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RESEARCH ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

The Impact of Ethnic Discrimination on the Prevention of Human Trafficking

Etnik Ayrımcılığın İnsan Ticaretini Önleme Üzerine Etkisi

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Abstract

Due to the ubiquitous concern about human trafficking, the international community has developed a comprehensive legal framework that requires countries to take effective measures to eliminate this grave crime. As an essential part of this international legal framework, countries have a responsibility to prevent people from being exposed to any type of exploitation. In order to save vulnerable people from exploitation before it transpires, countries are expected to implement preventative measures including alleviation of the factors that increase vulnerability to being exploited and encourage the demand for human trafficking. While ethnic discrimination has been acknowledged as a factor that renders individuals vulnerable to human trafficking and also bolsters the demand for this severe crime, its effect on the implementation of prevention measures has received limited attention from recent studies. To fill this gap, this study theoretically discusses and empirically examines whether or not ethnic discrimination affects countries' preventative measures for human trafficking. The results of statistical analysis based on a data set that involves 165 countries over the years between 2003 and 2015 show that ethnic discrimination deteriorates the prevention of human trafficking.

Keywords: Human Trafficking, Ethnic Discrimination, United Nations, Palermo Protocol, Prevention of Human Trafficking

Öz

İnsan ticareti konusundaki yaygın endişe nedeni ile uluslararası toplum, ülkelerin bu ciddi suçu ortadan kaldırmaya yönelik önlemler almalarını gerektiren kapsayıcı bir yasal çerçeve geliştirmiştir. Bu uluslararası yasal çerçevenin önemli bir parçası olarak ülkelerin, insanların herhangi bir sömürüye maruz kalmalarını önleme konusunda sorumlulukları vardır. Savunmasız durumda olan insanları, henüz bir sömürü ortaya çıkmadan önce, bu ortaya çıkabilecek olan sömürüden korumak için ülkelerin, sömürülmeye karşı kırılganlığı arttıran ve insan ticaretine yönelik talebi yükselten faktörleri hafifletmeyi içeren önleyici tedbirleri uygulamaları beklenmektedir. Etnik ayrımcılık, bireyleri insan ticaretine karşı savunmasız hale getiren, ve ek olarak, bu ağır suça yönelik talebi arttıran bir faktör olarak kabul edilirken, onun insan ticaretini önlemeye yönelik tedbirlerin uygulanması üzerine olan etkisi son zamanlarda yapılan çalışmalar tarafından sınırlı bir ilgi ile karşılanmıştır. Bu boşluğu doldurmak için yapılan bu çalışma, etnik ayrımcılığın, ülkelerin insan ticaretini önleme konusunda aldıkları tedbirler üzerine bir etkisi olup olmadığını teorik olarak tartışmakta ve ampirik olarak incelemektedir. 2003 yılından 2015 yılına kadar olan dönem üzerinden 165 ülkeyi kapsayan bir veri seti temel alınarak yapılan sayısal analizin sonuçları, etnik ayrımcılığın insan ticaretini önleme üzerinde kötüleştirici bir etkisi olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İnsan Ticareti, Etnik Ayrımcılık, Birleşmiş Milletler, Palermo Protokolü, İnsan Ticaretini Önleme

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Introduction

Human trafficking, recognized as a contemporary type of slavery, impacts millions of lives in almost every country. Although it is difficult to report the correct number of victims due to their reluctance in interacting with the authorities, the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that approximately 40 million people around the world are victims of this crime (ILO, 2017). Driven by the growing concern over human trafficking, in 2000, the United Nations (UN) approved a comprehensive legal instrument, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Children and Women (hereinafter referred to as the Palermo Protocol), supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. To synchronize global counter-trafficking efforts, the Palermo Protocol provides a formal definition for the concept of human trafficking and outlines obligations for countries to prevent and eliminate this problem. It defines human trafficking as employing or relocating people through force, the threat of force, or deception with the intention of exploitation (United Nations [UN], 2000, Art. 3(a)). Acknowledging that prevention of human trafficking is an essential part of anti-trafficking efforts, the Palermo Protocol requires countries to take preventative measures to protect people before they are harmed.

According to the Palermo Protocol, preventative measures include i) mitigating the factors that increase vulnerability to exploitation, ii) discouraging the demand for human trafficking, and also, iii) creating awareness among the public about the identification and risks of human trafficking (UN, 2000, Art. 9(1-5)). Since extreme poverty and expectations of better income-earning opportunities render people, specifically women and children, susceptible to exploitation (ILO, 2006), the Palermo Protocol demands countries to take preventive measures to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment (UN, 2000, Art. 9(4)). As another preventive measure, countries are required to take action to eradicate the income potential in sectors where exploitation occurs, and in turn decrease the demand for all types of exploitation (UN, 2000, Art. 9(5)). The Palermo Protocol also holds countries responsible for launching educational and media campaigns to raise awareness about potential human trafficking (UN, 2000, Art. 9(2)).

While a substantial number of countries commits to fighting against human trafficking,[1] some countries are less concerned with taking strict preventative measures. Motivated by these differences, this study asserts that ethnic discrimination is a significant factor that deteriorates countries' performance in the prevention of human trafficking. Recent research, defining ethnicity as a feeling of unity owing to common heritage and culture, has acknowledged the ethnicity's prominent role on competition over state power (Cederman, Wimmer and Min, 2010; Wimmer, Cederman and Min, 2009; Vogt et. al, 2015). The literature on ethnic power relations suggests that regardless of being the majority or the minority, ethnic groups whose members are engaged in state-level decision-making have advantages in receiving economic gains such as public goods and services as well as legal benefits including citizenship privileges, justice, and impunity from indiscriminate violence (Cederman, Wimmer and Min, 2010; Wimmer, Cederman and Min, 2009; Vogt et. al, 2015). On the other hand, ethnic discrimination occurs when

1 The 2020 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report launched by the United States Department of State presents that 178 countries have committed to the Palermo Protocol to date.

particular groups are deliberately excluded from state-level decision-making because of their ethnic background. Ethnically discriminated groups would be disadvantaged in receiving economic and legal benefits since they are prevented from participating in national decision-making (Cederman, Wimmer and Min, 2010; Wimmer, Cederman and Min, 2009; Vogt et. al, 2015).

Following the discussion on ethnic power relations, this paper argues that ethnic discrimination impedes an effective implementation of preventative measures by i) rendering people more vulnerable to exploitation, ii) encouraging the demand for human trafficking, iii) causing a lack of information on the risks of being trafficked, and iv) inhibiting the political will for anti-trafficking. First, discrimination based on ethnic origin hinders the access of members of these groups to education, the labor market, health care, and social services (De Soto, Beddies & Gedeshi, 2005). Lacking proper skills to raise their socio-economic status and information about the dangers of human trafficking, people are induced to accept increased risks for income-earning activities, and they become easy targets for exploitation (De Soto et al., 2005). Second, ethnic discrimination deteriorates countries' prevention efforts because prejudiced assumptions about the servility and sexuality of people based on their ethnic origin increase the demand for forced labor or sex trafficking (Gutierrez Chong, 2014; Kempadoo, 2004; Poulin, 2003; Todres, 2009). Another issue is that ethnic discrimination diminishes the political will that is necessary to make regulations for counter- trafficking (European Roma Rights Centre, 2011). National governments might not prioritize raising awareness of the dangers of human trafficking or discouraging the demand for exploitation when members of ethnically discriminated groups are the victims. Hence, ethnic discrimination leads countries to fall short in implementing effective prevention measures.

To test the argument about the relationship between ethnic discrimination and prevention efforts of national governments, this study conducts statistical analysis based on a country-level data set. The global data set includes the outcome variable that is the prevention of human trafficking and the main independent variable of interest, ethnic discrimination. Several control variables, such as women legislators, corruption control, the rule of law, regime type, civil conflict, economic wealth, and population, are also included in the statistical analysis because of their possible effects on the suggested link between the outcome and the main independent variable of interest. In congruent with the theoretical argument of this study, empirical examination of the ordered probit regression model shows evidence that ethnic discrimination weakens the prevention efforts of national governments. The results are confirmed by the predicted probabilities estimated based on the main model. Furthermore, the findings remain intact after adding a couple of alternative indicators to the main model, such as involvement in international organizations and commitment to the main anti-trafficking document along with country and year fixed effects.

This paper is divided into seven sections: The first section succinctly reviews the quantitative literature on counter-trafficking and the research that examines the link between ethnic discrimination and human trafficking. The second section presents this study's theoretical argument about the worsening effect of ethnic discrimination on the prevention efforts of countries. The following three sections discuss the data employed

in this study, present the findings of quantitative analysis, and correspondingly report the results from robustness tests. The sixth section discusses the limitations of this study and provides two examples to illustrate the main argument. Finally, the seventh section provides a summary of the empirical evidence reported in previous sections as well as propositions for data-driven policy-making.

Background

As a response to the ubiquitous concern around human trafficking, many countries have committed themselves to fighting against this severe crime. However, some countries have failed to take effective measures to eradicate human trafficking. To understand the reasons for this variation, recent research has focused on factors that affect countries' counter-trafficking practices. Among them Avdeyeva (2012), Bartilow (2008), Cho & Vadlamannati (2012), Cho et al. (2014), and Schonhofer (2017) discuss and show empirical evidence for significant effects of female legislators, control for corruption, and regime types on countries' efforts in eliminating human trafficking. After conducting statistical analyses, their findings show that countries that have more women in their parliaments, take strict measures to control corruption, and have democratic regimes take stringent measures to counter trafficking in persons.

Ethnic discrimination, on the other hand, has been widely discussed as a significant factor that renders people vulnerable to human trafficking. Gutierrez Chong (2014) discusses race and ethnicity as major components of structural poverty and marginalization leading to exploitation. Using excerpts from media and popular literature, Gutierrez Chong (2014) asserts that stereotypical images constructed based on different races and ethnicities make members of these groups an easy target for exploitation. Kempadoo (2004), Poulin (2003) and Todres (2009) discuss the concept of otherness based on ethnicity and its enhancing effect on the demand for human trafficking. According to them, discriminatory stereotypes constructed based on ethnic origin normalize the exploitation of members of the groups considered as others by the dominant groups.

Recent research on individual countries has also endorsed the vulnerability of ethnically discriminated groups to human trafficking. Among these studies, Bedoya, Bedoya & Belser (2009) argue that discrimination against Indigenous people in Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru makes them victims of forced labor while De Soto, Beddies & Gedeshi (2005) examine the marginalizing effect of ethnic discrimination over the Roma people and Egyptians living in Albanian society. Presenting a detailed analysis on human trafficking in Thailand, Rijken et al. (2015) discuss that members of ethnic minorities, such as hill tribe people in Thailand, face a higher risk of being trafficked because they lack basic rights endowed with citizenship. Without proper identification, these people face difficulties in finding formal employment and free movement within the country and thus become more vulnerable to traffickers in search of meeting their basic needs (Rijken et al., 2015). In a different study, Raza (2019) examines China's re-education centers incarcerating Muslim Uyghurs, one of the ethnic minorities within the country, with the aim of teaching them how to become loyal citizens and competent workers. According to Raza (2019), this policy is a cover for forced labor in government facilities because it was historically used by the Chinese authorities to penalize dissenters. Moreover, examining

the efficiency of prevention measures in Vietnam, Le et al. (2018) discuss that awareness-campaigns should target members of ethnic minority groups because they are more likely to be victims of traffickers and these campaigns should be planned considering their low educational attainment and language barriers.

While extant studies discuss ethnic discrimination as a critical factor that reinforces the vulnerability of people to being trafficked, there is a lack of research regarding the association between ethnic discrimination and the prevention efforts of countries. Since this relationship has been insufficiently investigated within human trafficking literature, the purpose of this study is to theoretically argue and empirically examine the impact of ethnic discrimination on an effective implementation of countries' prevention measures.

Ethnic Discrimination and Prevention of Human Trafficking

This study argues that ethnic discrimination impairs prevention efforts by i) generating the necessary conditions for being vulnerable to exploitation, ii) deterring awareness about the dangers of being trafficked, iii) boosting the demand for human trafficking, and iv) impeding the political will for counter-trafficking. The theoretical expectation about the deteriorating impact of ethnic discrimination on prevention measures is postulated on the link between ethnicity and competition over political power. Defined as a shared feeling of unity regarding the joint lineage and culture, and manifesting itself by religion, language, and race, ethnicity has been acknowledged as a significant factor that affects the access to state-level decision-making to control the distribution of economic and legal gains (Cederman, Wimmer and Min, 2010; Wimmer, Cederman and Min, 2009; Vogt et. al, 2015). Either majorities or minorities, ethnic groups whose members take part in state governments have advantages in accessing to economic gains such as public employment and services as well as legal benefits in terms of citizenship entitlements, impartial trials, and protection from indiscriminate violence (Cederman, Wimmer and Min, 2010; Wimmer, Cederman and Min, 2009). On the other hand, ethnic discrimination occurs when groups are deliberately excluded from state power based on their ethnic background, and these groups will be disadvantaged in receiving public goods and services as well as legal benefits because of their lack of access to state-level decision-making (Cederman, Wimmer and Min, 2010; Wimmer, Cederman and Min, 2009; Vogt et. al, 2015).

Discrimination based on ethnic origin brings marginalization of certain groups and prevents them from having benefits that are envisioned for citizens (De Soto et al. 2005; Omelaniuk, 2006; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2008; Velentza, 2020). The Palermo Protocol, the main international legal document for preventing and eliminating human trafficking, requires countries to develop programs addressing fundamental causes of this crime, such as poverty, economic marginalization, and inequality (UN, 2000, Art. 9(4)). However, ethnic discrimination reinforces poverty through a lack of access to education, formal employment and health care and thus increases the vulnerability of individuals to human trafficking (De Soto et al. 2005; Omelaniuk, 2006; UNODC, 2008; United States Department of State, 2021). These people face high barriers in receiving education and have fewer formal employment opportunities that provide a proper wage, health insurance and unemployment benefits (De Soto et al., 2005; European Roma Rights Centre, 2011). With low educational

achievement, members of ethnically discriminated groups either become unemployed or work in the informal sector for lower wages and insufficient social protection (De Soto et al., 2005; European Roma Rights Centre, 2011). Even if they are properly educated, they might not be able to find a decent job due to their ethnicity. For instance, studies show that in the United States, African Americans are more likely to face employment discrimination and unemployment compared to their white counterparts (Butler, 2015). Desperate socio-economic conditions driven by ethnic discrimination lead people to take high risks to improve the quality of their lives. In search of better access to education and employment opportunities, discriminated people who are vulnerable to exploitative practices easily become victim to traffickers who deceive them with false promises of financial gains (United States Department of State, 2021).

Recent research conducted by national and international organizations shows that individuals belonging to ethnically discriminated groups are at the greatest risk of being trafficked because of their vulnerable positions. According to the report of European Roma Rights Centre (2011), in many Central and Eastern European countries, the Roma people are susceptible to human trafficking due to the high level of ethnic discrimination resulting in the lack of access to educational and formal labor opportunities. The Roma people are trafficked mainly for the purposes of forced begging, petty theft, labor and sexual exploitation (European Roma Rights Centre, 2011). Similarly, the recent Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report released from the United States Department of State (2020) states that members of ethnically discriminated Rohingya people in Myanmar are at a higher risk of forced labor and sex trafficking due to their lack of citizenship or identification documents that are necessary to access education, health system, courts, or formal employment.

Other than eliminating poverty and underdevelopment, the Palermo Protocol requires countries to launch awareness-raising campaigns (UN, 2000, Art. 9(5)) among the public to prevent human trafficking. Ethnic discrimination, on the other hand, causes the isolation of discriminated groups in their own neighborhoods, and in turn, the lack of interaction between these groups and the ethnic majority (European Roma Rights Centre, 2011). As an example, in Bulgaria, a significant number of Roma live in neighborhoods inhabited mainly by the Romani people (European Roma Rights Centre, 2011). This segregation leaves individuals belonging to ethnically discriminated groups ill-informed about government policies as well as types, methods, and risks of human trafficking (De Soto et al., 2005; European Roma Rights Centre, 2011; United States Department of State, 2021). With the limited information on exploitative situations as well as their rights and responsibilities, individuals become less alerted to protecting themselves from abusive practices (European Roma Rights Centre, 2011; UNODC, 2008; United States Department of State, 2021; Velentza 2020). Motivated by the search for better education or income-earning opportunities, members of ethnically discriminated groups who are unfamiliar with the concept of human trafficking become easy targets for traffickers who know their vulnerable position and take advantage of it (United States Department of State, 2021). Hence, ethnic discrimination weakens countries' prevention measures by limiting information about human trafficking.

Acknowledging the significant function of the demand in exploitation of vulnerable people, the Palermo Protocol also requires countries to take action to discourage the demand for human trafficking, particularly women and children (UN, 2000, Art.

9(5)). Nevertheless, this study argues that ethnic discrimination weakens prevention measures because it drives the demand for human trafficking by intensifying prejudiced assumptions and beliefs that create acceptance of the exploitation of certain individuals. Ethnic discrimination increases the risk of victimization for particular groups, associating them with negative stereotypes regarding their sexuality, servility, or work performance (Gutierrez Chong, 2014; Kempadoo, 2004; Poulin, 2003; Todres, 2009). Negative perceptions lead exploiters to see ethnically discriminated people responsible for their own problems rather than seeing them as vulnerable victims (Gutierrez Chong, 2014). Association with these stereotypes normalizes the exploitation of members of discriminated ethnic groups, allowing consumers of their services rationalize their behavior (Gutierrez Chong, 2014; Todres, 2009). Some consumers even assert that their purchase of service helps the victims and their families rather than abusing them (Todres, 2009). Fostering the demand for human trafficking through economic marginalization and social stigmatization, ethnic discrimination negatively affects countries' preventative measures.

Finally, as another preventive measure, the Palermo Protocol encourages countries to take legislative, educational, social or cultural measures to reduce the demand for this serious crime (UN, 2000, Art. 9(5)). Ethnic discrimination, on the other hand, deteriorates preventive measures by impeding the political will required to make these essential regulations. National governments have the authority to take measures, such as hindering forced labor by regulating labor standards for wages, hours as well as working conditions, and they are able to properly monitor them. They also have the power to protect people from sexual exploitation by regulating prostitution while also taking cultural and social measures to change public attitude toward exploitation. However, discrimination against ethnic groups prevents national governments from formulating laws and policies to save members of these groups from being trafficked (European Roma Rights Centre, 2011). As in the case of the Roma community, the actions taken by authorities, such as mass evictions and forced migration, may essentially target ethnically discriminated groups and increase their vulnerability to human trafficking (European Roma Rights Centre, 2011).

Consequently, human trafficking is a complex problem. As instructed by the Palermo Protocol, to prevent human trafficking, national governments need to alleviate the factors that make people susceptible to exploitation and discourage the demand. This study argues that ethnic discrimination impedes countries' prevention efforts by increasing the vulnerability to being exploited, encouraging the demand for human trafficking, and reducing the resolve for the fight against trafficking. This theoretical argument results in the subsequent hypothesis:

Hypothesis: Ethnic discrimination deteriorates countries' prevention measures.

Research Design

To test whether ethnic discrimination deteriorates preventative measures for the trafficking of persons, this study empirically examines a data set covering 165 countries

between the years 2003 and 2015.[2] Congruent with the argument on the adverse impact of ethnic discrimination on the prevention of human trafficking, the outcome variable is *Prevention*, and the main independent variable of interest is *Ethnic Discrimination*. In addition to the outcome, *Prevention,* and the main independent variable, *Ethnic Discrimination*, control variables are added to the analysis for their possible effects on the link between the outcome and the main independent variables. Those control variables are *Democratic Regimes, Female Representatives, Control for Corruption, the Rule of Law, Civil Conflict, GDP* and *Population*. The data used to measure all the variables are discussed below and summarized in Table 1.

Outcome Variable

Based on the main argument, the outcome variable in this study is the prevention of human trafficking and it is indicated as *Prevention* in the model. *Prevention* is measured by using the data provided by the 3P Anti-trafficking Policy Index, coming from Cho et al. (2014) and Cho (2015). To construct the index, the data are derived from the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) reports published by the United States Department of State along with the Global Reports on Trafficking in Persons published by the UNODC (Cho, 2015; Cho et al., 2014). The 3P Anti-trafficking Policy Index measures the counter-trafficking practices of each country in three aspects (prosecution, protection, and prevention) annually (Cho, 2015; Cho et al., 2014). Congruent with the theoretical discussion on the prevention of human trafficking, this study measures the outcome variable, *Prevention,* by using the prevention aspect of the 3P Anti-trafficking Policy Index (Cho, 2015; Cho et al., 2014). The index for preventative measures of countries goes from 1 to 5. While the value of 5 shows the strictest prevention measures, the value of 1 shows the worst performance in taking preventative measures.

Main Independent Variable

The main independent variable of interest in this study is *Ethnic Discrimination* because the main argument discusses its impeding effect on preventative measures. Following the discussion on the ethnic power configurations, ethnic discrimination is measured by using the data coming from the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) data set (Vogt et al., 2015). The EPR data set defines ethnicity as a feeling of fellowship based on a shared lineage and culture, manifesting itself through language, religion, and race. It provides data on politically relevant ethnic groups in countries and to which extent these groups join in executive-level decision-making between the years 1946 and 2021 (Vogt et al., 2015). According to this data set, ethnic groups, regardless of being majorities or minorities, are defined as politically relevant if their members are involved in or expelled from state power (Vogt et al., 2015). However, the EPR data set does not provide information on groups whose members are not citizens, for example, migrant employees, unless these groups live in those countries for generations, such as the Roma people residing in many countries (Vogt et al., 2015). To create the data on politically relevant groups, about a hundred country and regional specialists are surveyed to categorize prominent ethnic groups in countries' national politics (Vogt et al., 2015). As the data set registers

2 The time frame of the quantitative analysis is given based on the accessibility of the data used to measure the outcome variable, taken from Cho et al. (2014) and Cho (2015).

politically relevant ethnic groups in countries, it also shows the changes in the size of groups compared to the total population or their status in national politics over years (Vogt et al., 2015). The EPR data set evaluates ethnic groups' power in national politics based on three categories, whether they dominate the politics on their own, share the political power with other ethnic groups, or are excluded from executive-level decision making (Vogt et al., 2015). Accordingly, *Ethnic Discrimination* is defined as the organized and deliberate exclusion of groups from political power based on their ethnic background and the data show the ratio of ethnically discriminated people in countries (Vogt et al., 2015). Ranging from 0 to 1, this indicator shows an increasing share of ethnically discriminated population when it is closer to the value of 1.

Control Variables

Several control variables are added to the quantitative analysis in order to eliminate the probability that the other factors affect the relationship between ethnic discrimination and preventative measures. First of all, current research has discussed the significant effect of regime type on international commitments (Neumayer, 2005; Hathaway, 2007; von Stein, 2016). To eliminate the likelihood that political institutions influence countries' preventative efforts, this paper employs a dummy variable: *Democratic Regimes*. This variable is created based on a Polity index (Marshall et al., 2019), ranging from +10 to -10. According to the Polity index, the value of +10 shows highly democratic countries while the value of -10 indicates highly autocratic countries. For this study, *Democracy* is coded 1 for all the country-years with the value of 6 and above on the 21-point Polity index, and 0 otherwise.

Second, the variable of *Female Representatives* is added to the analysis following the argument that female legislators are more likely to defend women's rights because they are more sensitive to the issues that are related to women (Bartilow, 2008; Cho et al., 2014). The second control variable, *Female Representatives,* shows the share of female representatives in countries' parliaments. The data for this indicator are provided by the World Bank's Gender Statistics Database (World Bank [WB], 2019). The values for *Female Representatives* change from 0 to 1 while the values closer to 1 show more women in parliaments.

The third control variable added to the analysis is *Control for Corruption* because recent studies discuss that countries with corrupted officials fail to take effective measures in fighting against trafficking in persons (Cho et al., 2014). The index for *Control for Corruption,* taken from the World Bank's Governance Indicators (WGI), shows how corruption is perceived in more than 200 countries (WB, 2019). The index for *Control for Corruption* ranges from -2.5 to +2.5. The values closer to +2.5 indicate stricter corruption control than lower values.

Fourth, the *Rule of Law* is included in the analysis to control for its effect on countering human trafficking based on the argument that countries respecting the law succeed in fighting against human trafficking (Cho & Vadlamannati, 2012). The index for *Rule of Law*, coming from the World Bank's Governance Indicators (WGI), ranges from -2.5 to +2.5. The values closer to +2.5 show higher levels of respect for law.

The fifth control variable, *Civil Conflict,* is added to the analysis following the discussion that civil conflicts create opportunities to force individuals into labor and sex trafficking

as well as to combat in armed conflicts (UNODC, 2018, p. 11). The data for *Civil Conflict* are provided by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program/Peace Research Institute Oslo Armed Conflict Data set (Gleditsch et al., 2002; Pettersson et al., 2019). This indicator is coded 1 for years in which civil conflicts are experienced, and 0 otherwise.

Finally, the sixth and seventh control variables are added to the analysis to account for their possible influence on the prevention measures of countries. *GDP* indicates the level of economic development and is added to the analysis due to its possible effect on countries' actions for fighting against human trafficking (United States Department of State, 2021). *Population* is added to the model following the argument that detecting, and in turn, eliminating human trafficking might be difficult in more populous locations (United States Department of State, 2021). The data for *GDP* and *Population* are driven from the World Bank's World Development Indicators (WB, 2019). In order to fix the skewed distribution, this study takes the natural log of these two variables.

Methodology

In line with the main argument, the outcome variable in this study is *Prevention,* and it is an ordered and categorical variable with five categories. The models are analyzed using the ordered probit estimation method since it is the proper method for ordered and categorical outcome variables (Long, 1997). Standard errors are clustered on a country level to handle the issue of correlation of errors within countries as well as heteroscedasticity between countries. Additionally, this study includes the lagged outcome variable in the analysis to address the temporal dynamics and control for the likelihood that countries' preventative measures in previous years might affect their performance in future years.

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics that summarize the information on the data used to measure all the variables included in the ordered probit regression model. The first column in Table 1 presents the names for all the variables included in the ordered probit regression model. The second column in Table 1 indicates the total number of observations for each variable in the data set whereas the third and fourth columns show the mean and standard deviations respectively. The fifth and sixth columns in Table 1 present the minimum and maximum values of all the variables, for which the data are discussed in the Research Design section.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Prevention	2492	3.22	1.037	1	5
Ethnic Discrimination	2682	0.029	0.094	0	0.848
Democratic Regimes	2669	0.616	0.487	0	1
Female Representatives	2466	16.556	10.815	0	63.8
Control for Corruption	2485	-0.102	1.008	-1.869	2.47
Rule of Law	2493	-0.121	1.002	-2.606	2.1
Civil Conflict	2669	0.114	0.318	0	1
GDP	2575	24.219	2.197	18.78	30.419
Population	2643	15.814	1.836	9.776	21.029

Note: Descriptive statistics are estimated based on the data discussed in the Research Design section. STATA 15 statistical software is used to estimate the results.

Results

To test the hypothesis on the relationship between ethnic discrimination and the prevention of human trafficking, this study uses the ordered probit estimation method based on the main model, *Model 1* in Table 2, including all the variables discussed in the Research Design section. The results for *Model* 1 in Table 2 show that the main independent variable of interest in this study, *Ethnic Discrimination,* has a negative sign as expected, and this effect is significant. This result confirms the significant negative relationship between ethnic discrimination and the outcome variable, *Prevention*. It suggests that higher levels of ethnic discrimination lead countries to take weak prevention measures, and thus it supports the main argument. When looking at the results for the control variables included in *Model 1* in Table 2, Prevention $_{(t-1)}$, *Democratic Regimes*, *Female Representatives*, the *Rule of Law*, and *Population* have statistically significant positive signs, indicating their significant positive relationship with the outcome variable, *Prevention*. These findings present that taking strict prevention measures in previous years, having democratic regimes, having more female representatives in parliaments, showing high respect for the rule of law and having more people raise the probability of taking severe measures to prevent trafficking in persons. Additionally, the results for one of the control variables, *GDP*, included in *Model 1* in Table 2, demonstrate that it has a positive sign, indicating that wealthy countries are likely to take strict prevention measures, but this effect is not statistically significant. As another control variable included in *Model 1* in Table 2, *Civil Conflict* has a significant negative sign, presenting its significant negative relationship with the outcome variable, *Prevention*. This finding confirms that countries that are involved in armed conflicts are not able to take strong measures to prevent trafficking in persons. The results reported for *Model 1* in Table 2 also show that *Control for Corruption*, as a control variable, has a negative sign, representing its negative relationship with the outcome variable, *Prevention*. Nevertheless, this relationship is not statistically significant. Other than the regression coefficients, *Model 1* in Table 2 presents the threshold values (cu1, cut2, cut3, and cut4) for the categories of the outcome variable, *Prevention*, while the value of Pseudo R^2 for the model is 0.307. Finally, the number of observations included in *Model 1* in Table 2 is 1,942 as the number of countries in the analysis is 165.

Table 2
Ethnic Discrimination and Prevention of Human Trafficking, 2003-2015 (Main Model)

	(Model 1)
Main Independent and Control Variables	**Outcome Variable: Prevention**
Prevention $_{(t-1)}$	1.053*** (0.046)
Ethnic Discrimination $_{(t-1)}$	-0.565** (0.230)
Democratic Regimes $_{(t-1)}$	0.223*** (0.061)
Female Representatives $_{(t-1)}$	0.007** (0.003)
Control for Corruption $_{(t-1)}$	-0.055 (0.113)
Rule of Law $_{(t-1)}$	0.301*** (0.115)
Civil Conflict $_{(t-1)}$	-0.191** (0.092)
GDP $_{(t-1)}$	0.008 (0.024)
Population $_{(t-1)}$	0.085*** (0.032)
/cut1	2.226*** (0.385)
/cut2	3.760*** (0.395)

	(Model 1)
Main Independent and Control Variables	**Outcome Variable: Prevention**
/cut3	5.476*** (0.401)
/cut4	7.149*** (0.421)
Number of Observations	1942
Number of Countries	165
Pseudo R^2	0.307

*Note: Clustered standard errors are reported in parenthesis. The results are estimated based on the main model discussed in the Research Design section. STATA 15 statistical software is used to estimate the results. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1*

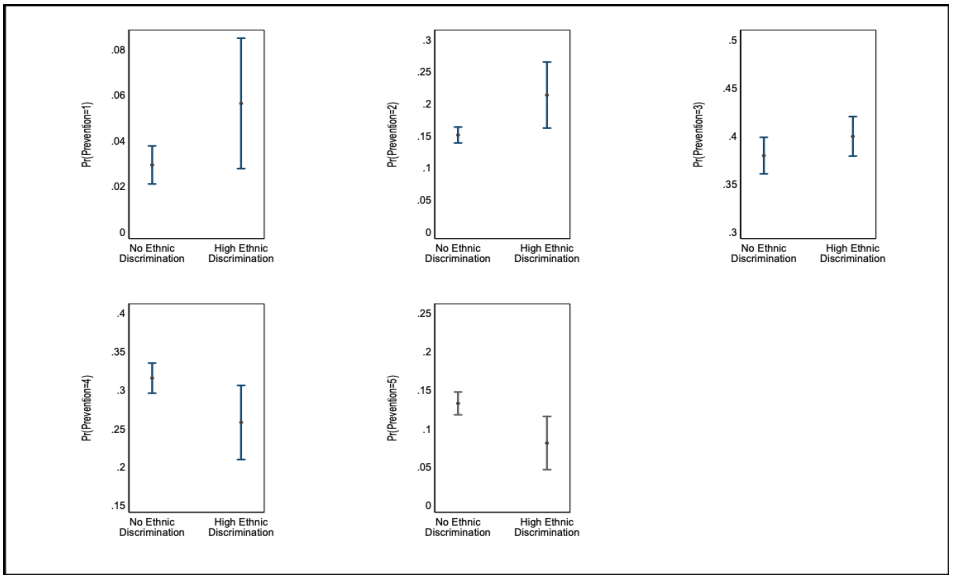


Figure 1. Predicted probabilities for prevention of human trafficking

Note: Predicted probabilities are plotted based on Model 1 in Table 2. STATA 15 statistical software is used to plot the figure.

While the findings from the main model, *Model 1*, reported in Table 2, support the argument on the link between ethnic discrimination and the prevention of human trafficking, interpretation of coefficients from the ordered probit regression might not be so straightforward. To assist the interpretation of the results from the ordered probit regression, predicted probabilities are plotted using STATA 15 statistical software. Figure 1 presents the predicted probabilities that confirm the results of *Model 1* reported in Table 2. The top three panels of Figure 1 show the probability of having lower levels of prevention scores ([Pr(Prevention=1)], [Pr(Prevention=2)], [Pr(Prevention=3)]) when there is no ethnic discrimination or it is high. As seen in the top three panels of Figure 1, when *Ethnic Discrimination* changes from its smallest to highest value, the probability of having lower levels of prevention scores ([Pr(Prevention=1)], [Pr(Prevention=2)], [Pr(Prevention=3)]) increases. Specifically, when ethnic discrimination is high, the likelihood of taking a prevention score of 1 [Pr(Prevention=1)] rises from about 0.03 to about 0.06 as the likelihood of taking a prevention score of 2 [Pr(Prevention=2)] increases from about 0.15 to about 0.21; and the likelihood of taking a prevention

score of 3 [Pr(Prevention=3)] rises from about 0.38 to about 0.40. On the other hand, the bottom two panels of Figure 1 present the predicted probabilities of having higher levels of prevention scores ([Pr(Prevention=4)], [Pr(Prevention=5)]) when ethnic discrimination is either absent or at its highest value. As the bottom two panels of Figure 1 show, the likelihood of taking higher levels of prevention scores ([Pr(Prevention=4)], [Pr(Prevention=5)]) decreases as ethnic discrimination switches from its minimum to maximum value. When ethnic discrimination is high, the likelihood of taking a prevention score of 4 [Pr(Prevention=4)] decreases from about 0.31 to about 0.26. Similarly, the likelihood of taking a prevention score of 5 [Pr(Prevention=5)] decreases from about 0.13 to about 0.08 as *Ethnic Discrimination* changes from a minimum to a maximum value. These plots support the findings from the main model, *Model 1* in Table 2, indicating that countries are less likely to take strong prevention measures when ethnic discrimination is high.

Robustness Checks

While the results from *Model 1* in Table 2 and the predicted probabilities presented in Figure 1 provide support for the main argument, additional tests are conducted to confirm that these findings are robust to changes in the main model. *Model 2*, *Model 3*, and *Model 4* reported in Table 3 present the results of additional models that are run to check the robustness of the findings from the main model. First of all, *Model 2* in Table 3 includes two alternative variables, OECD membership and commitment to the Palermo Protocol, to control for their possible effects on the relationship between the main independent variable, *Ethnic Discrimination,* and the outcome variable, *Prevention*. The variable of *OECD* is coded 1 for countries that are members of OECD, and 0 otherwise. *Ratification* is coded 1 for countries that are a party of the Palermo Protocol, and 0 otherwise.

As seen in *Model 2* in Table 3, after including *OECD* and *Ratification*, the effect of *Ethnic Discrimination* on the outcome variable, *Prevention*, remains unchanged. *Ethnic Discrimination* still has a significant negative relationship with *Prevention*. This finding supports the main argument about the impeding effect of ethnic discrimination on the prevention of human trafficking. The signs of *OECD* and *Ratification* are significant and positive, indicating their significant positive association with the outcome variable, *Prevention*. The results reported for *Model 2* in Table 3 present that both membership to OECD and commitment to the Palermo Protocol (*Ratification*) increase the likelihood of taking strict prevention measures. In congruent with the findings from the main model, the results for *Model 2* reported in Table 3 show that control variables such as $Prevention_{(t-1)}$, *Democratic Regimes*, the *Rule of Law*, and *Population* still have significant positive signs, displaying their positive relationship with the outcome variable, *Prevention*. According to these results reported for *Model 2* in Table 3, taking prevention measures in former years, being democracies, respecting the law, and having more people increase the likelihood of taking strong preventative measures in countries. On the other hand, as another control variable, *Civil Conflict,* has a significant negative sign, showing its significant negative relationship with the outcome variable, *Prevention,* after two indicators, *OECD* and *Ratification,* are added to the model. This result confirms that countries experiencing civil conflicts are less likely to implement strong preventative measures. The results for *Model*

2 reported in Table 3 demonstrate that *GDP* and *Control for Corruption* have negative signs, suggesting their negative effects on the outcome variable whereas another control variable, *Female Representatives,* has a positive sign indicating its positive effect on the outcome variable, *Prevention*. However, these effects of *GDP*, *Control for Corruption* and *Female Representatives* are statistically insignificant. *Model 2* in Table 3 reports threshold values (cu1, cut2, cut3, and cut4) for the categories of the outcome variable, *Prevention*, while the value of Pseudo R^2 for *Model 2* in Table 3 is 0.310. Besides, there are 1,942 observations and 165 countries included in *Model 2* in Table3.

Model 3 and *Model 4* reported in Table 3 show the findings after adding country and year fixed effects to the main model respectively. Country and year fixed effects are included in the analyses to account for their possible effects. The results for both *Model 3* and *Model 4* reported in Table 3 show that the main independent variable, *Ethnic Discrimination*, still has a significant negative sign after controlling for year and country fixed effects. This result confirms the significant negative effect of ethnic discrimination on prevention efforts of countries. Additionally, among the control variables included in both *Model 3* and *Model 4* in Table 3, Prevention $_{(t-1)}$, *Democratic Regimes*, *Female Representatives*, the *Rule of Law, and Population* have significant positive signs, showing their significant positive effects on the outcome variable, *Prevention*. These results confirm that prevention efforts in former years, democratic regimes, women legislators, respect to the rule of law and having more people increase the likelihood of taking strict prevention measures. As another control variable, *Civil Conflict*, included both in *Model 3* and *Model 4* in Table 3, still has a significant negative sign showing its significant adverse relationship with the outcome variable, *Prevention*. According to this result, countries experiencing civil conflict are less likely to take strict prevention measures. The results for both *Model 3* and *Model 4* in Table 3 show that *GDP* has a positive sign, implying its positive effect, and *Control for Corruption* has a negative sign, indicating its negative effect on the outcome variable, *Prevention*. However, these effects are statistically insignificant. Moreover, *Model 4* in Table 3 estimates the main model with year fixed effects to account for years' effects and reports the results for individual years between 2003 and 2015. Other than regression coefficients, both *Model 3* and *Model 4* in Table 3 report threshold values (cu1:cons, cut2:cons, cut3:cons, and cut4:cons) from the ordered probit estimation with country and years fixed effects for the categories of the outcome variable, *Prevention*. The value of Prob>chi^2 for both *Model 3* and *Model 4* in Table 3 is 0.000. Finally, 1,942 observations and 165 countries are included in both *Model 3* and *Model 4* in Table 3.

Table 3
Ethnic Discrimination and Prevention of Human Trafficking, 2003-2015 (Robustness Checks)

	(Model 2)	**(Model 3)**	**(Model 4)**
Main Independent and Control Variables	**Outcome Variable: Prevention**	**Outcome Variable: Prevention**	**Outcome Variable: Prevention**
Prevention $_{(t-1)}$	1.030*** (0.044)	1.026*** (0.054)	1.015*** (0.057)
Ethnic Discrimination $_{(t-1)}$	-0.540** (0.225)	-0.597** (0.247)	-0.565** (0.235)
Democratic Regimes $_{(t-1)}$	0.203*** (0.061)	0.238*** (0.065)	0.263*** (0.072)
Female Representatives $_{(t-1)}$	0.005 (0.003)	0.008** (0.003)	0.007** (0.003)
Control for Corruption $_{(t-1)}$	-0.030 (0.112)	-0.058 (0.121)	-0.039 (0.129)

	(Model 2)	(Model 3)	(Model 4)
Main Independent and Control Variables	**Outcome Variable: Prevention**	**Outcome Variable: Prevention**	**Outcome Variable: Prevention**
Rule of Law$_{(t-1)}$	0.252** (0.116)	0.318** (0.125)	0.333** (0.130)
Civil Conflict$_{(t-1)}$	-0.161* (0.094)	-0.187* (0.095)	-0.202** (0.103)
GDP$_{(t-1)}$	-0.022 (0.026)	0.010 (0.026)	0.003 (0.028)
Population$_{(t-1)}$	0.106*** (0.032)	0.089*** (0.034)	0.112*** (0.038)
OECD	0.293*** (0.105)		
Ratification$_{(t-1)}$	0.171*** (0.060)		
Year 2003			-0.176 (0.197)
Year 2004			0.390** (0.179)
Year 2005			0.320* (0.183)
Year 2006			0.037 (0.191)
Year 2007			0.057 (0.178)
Year 2008.			0.399** (0.176)
Year 2009			0.260 (0.195)
Year 2010			0.576*** (0.201)
Year 2011			0.248 (0.182)
Year 2012			0.518*** (0.198)
Year 2013			0.257 (0.204)
Year 2014			0.004 (0.204)
Year 2015			0.230 (0.181)
/cut1	1.855*** (0.409)		
/cut2	3.381*** (0.418)		
/cut3	5.101*** (0.424)		
/cut4	6.795*** (0.439)		
cut1:_cons		2.260*** (0.407)	2.577*** (0.499)
cut2:_cons		3.808*** (0.418)	4.161*** (0.512)
cut3:_cons		5.537*** (0.424)	5.934*** (0.523)
cut4:_cons		7.229*** (0.446)	7.677*** (0.548)
sigma2_u:_cons		0.021 (0.022)	0.044 (0.028)
Number of Observations	1942	1942	1942
Number of Countries	165	165	165
Pseudo R^2	0.310		
Prob > chi^2		0.000	0.000

Note: Clustered standard errors are reported in parenthesis. The results are estimated using STATA 15 statistical software.
**** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1*

Discussion

This study argues theoretically and tests empirically the relationship between ethnic discrimination and the prevention of human trafficking. While the findings from statistical analyses support the argument that ethnic discrimination weakens the prevention efforts of countries, this study has two limitations. First, the time span of statistical analyses is limited to the years between 2003 and 2015 because of the availability of the data used to measure the outcome variable, the prevention of human trafficking, coming from Cho et al. (2014) and Cho (2015). Available data for additional years would assist to better identify general patterns on prevention of human trafficking. Another limitation to this study is the lack of information regarding prevention efforts at the micro-level. This study uses aggregate-level data to test the relationship between ethnic discrimination and

the prevention of human trafficking. While analyses using aggregate-level data allow researchers to detect broad patterns based on comparisons cross-nationally and over time, they provide less information about the mechanism behind the inspected relationship. To address this limitation, this study presents two illustrative cases to highlight the mechanism behind the main argument.

The examples of Myanmar and Cambodia demonstrate how ethnic discrimination impairs the prevention of human trafficking. First, in Myanmar, the Rohingya people have been denied citizenship and the privileges coming with it based on the 1982 Citizenship Law (Naik & Arafath, 2021). Despite the vigorous evidence regarding the existence of Rohingya in Myanmar for many years, these people have been regarded as illegal immigrants who had originally come from Bangladesh (Naik & Arafath, 2021). Discrimination against the Rohingya people based on their ethnic origin has increased their vulnerability to trafficking by limiting their freedom of movement and thus the improvement of their socio-economic status (United States Department of State, 2021). Without proper identification, they have had a lack of access to job opportunities, proper education, and medical services (United States Department of State, 2021). As a result, for many years, Myanmar has been reported as a country where members of ethnically discriminated groups have been victims of labor or sex trafficking either within the country or in its neighbors (United States Department of State, 2021). Although in recent years, Myanmar took some measures to prevent human trafficking, including raising awareness and issuing identity documents for the Rohingya people, the registration process of national verification system has been criticized for revealing the ethnic identity of Rohingya and not guaranteeing citizenship or the rights granted with it (United States Department of State, 2021).

Cambodia provides another illustrative case for the negative relationship between ethnic discrimination and prevention of human trafficking. The ethnic Vietnamese community residing in Cambodia has been recognized as one of the ethnic groups living in the country for generations (Ehrentraut, 2011). However, the 1993 Constitution and 1996 Law on Nationality defined Cambodian citizenship and authorized government officials to deport foreigners and illegal migrants (Lainez, 2011). Not recognized as Cambodian citizens, the ethnic Vietnamese people settled in Cambodia faced the risk of deportation based on these regulations (Lainez, 2011). However, the crisis was assured by granting the ethnic Vietnamese people the status of foreign national and letting them stay in the country without having citizenship privileges (Lainez, 2011). Without citizenship and proper documentation, the ethnic Vietnamese people are prevented from having basic rights granted by nationality, such as access to formal job opportunities, education, healthcare, fair trial, or property rights (United States Department of State, 2021). Lacking the proper means for raising their socio-economic status, such as education and formal job opportunities, the ethnic Vietnamese people in Cambodia face a higher risk of being trafficked particularly when they seek to fulfill their economic necessities including food, shelter, and medical care (Brown, 2007). Consequently, Cambodia has been reported as a country where the ethnic Vietnamese people are victims of exploitative practices due to their disadvantaged position within their society (United States Department of State, 2021).

Conclusion

As human trafficking has become a global concern that threatens millions of lives in almost every country (ILO, 2017), prevention measures have a critical importance in combatting against this grave crime. While the main anti-trafficking instrument, the Palermo Protocol, details how countries will counter trafficking in persons, national practices for preventing human trafficking vary. Former quantitative anti-trafficking literature discusses several factors that have led to varying anti-trafficking practices, including female legislators, control of corruption, and regime types (Avdeyeva, 2012; Bartilow, 2008; Cho & Vadlamannati, 2012; Cho et al., 2014; Schonhofer, 2017). Although ethnic discrimination has been discussed as a source of vulnerability to human trafficking, its effect on countries' prevention efforts has not been empirically examined within human trafficking literature yet. In order to contribute to the human trafficking literature, this study investigates the association between ethnic discrimination and the implementation of effective prevention measures.

Despite its limitations, this study shows the significant association between ethnic discrimination and the prevention of trafficking of persons. The findings of quantitative analysis highlight the significant negative effect of ethnic discrimination on countries' prevention measures. The results implicate that national and international decision-makers should recognize the deteriorating effect of ethnic discrimination, which makes individuals susceptible to being exploited as well as increasing the demand for human trafficking and address it to eliminate the risk of this severe crime. To implement effective preventative measures, national governments should develop programs to rectify discrimination by strengthening discriminated groups' representation and improve their livelihood options. Easier access to educational opportunities, job-training skills and social protection systems could decrease the susceptibility of members of ethnically discriminated groups to human trafficking. Additionally, national and international policy makers should launch educational campaigns to raise public awareness about the risks of human trafficking and make legislative and educational regulations to shift discriminatory beliefs to protect people from abusive practices which in turn discourage the demand for human trafficking.

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