0.095
	Internet Usage	0.00	0.00	0.168				0.002	0.001	0.186
	Mobile Phones/Cap	0.01	0.01	0.345						
	Literacy Females	0.00	0.01	0.759						
	% Women with Secondary Education	-0.01	0.01	0.436						
	Net Migration				-0.02	0.02	0.415			
	Total Refugees Harbored (00000)				0.05	0.11	0.691			
	International Refugees Harbored (00000)				-0.03	0.12	0.829			
	Internal Refugees Displaced Persons (00000)				-0.07	0.12	0.548			
Model Fit	X^2		9.04			3.88			8.35	
	Sig		0.251			0.42			0.210	
	Nagelkerke R^2		0.06			0.02			0.050	

Model 1, which focuses on modernization alone, shows that percent urbanization and internet usage both have significant independent effects. While urbanization shows a slight propensity for more liberal prostitution policies, internet usage fails to convey any relationship to more liberal or conservative prostitution policies. Furthermore, Model 2, which focuses on migration, lacks any variables with significant independent effects.

The goodness-of-fit statistic indicate that the models do not have an acceptable fit to the data. The X^2 is not significant and the Nagerkerke R^2 is very low.

Ultimately, the failure of any modernization or migration indicators besides percent urbanization and internet usage to yield significant independent effects undermines our initial prediction that modernization is a contemporary driver of prostitution policy. While significant, the independent effects of percent urbanization and internet usage are weak and only slightly lean towards more liberal policies. Thus, the multivariate analysis proves that the relationship between modernization and prostitution policy is complex and context-dependent, and that there is no clear or consistent pattern across all countries.

The impact of modernization on prostitution policy may be mediated, however, by a range of other drivers, such as democratization, and by a lack of time-series data. It is possible that the effects of modernization on prostitution policy occurred during the initial period of industrialization and urbanization, and that modernization lacks any strong contemporary connection to prostitution policy for this reason.

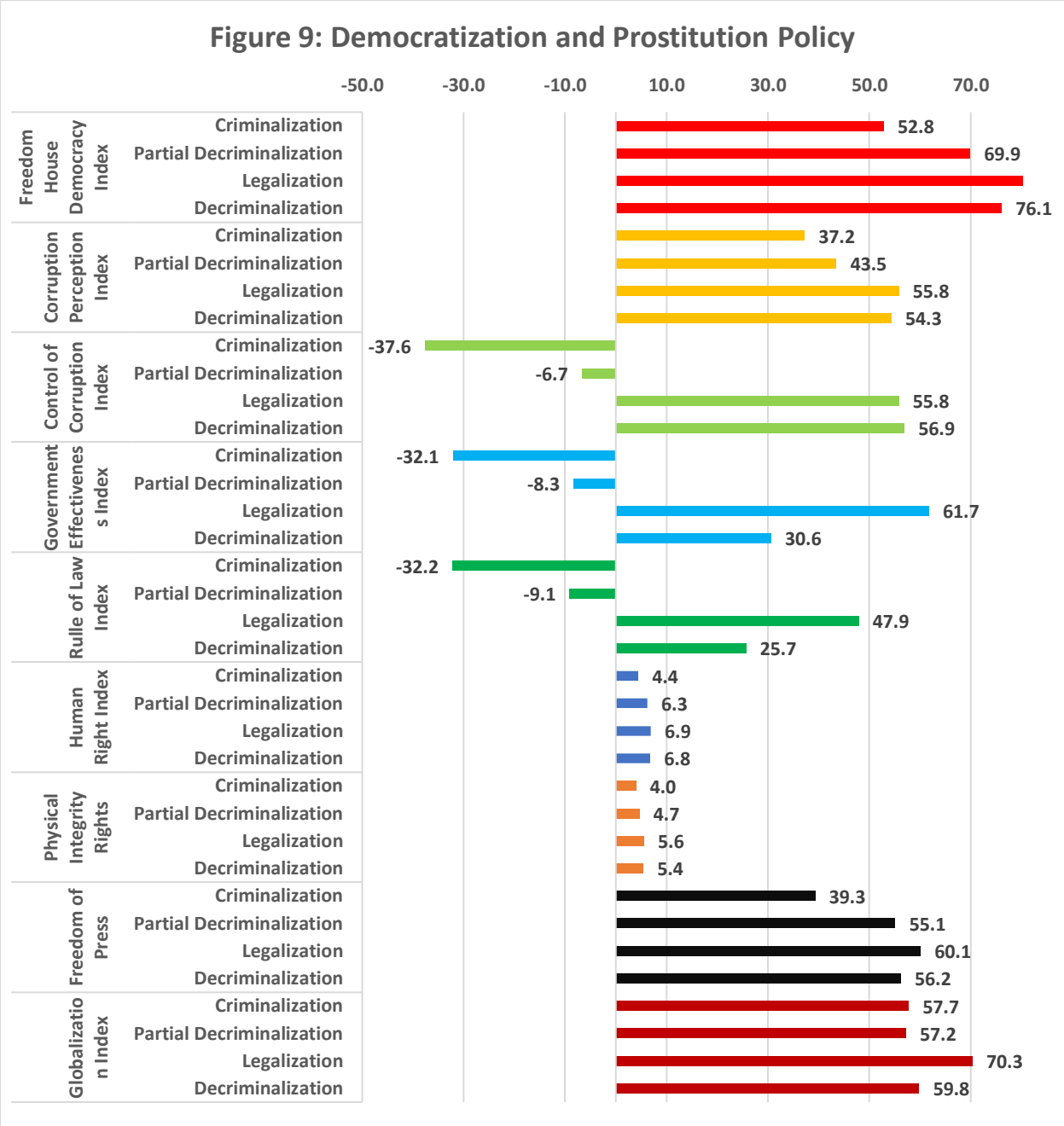
4. Democratization

As indicated by our initial hypothesis, prostitution policy can be influenced by a country's level of democratization. In more democratic societies, there may be greater public debate and discussion about the merits and drawbacks of varying approaches to prostitution policy, which can lead to a more open and nuanced approach to legislation. We predicted that level of democratization in a society can affect the approach taken to regulate the sex trade industry, and our results support this notion and indicate that higher levels of democratization are linked to more liberal prostitution policy.

Specifically, Figure 9 shows that countries with higher scores on the Freedom House Democracy Index are more likely to have more liberal policies towards prostitution. The index assesses each country's level of political and civil freedom based on a set of indicators, including the conduct of free and fair elections, freedom of expression and association, rule of law, and civil liberties (Freedom House, 2023). The greatest index values are found in countries where prostitution is legalized, with a score of 82 out of 100. Decriminalization policies follow closely with a score of 76. On the other hand, countries with more conservative policies such as partial or full criminalization have lower scores of 70 and 53, respectively.

Additionally, countries with higher levels of perceived public sector corruption, as measured by the Corruption Perception Index, are more likely to have conservative prostitution policies.[8] The Corruption Perceptions Index ranks countries on a scale from 0 to 100, with 0 indicating a highly corrupt country and 100 indicating a very clean, or non-corrupt, country. Countries with legalized prostitution have the highest score at 56, followed closely by those with decriminalization policies with a score of 54. In contrast, countries with partial or full criminalization have much lower scores and thus greater corruption in the public sector, with a score of 44 and 37, respectively.

[8] The Corruption Perceptions Index is an index which utilizes opinion surveys and expert assessments to rank countries by their perceived levels of public sector corruption ("Corruption Perceptions Index", 2023).



The Control of Corruption Index, which measures the extent to which public officials in a given country are able to control corruption as assessed by officials at the World Bank, also indicates that countries with more liberal prostitution policies tend to have less corruption (Millenium Challenge Corporation, 2023). Higher scores indicate stronger control of corruption. Countries with legalized prostitution have a score of 56, and those with decriminalization policies score 57. In comparison, countries with partial criminalization have a score of -7, and those with full criminalization have a score of -38, indicating poor performance with respect to corruption control.

Moreover, countries with higher scores on the Government Effectiveness Index (also as measured by the World Bank) tend to have more liberal prostitution policies. Countries with legalized prostitution have a score of 62 while those with decriminalized prostitution have a score of 31. This compares to scores below -32 in full criminalization countries and merely -7 in countries with partial criminalization. The Rule of Law Index also shows that countries with more liberal prostitution policies tend to have higher scores, and thus greater levels of democratization. Countries with legalized prostitution have a score of 48, while those with full criminalization have a drastically lower score of -32.

Aside from the previous indicators measuring the quality of governance in each country, it is also vital to consider factors such as human rights and physical integrity rights when considering the influence of democratization on legislation. In fact, human rights are often considered a cornerstone of democratic governance. Mirroring the previous findings, countries with higher scores on the Human Rights Index also tend to have more liberal prostitution policies.[9] Countries with legalized or decriminalized prostitution have a score of 7, while those with partial or full criminalization have scores of 5 and 4, respectively. Similarly, countries with higher scores on physical integrity rights tend to have more liberal prostitution policies. Countries with legalized prostitution have a score of 6, while those with partial or full criminalization have scores of 4.

The freedom of the press in a country, as measured by Freedom House, also is related to its prostitution policies. A free and independent media is an important component of a democratic system, as it provides citizens with information about government actions and policies, helps to hold officials accountable for their actions, and enables citizens to make informed decisions. Countries with the most freedom of the press tend to have more liberal prostitution policies, while those with the least freedom of the press tend to have more conservative policies. Our data show that countries with full criminalization have a low score of 39, while countries with legalization have a markedly higher score of 60.

Finally, countries with more liberal prostitution policies tend to have higher globalization indexes. It is important to note that the relationship between globalization and democratization is complex and context-specific, and can have both positive and negative effects on democratic governance depending on a range of factors. Globalization is also correlated with modernization. Nevertheless, countries with legalized prostitution have the highest globalization index of 70, while those with decriminalization, full criminalization, and partial criminalization have scores of 60, 58, and 57, respectively.

[9] The Human Rights Index, as issued by various bodies of the United Nations human rights monitoring system, is a human rights indicator and consists of a repository of observations and recommendations (UN Office of the High Commissioner, n.d.).

Overall, these findings suggest that countries with more democratic policies, less corruption, and greater human rights tend to have more liberal policies towards prostitution. Our data show a clear consensus on the relationship between indicators of democratization and prostitution policy, illustrating the parallel between democratization and more liberal prostitution policies.

Figure 10 conveys the various democratization, corruption, and human rights variables in a multivariate analysis. Models 1 and 2 analyze the separate effects of democratization and corruption, respectively, and then combine the significant independent effects into a summary third model.

Figure 10: Ordinal Logit Analysis of Potential Democracy, Human Rights and Corruption Drivers of Prostitution Policy Types

		Est	Std. Error	Sig.		Est	Std. Error	Sig.		Est	Std. Error	Sig.
Threshold	1	1.45	1.91	0.448		1.37	1.32	0.302		3.49	2.37	0.141
	2	4.58	1.94	0.018		4.48	1.37	0.001		6.78	2.42	0.005
	3	5.90	1.97	0.003		5.83	1.42	0.000		8.14	2.45	0.001
Covariates	Freedom House Democracy Index	0.02	0.01	0.176						0.03	0.02	0.065
	Freedom House Free Press	0.01	0.02	0.785								
	Ciri Human Rights Index	0.07	0.08	0.402								
	Physical Integrity Index	0.08	0.08	0.364						0.04	0.03	0.246
	Control of Corruption Index					0.61	0.61	0.325				
	Rule of Law					-1.14	0.54	0.034		-1.83	0.60	0.002
	Government Effectiveness Index					0.11	0.46	0.809				
Model Fit	X^2	22.50					18.90				34.90	
	Sig	0.00					0.00				0.00	
	Nagelkerke R^2	0.06					0.11				0.20	

Model 1 confirms that democratization influences more liberal prostitution policy, as all democratization variables lean slightly towards more liberal prostitution policies. This effect is only statistically significant for the Freedom House Democracy Index, but this index effectively subsumes all of the others and can be considered a summary indicator disguising the effects of the others.

In Model 2, the Control of Corruption Index and the Government Effectiveness Index do not appear to have significant independent effects on prostitution policy, but both lean towards more liberal prostitution policies. On the other hand, the Physical Integrity Index and the Rule of Law index have opposing significant independent effects on prostitution policy. Countries with greater levels of physical integrity tend to have slightly more liberal policies. Although countries with greater rule of law have some of the most conservative prostitution policies, it may be not just that they practice the rule of law but also the rule of more conservative, draconian law.

Finally, the third summary model confirms the independent effects of all the significant variables from the previous models. The combined model performs better than the other two individually, reinforcing the importance of democratization, human rights, and corruption in shaping prostitution policy. The goodness-of-fit statistics at the bottom of the four models show that all have an acceptable fit to the data. The X^2 is significant in all three cases, although the Nagerkerke R^2 is modest.

Our data indicate a clear relationship between greater levels of democratization and more liberal prostitution policy approaches. One possible explanation, as supported by the data pertaining to the Physical Integrity Index, is that democratic societies tend to place a greater emphasis on individual rights and freedoms, including the right to engage in consensual sexual activity and the right to privacy. Another possible explanation is that democratic societies tend to have more open and transparent political systems, which may make it easier for advocates of liberal prostitution policies to mobilize public support and influence policy decisions.

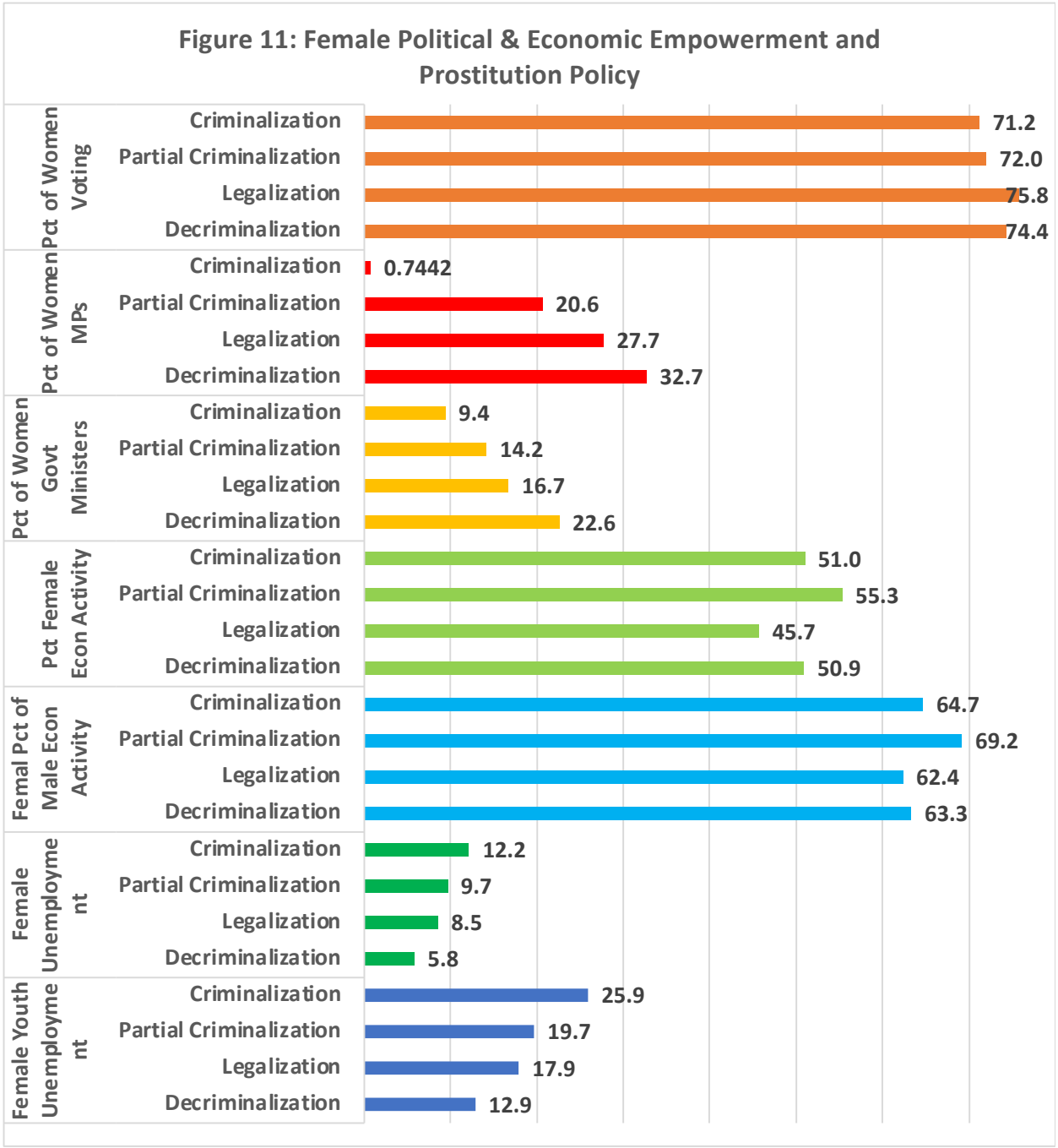
5. Female Political and Economic Empowerment

Prostitution policy is often linked to broader debates about gender equality and women's rights. Increased female political and economic empowerment may lead to greater public debate and engagement on the issue, which can influence sex work legislation in various manners. Consistent with expectations about feminism and the role of women in society, Figure 11 validates female economic and political empowerment as a driver of prostitution policy.

Firstly, the data show that there is a higher percentage of women voting in countries with more liberal prostitution policies. Countries with legalization and decriminalization have 76% and 74% of women voting, respectively, while those with partial criminalization and full criminalization have 72% and 71%, respectively.

The data also reveal that countries with a higher percentage of women in political power tend to have more liberal prostitution policies. Specifically, countries with decriminalization policies have the highest percentage of women in parliament, at 33%, followed by countries with

legalization policies at 28%. On the other hand, countries with full criminalization policies have the lowest percentage of women in parliament at only 18%.



Similarly, countries with more women in government minister roles also tend to follow more liberal policies, with the highest percentage occurring in countries with decriminalization policies at 23%. In contrast, countries with more women involved in economic activity tend to have slightly more conservative policies, with partial criminalization countries having the highest

percentage at 55%. Rather than suggesting female empowerment, these data may reflect countries where poverty forces women to work whether they want to or not. This is also consistent with the finding that countries with a higher female to male percentage of economic activity are slightly more likely to follow more conservative prostitution policies, with countries practicing partial criminalization maintaining a high of 69%.

Moreover, the data show that countries with a higher percentage of female unemployment, especially among young women, are more likely to have more conservative prostitution policies. For instance, full and partial criminalization countries have female youth unemployment rates of 26% and 20%, respectively, while countries with legalization and decriminalization policies have lower rates at 18% and 13%, respectively.

Overall, the evidence suggests that female political empowerment has a greater impact on prostitution policy than female economic empowerment – if that is what female economic activity is really measuring. While there are some differences in female economic empowerment as related to prostitution policy, the data pertaining to female political empowerment present a stronger connection to prostitution policy and asserts that greater female political empowerment corresponds to more liberal prostitution policies.

Figure 12 presents the multivariate analysis of the various female economic and political empowerment indicators. This analysis supports the findings of the bivariate analysis and draws out the separate effects of the previously discussed variables, solidifying female empowerment as a driver of prostitution policy. Model 1 examines female economic empowerment, while Model 2 investigates female political empowerment. Model 3 provides a summary of significant variables from the previous models.

Model 1 of the analysis confirmed that there are differential effects of female economic empowerment on prostitution policy. Interestingly enough, both female economic activity and female youth unemployment have weak, although statistically significant, effects on the model, exhibiting more conservative prostitution policies. Conversely, female economic activity as percent male shows a weak, although significant propensity for more liberal policies.

In Model 2, the percentage of women voting does not have a significant independent effect on prostitution policy. However, the percentage of females in parliament and the percentage of female government ministers are both statistically significant and show an inclination towards more liberal prostitution policies.

Figure 12: Ordinal Logit Analysis of Potential Female Political & Economic Empowerment Drivers of Prostitution Policy Types												
		Est	Std. Error	Sig.		Est	Std. Error	Sig.		Est	Std. Error	Sig.
Threshold	1	-2.43	0.85	0.004		0.36	1.58	0.822		-1.35	1.80	0.454
	2	0.59	0.83	0.482		3.46	1.61	0.031		1.92	1.80	0.287
	3	1.91	0.90	0.033		4.81	1.65	0.004		3.32	1.84	0.071
Covariates	Female Economic Activity	-0.07	0.03	0.043						-0.03	0.04	0.429
	Female Econ Act as % Male	0.04	0.03	0.105						0.01	0.03	0.849
	Female % Unemployed	0.06	0.06	0.317								
	Female Youth % Unemploy	-0.07	0.03	0.030						-0.06	0.03	0.096
	% Women Voting					0.07	2.08	0.972				
	Percent Female MPs					0.03	0.01	0.027		0.03	0.01	0.032
	% Female Govt. Ministers					0.04	0.02	0.014		0.04	0.02	0.015
Model Fit	X^2		14.20				18.60				31.30	
	Sig		0.01				0.00				0.00	
	Nagelkerke R^2		0.09				0.11				0.18	

The final summary model confirms the significant independent effects of female youth unemployment, percentage of females in parliament, and percentage of female government ministers. While the latter two variables experience a diminishing effect in Model 3, this is likely due to the overlap in variables measuring female economic empowerment which results in a competition for a relatively small amount of variance.

The goodness-of-fit statistics at the bottom of the three models show that all have an acceptable fit to the data. The X^2 is significant in all models, although Nagerkerke R^2 is modest in all three cases. The combined model shows better performance than the other two models individually and solidifies the importance of female empowerment in shaping prostitution policy.

Ultimately, the data show that female political and economic empowerment corresponds to more liberal policies. These data support the notion that in societies where women have greater political and economic power, there may be greater support for decriminalizing or legalizing prostitution as a means of improving the working conditions and safety of sex workers.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the relationship between female economic and political empowerment is highly contingent on a range of social, cultural, and political factors.

Summary of Results

Figure 13 summarizes the independent effects of significant variables across all historical prostitution policy drivers to reveal the extent to which these drivers still influence modern-day prostitution policy cross-nationally. These variables include only those which maintained significance in the summary model of each policy driver. The data confirm our initial expectations of the influence of religion, modernization, democratization, and female economic and political empowerment on prostitution policy to varying degrees. However, the data contradict our hypotheses regarding the effects of health and migration, as they fail to convey any significant impact of these drivers on prostitution policy today.

Figure 13: Summary Ordinal Logit Analysis of Most Important Drivers of Prostitution Policy Types

		Most Important Variables		
		Est.	Std. Error	Sig.
Threshold	1	3.80	1.66	0.022
	2	7.43	1.72	0.000
	3	8.84	1.76	0.000
Factors	Predominantly Catholic	0.69	0.43	0.106
	Predominantly Orthodox	-1.82	0.75	0.016
	Muslim State Religion	-1.14	0.67	0.089
Covariates	Religious Freedom	0.01	0.01	0.475
	Percent Urban	0.01	0.01	0.204
	Internet Usage	0.00	0.00	0.555
	Female Youth Unemployment	-0.03	0.01	0.035
	Freedom House Democracy Index	0.02	0.01	0.123
	Rule of Law	-0.10	0.32	0.743
	Percent Female Legislators	0.02	0.02	0.118
	Percent Female Govt Ministers	0.02	0.02	0.302
Model Fit	X^2		61.92	
	Sig		0.001	
	Nagelkerke R^2		0.34	

Religion has the greatest independent effects on prostitution policy compared to the other policy drivers. The data validate historical findings that religion can promote or prohibit prostitution based on various factors, such as predominant national religions and state religions. Moreover, the effects of religion are magnified when religion controls the levers of state power. While predominantly Catholic countries, although no longer significant in the summary model, tend to adopt more liberal prostitution policies (coefficient of 0.69), predominantly Orthodox countries adopt the most conservative policies, with the strongest independent effect on the model (coefficient of -1.82). Countries with a state religion of Islam have the next greatest effect on the model, also enacting more conservate policies (coefficient of -1.14). Religious freedom is not significant in the summary model and only slightly tends towards more liberal policies (coefficient of 0.01), but it reinforces the crucial role of religion in the type of prostitution policy adopted cross-nationally.

It is worth noting that the influence of religion on prostitution policy is complex and multifaceted. For example, in some predominantly Catholic countries, prostitution may be considered a moral issue, and therefore regulated through laws and regulations that aim to protect sex workers. These laws, however, are significantly more liberal than their Orthodox counterparts and revolve around the protection of sex workers as opposed to the eradication of sex work. In predominantly Orthodox countries, on the other hand, prostitution may be viewed as a grave sin, and therefore criminalized to a greater extent. Similarly, in countries with Islam as a state religion, prostitution is often strictly prohibited and punished severely under Islamic Zina Law.

Modernization also has some implications for prostitution policy, as indicated by the independent effects of urbanization and internet usage. Countries with more urbanization are slightly more inclined to adopt liberal policies (coefficient of 0.01), while internet usage has no significant independent effects on prostitution policy compared to other policy drivers (coefficient of 0.00). The relationship between urbanization and prostitution policy can be explained by the fact that urban areas tend to have more diverse populations, including more sex workers, and therefore may be more accepting of liberal prostitution policies. Nevertheless, the lack of a strong connection between modernization and prostitution policy indicates that the relationship is nuanced and influenced by other drivers.

Democratization also influences prostitution policy, as illustrated by the differing independent effects of the Freedom House Democracy Index and Rule of Law. Countries with a greater Freedom House Democracy Index are more likely to adopt liberal prostitution policies (coefficient of 0.02), while those with greater Rule of Law tend to enact more conservative prostitution policies (coefficient of -0.10).

In terms of democratization and prostitution policy, it is important to note that the relationship between the two may be influenced by cultural, political, and historical factors unique to each country. Countries with a higher Freedom House Democracy Index, for example, may be more likely to adopt liberal prostitution policies due to greater respect for individual rights and freedoms, while those with greater Rule of Law may be more conservative due to a stronger emphasis on traditional values and morals.

Finally, female political empowerment, as measured by percent female legislators and percent female government ministers, plays a role in the adoption of more liberal prostitution policies (both have a coefficient of 0.02). Furthermore, countries with greater female youth unemployment, which may encourage young women to turn to prostitution when other employment is unavailable, tend to adopt more conservative prostitution policies (coefficient of -0.03).

Thus, the role of women in society as a determinant of prostitution policy addresses the implications of greater gender equality and female empowerment in decision-making processes. This can include increasing the number of women in government positions and promoting women's economic and social mobility. Such efforts can help to create a more inclusive, progressive, and liberal approach to prostitution policy that reflects the diverse needs and perspectives of all members of society. On the contrary, countries with less female economic empowerment, as evidenced by those exhibiting higher levels of female youth unemployment, may be more likely to adopt conservative prostitution policies as a result of economic stressors and the abolitionist perspective that prostitution is a last resort for women in dire financial circumstances.

Overall, the goodness-of-fit statistics indicate an acceptable fit to the data, with the model confirming our initial hypothesis that various historical drivers of prostitution policy continue to shape modern-day policies across countries. However, the independent effects of each driver are complex and multifaceted, and influenced by unique cultural, political, and historical factors in each country. Furthermore, the fact that some variables fail to be significant in the final summary model suggests that some of their influence on prostitution policy is shared with other variables included in the model.

Conclusion

Prostitution, often called “the world’s oldest profession”, is a complex and controversial topic that has long been the subject of debate and discussion regarding how to regulate its practice. With prostitution policies varying widely across countries, cultures, and time, it begs the question*:* why? Specifically, why do some countries and cultures outlaw prostitution entirely at times, while others outlaw it only in part, and only a few legalize or decriminalize it?

In this study, we have sought answers to these questions by developing a measure of prostitution policy based on four predominant prostitution policy categories - complete criminalization, partial criminalization, legalization, and decriminalization - and identifying how these policies have developed over space and time.

We began by looking for international and regional patterns pertaining to prostitution policies, hoping to find patterns that might help identify causes. In fact, little by way of regional patterns emerged. There was some evidence that Middle Eastern countries had slightly higher concentrations of complete criminalization than elsewhere, but this concentration was still relatively limited and was nearly matched by the concentration observed in North America, given the complete criminalization policy maintained by the United States.

Finding few clues in current geographic patterns, we turned to history where we identified five broad clusters of influences that historically appear to have driven the development of prostitution policies across the world. These drivers are religion and religiosity; health concerns especially regarding sexually transmitted diseases; modernization, migration, and immigration; democratization and human rights; and female economic and political empowerment. Moreover, our historical analysis of prostitution policy highlights the ever-changing roles that these different drivers have played in shaping prostitution policy across space and time.

Ideally, analyses of the effects of these drivers would require a massive data set covering all or most of the countries in the world over centuries of time. Such data sets do not exist however, and their compilation, if even possible, would require heroic efforts far beyond the resources available in this study. Instead, we have compiled a modern-day data set consisting of prostitution policy measures for 184 countries spanning all continents of the world and including 46 variables measuring various aspects and dimensions of the five hypothesized drivers of these policies. Although the contemporary nature of these data prevents direct assessments of the impacts of historical forces, it may still be possible to see the legacy of these forces in modern prostitution policies.

Perhaps not surprisingly, our data demonstrate that religion probably has played the greatest role historically and in present times in shaping prostitution policies. However, religion has had a

complex relationship with prostitution, variously promoting and prohibiting it at different times and in different contexts. On one hand, some religions have encouraged prostitution, especially in ancient Mesopotamia and Greece, where temple prostitution was common and prostitution served as an integral part of religious rituals. These practices were often supported and even sanctioned by religious institutions. With the subsequent spread of Christianity and Islam, however, religious institutions increasingly sought to regulate prostitution as a means of controlling and containing it. Medieval Europe, for example, witnessed the increasing regulation and prohibition of brothels as Christian authorities desired to suppress prostitution and punish those involved, often viewing it as a sin or a crime. In more recent times, many religious groups have sought to prohibit prostitution as a moral issue.

Today, while predominantly Catholic countries are more likely to adopt more liberal prostitution policies, predominantly Orthodox countries are more likely to adopt conservative policies. Catholicism has historically placed more emphasis on the individual conscience and personal responsibility, which has led to a more liberal approach to social issues such as prostitution. In contrast, Orthodox Christianity places greater emphasis on tradition, community, and order, which evidently leads to a more conservative approach to prostitution policy.

Furthermore, the effects of predominant religions on prostitution policy are reinforced when religion is authorized by the state. Our data emphasize that countries with Islam as a state religion have the most conservative prostitution policies. Prostitution is condemned by most major religions, but countries with state religions can embed cultural and religious beliefs within political and legal frameworks. Accordingly, countries with Islam as a state religion prohibit prostitution and extra-marital sex under Islamic Zina Law.

The fear of sexually transmitted diseases and health concerns more generally have also played important historical roles in shaping prostitution policy, especially after the discovery of the causes of venereal disease. As the spread of sexually transmitted infections was increasingly used as a justification for regulating or criminalizing prostitution, policies often targeted sex workers, who were viewed as a major source of infection. These laws were justified on the grounds of protecting public health and morality, as the spread of STDs was seen as a significant threat to both.

Sexually transmitted diseases and health, however, have lost much of the historic relevance for prostitution policy, given widely available medical treatments for most STDs. In more recent times, some countries have adopted more liberal policies to help regulate and protect sex workers and clients from sexually transmitted diseases. However, our data fail to indicate the significance of any variables measuring health and STDs, undermining the notion that STDs influence prostitution policy in modern times. Ultimately, while efforts to control the spread of disease are

important, they must also take into account the rights and needs of sex workers and the complex social, cultural, and economic factors that drive prostitution.

The modernization hypothesis holds that the economic, social, and cultural changes set in motion by modernization processes can have profound effects, both liberal and conservative on prostitution policy. While middle class values condemning prostitution flourished in tandem with urbanization, current modernization is often associated with economic development and social progress, creating an environment in which prostitution is increasingly viewed as a form of work, and sex workers are seen as individuals with rights and agency, rather than as victims or criminals.

Thus, modernization has some contemporary influence on prostitution policy, as substantiated by the significant independent effects of urbanization and internet usage. While both lean slightly towards more liberal prostitution policy, it is important to note that modernization, in contrast to our initial predictions, is a weak driver of prostitution policy. Moreover, migration, which served as both a corroborator and indicator of modernization within our study, failed to yield any significant effects on prostitution policy. While modernization may bring developments in social, economic, and cultural values, it is not a strong or deterministic driver of change in sex work legislation.

Closely related to modernization, we classified democratization as a fourth potential driver of prostitution policy and confirmed its contemporary importance with our data. On one hand, we noted that democratization can provide greater opportunities for civil society groups, including non-abolitionists advocating for sex workers' rights, to participate in the political process and influence policy decisions. On the other hand, democratization can also lead to greater societal polarization and the rise of conservative groups that seek to restrict or eliminate prostitution altogether.

Not only does our data validate the contemporary implications of democratization on cross-national prostitution policy, but our findings provide opportunities for more progressive and evidence-based policies that prioritize the health and human rights of sex workers. Countries with a greater Rule of Law tend to enact more conservative policies due to a stronger emphasis on traditional values and morals. Conversely, countries with a higher Freedom House Democracy Index adopt more liberal policies due to an enhanced appreciation of human rights and freedoms. While democratization can therefore have varying effects on prostitution policy, it is undoubtedly a determinant of modern prostitution policy. Furthermore, greater democratization may provide a more favorable environment for the development of polices that promote the rights and well-being of sex workers.

The last driver of prostitution policy is feminism and the role of women in society, as measured by female political and economic empowerment. Feminism and female political and economic empowerment are relevant to prostitution policy because while agreeing on the problem, feminists often disagree on the solution, debating whether decriminalization is better by leaving women free to pursue their own paths or whether legalization is preferable because it allows the state to regulate prostitution in efforts of protecting women and their customers from potential harms. Yet still, some feminists advocate for the eradication of prostitution by pursuing policies of partial or complete criminalization.

Our data provide insight into the nuances of female economic and political empowerment in relation to sex work legislation, demonstrating that countries with greater female youth unemployment adopt more conservative prostitution policies. One possibility is that in societies where there are high levels of female youth unemployment, there may be increased pressure for women to engage in prostitution as a means of survival. This can lead to the perception that prostitution is a necessary evil, rather than a profession that people engage in by choice. Another possibility is that conservative attitudes towards gender and sexuality may be more prevalent in societies with high levels of female youth unemployment, leading to a stigmatization of sex work which manifests in more conservative legislation.

Moreover, countries with greater female political empowerment, as measured by percent female legislators and percent female government ministers, practice more liberal prostitution policies. Countries with more female lawmakers may be more likely to have more progressive attitudes towards gender and sexuality, which can create a favorable environment for policies that protect the rights and safety of sex workers. In addition, female lawmakers may be more likely to challenge gender stereotypes and stigma surrounding prostitution and may consequently be more open to liberal policy approaches.

Our data analyses contribute significantly to our understanding of the drivers of prostitution but are limited in a number of different ways. For instance, the rhetoric underlying our research is largely retrospective, relying heavily on historical practices, but our data are mostly based on contemporary observations. Additionally, our data only cover about two-thirds of the countries in the world, and some driver measures have limited reliability due to their overlap with other measures. While our data identify which socio-economic and cultural drivers are linked to contemporary prostitution policy, they cannot prove cause and effect or demonstrate the connections through which influence might occur. Still, despite these limitations, our study provides valuable insights into the historical and contemporary drivers of prostitution policy and provides a solid basis for additional, in-depth work to follow. Prostitution has been influenced by a range of factors, both ancient and modern, and our study highlights the ongoing effects of these drivers on prostitution policy in modern times.

Moving forward, we recognize the need for more comprehensive and reliable data over a longer period of time. This may involve systematic interviews with prostitutes about how laws affect them, as well as an expansion of our analysis to include the implications of de facto law in relation to our findings regarding de jury law. By addressing these limitations, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of the drivers of prostitution policy and their effects on legislation.

One important way the research needs to be expanded is by moving from a focus on prostitution in general and focusing in parallel on female sexual trafficking as a distinctive activity. Today, international definitions of sex trafficking distinguish voluntary prostitution in which a woman sells her services to a client for a freely negotiated fee as opposed to sex trafficking in which force, fraud, or coercion is used to compel a woman to engage in commercial sex. Increasingly, women's advocates are questioning whether any form of prostitution is really voluntary. Money offered for sex to a prostitute who has no other funds to survive can be just as coercive. This is even more the case considering that voluntary prostitution often involves third parties such as pimps and brothel owners who in many cases play much the same roles as sex traffickers. To date, however, there is very little research comparing the drivers of prostitution and sex trafficking to inform contemporary debates.

We began this paper by raising the question of *why* prostitution policy varies cross-culturally and cross-nationally. Then, we developed a measure of prostitution policy and set out to identify how those policies developed historically. In the process, we identified several drivers of prostitution policies, and collected data to find the effect to which these drivers influence contemporary prostitution policy. While religion and culture have historically been significant factors in shaping prostitution policy, more recent drivers such as democratization and the increasing role of women in policymaking have become increasingly relevant. Understanding the impact of these drivers is crucial for shaping effective prostitution policy that addresses the needs and rights of all stakeholders involved.

Despite its label as the world's oldest profession, prostitution remains poorly understood. In part this is because it is widely disparaged as a sin or moral failing and dismissed as unworthy of study. In part it is because it lingers in the academic shadows much as those who practice the profession linger in the shadows on the corner of the street. In this paper, we have attempted to use an original data set and modern statistics to begin shedding some systematic light on the subject. Much work remains to be done. We hope this research lays a solid foundation for others – and for us – to build.

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Appendix A

Figure A1: Countries by Prostitution Policy Type

COMPLETE CRIMINALIZATION		PARTIAL CRIMINALIZATION				LEGALIZATION	DECRIMINALIZATION
Afghanistan	Maldives	Algeria	Dominica	Luxembourg	Suriname	Australia	Belgium
Albania	Marshall Islands	Angola	Dominican Repub	Madagascar	Swaziland	Austria	Cape Verde
Andorra	Moldova	Antigua/Barbuda	El Salvador	Malawi	Sweden	Azerbaijan	Honduras
Armenia	Mongolia	Argentina	Eritrea	Malaysia	Taiwan	Bolivia	New Zealand
Belarus	Montenegro	Bahamas	Estonia	Mali	Tajikistan	Ecuador	Paraguay
Bhutan	Oman	Bahrain	Ethiopia	Malta	Tanzania	Germany	Rwanda
Bosnia/Herzegovina	Pakistan	Bangladesh	Fiji	Mauritania	Timor Leste	Greece	
Brunei	Palau	Barbados	Finland	Mauritius	Togo	Lebanon	
Cameroon	Philippines	Belize	France	Mexico	Tonga	Netherlands	
China	Qatar	Benin	Gabon	Morocco	Trinidad/Tobago	Peru	
Comoros	Romania Fed	Botswana	Ghana	Mozambique	Tuvalu	Slovenia	
Croatia	Russia	Brazil	Grenada	Myanmar	United Kingdom	Switzerland	
Egypt	Samoa	Bulgaria	Guatemala	Namibia	Vanuatu	Turkey	
Equatorial Guinea	Saudi Arabia	Burkina Faso	Guinea	Nauru	Venezuela	Uruguay	
Gambia	Serbia	Burundi	Guyana	Nepal	Zambia		
Georgia	Somalia	Cambodia	Haiti	Nicaragua	Zimbabwe		
Guinea-Bissau	South Africa	Canada	Hungary	Niger			
Iran	St. Lucia	Central African Rep	Iceland	Nigeria			
Iraq	Sudan	Chad	India	Norway			
Japan	Syrian	Chile	Indonesia	Papua New Guinea			
Jordan	Thailand	Colombia	Ireland	Poland			
Korea, DPR	Tunisia	Congo, D.R	Israel	Portugal			
Korea, Rep	Turkmenistan	Congo, Republic of	Italy	Senegal			
Kosovo	Uganda	Costa Rica	Jamaica	Sierra Leone			
Kuwait	Ukraine	Cote D'Ivoire	Kazakhstan	Singapore			
Laos	UAR	Cuba	Kenya	Slovakia			
Liberia	United States	Cyprus	Kiribati	Solomon Islands			
Libya	Uzbekistan	Czech Republic	Kyrgyzstan	South Sudan			
Lithuania	Viet Nam	Denmark	Latvia	Spain			
Macedonia	Yemen	Djibouti	Lesotho	Sri Lanka			
(n=60)		(n=106)				(n=14)	(n=6)

Figure A2: Variable Definitions, Sources, Statistical Means, and Standard Deviations

Variable Name	Variable Definition	Source	Mean	Std. Dev.
Predominantly Protestant	**Largest Percentage of Country Identifies as Protestant**	**CIA World Factbook 2022**	**0.24**	**0.43**
Predominantly Catholic	**Largest Percentage of Country Identifies as Catholic**	**CIA World Factbook 2022**	**0.30**	**0.46**
Predominantly Muslim	**Largest Percentage of Country Identifies as Muslim**	**CIA World Factbook 2022**	**0.26**	**0.44**

Predominantly Orthodox	**Largest Percentage of Country Identifies as Orthodox**	**CIA World Factbook 2022**	**0.06**	**0.24**
Buddhist State Religion	**A state with an official Buddhist Religion**	**CIA World Factbook 2022**	**0.03**	**0.16**
Catholic State Religion	**A state with an official Catholic Religion**	**CIA World Factbook 2022**	**0.01**	**0.10**
Protestant State Religion	**A state with an official Protestant Religion**	**CIA World Factbook 2022**	**0.03**	**0.16**
Islamic State Religion	**A state with an official Islam Religion**	**CIA World Factbook 2022**	**0.12**	**0.33**
Religiosity	**Percent of population saying religion is very Important in their life**	**Pew Research Center 2020**	**73.90**	**25.60**
Religious Freedom Index	**100-point index of Freedom of Religion based on Expert Surveys**	**International IDEA: Global State of Democracy Indices, 2021**	**80.08**	**15.05**
Percent Aids	**Percent of Population with HIV/Aids 2019**	**CIA World Factbook 2019**	**2.69**	**6.13**
Female Percent of Population with Aids	**Female Aids as Percentage of Aids Population**	**UNAIDS.Org 2018**	**42.16**	**15.73**
Life Expectancy Female	**Life Expectancy Females at Birth**	**UNDP 2018**	**67.01**	**13.70**
Life Expectancy Males	**Life Expectancy Males at Birth**	**UNDP 2018**	**62.51**	**12.20**
Life Expectancy Ratio	**Ratio of Female to Male Life Expectancy**	**Calculated**	**1.07**	**0.04**
Percent STD	**Percentage of the Population with any STD**	**CIA World Factbook 2022 estimates**	**3.45**	**19.82**
Infant Mortality	**Infant Mortality / 1000 Live Births**	**CIA World Factbook 2022 estimates**	**21.23**	**19.27**
Liberal Democracy Scale	**Freedom of Democracy scale computed by combining Freedom House Civil Liberties and Political Liberties Scales into a scale from 0-100.**	**Freedom House 2022.**	**65.49**	**28.69**

Corruption Perception Index	**Corruption Perception Index (0-100) based on a variety of corruption perception surveys and other data.**	**Transparency International 2021**	**42.72**	**19.80**
Government Effectiveness Index	**Expert Ratings of government-provided services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies.**	**World Bank, World Governance Indicators 2021**	**-0.09**	**0.99**
Rule of Law Index	**Focuses on the absence of crime and the security of persons and their property; the Heritage Foundation's index emphasizes the protection of private property and the absence of corruption.**	**World Bank, World Governance Indicators 2021**	**-0.12**	**0.99**
Ciri Human Rights Index	**Rates levels of government respect for a variety of internationally recognized human rights.**	**Cingranelli, David, Mikhail Filippov, and Brendan Skip Mark. 2021. The CIRIGHTS Dataset. Version 2021.01.21. The Binghamton University Human Right Institute, www.binghamton.edu/institutes/hri/**	**5.73**	**3.12**

Physical Integrity Rights	**Ratings of the adherence to the right of physical integrity. Physical integrity is a human right and contains the absence of torture, extrajudicial killings, political imprisonment, and the disappearances of unwanted persons.**	**Cingranelli, David, Mikhail Filippov, and Brendan Skip Mark. 2021. The CIRIGHTS Dataset. Version 2021.01.21. The Binghamton University Human Right Institute, www.binghamton.edu/institutes/hri/**	**4.54**	**2.34**
Empowerment Rights Index	**An additive index summarizing government respect for electoral self-determination, domestic movement, foreign movement, religion, speech, assembly & association, and workers' rights.**	**Cingranelli, David, Mikhail Filippov, and Brendan Skip Mark. 2021. The CIRIGHTS Dataset. Version 2021.01.21. The Binghamton University Human Right Institute, www.binghamton.edu/institutes/hri/**	**6.15**	**3.39**
Control of Corruption Index	**Expert Rating of Countries' Efforts to ensure public power is not exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption.**	**World Bank, World Governance Indicators 2021**	**-0.10**	**1.00**
Freedom of Press	**Freedom House Index measuring extent to which there are free and independent media.**	**Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2019**	**49.26**	**23.46**
Human Development Index (HDI), 2020 100-pt scale	**HDI measures each country's social and economic development by focusing on the following four factors: mean years of schooling, expected years of schooling, life expectancy at birth, and gross national**	**UNDP 2020**	**0.68**	**0.16**

	income (GNI) per capita.			
GDP per capita ppp (000) 2020	**Gross Domestic Product based on purchasing power parity**	**World Bank 2021**	**16.88**	**18.71**
Internet Users		**UNDP**	**225.49**	**224.67**
Cell Phone Penetration	**Cellular phone subscribers per 100 population, 2019**	**ITU 2019**	**43.66**	**37.41**
Urban (% of population)	**Percent of Population Living in Urban Area**	**UNDP 2020**	**56.63**	**23.54**
Adult literacy rate, population 15+ years, gender parity index	**Female Literacy as a percent of Male Literacy age 15**	**UNESCO 2020**	**0.90**	**0.14**
Net Migration	**Net In Migration per 1000 Population**	**UNDP 2020**	**0.52**	**7.18**
Total Refugees Harbored	**Total Refugees Harbored per 1000 People**	**UNDP 2020**	**5.72**	**13.17**
International Refugees Harbored	**International Refugees Harbored per 1000**	**UNDP 2020**	**1.70**	**4.18**
Internal Refugees	**Internal Refugees per 1000 Population**	**UNDP 2020**	**4.27**	**11.88**
Percent Women Voting	**Percentage of Women Voting (most recent election)**	**Pew Research Center**	**0.74**	**0.14**
Percent Female MPS Lower House	**Percentage of Women that hold seats in Lower House of Legislature**	**Interparliamentary Union 2020**	**20.57**	**11.91**
Percent Female Government Ministers	**Percentage of Women Heading Government ministries**	**United Nations, Women in Politics 2019**	**13.11**	**10.80**
Female Percent Economic Activity	**Percent Female Economic Activity**	**UNDP 2020**	**67.03**	**15.96**
Female Unemployment	**Percentage of Women Unemployed**	**UNDP 2020**	**10.26**	**7.25**

Female Youth Unemployment	**Percentage of Women 15-25 Unemployed**	**UNDP 2020**	**21.35**	**15.08**
Relative Female Unemployment	**Female Unemployment as percentage of male unemployment**	**UNDP 2020**	**1.44**	**1.36**