

1 Introduction

“Just as metaphors lose their metaphoricity as they congeal
through time into concepts, subversive performances always run the risk of
becoming deadening clichés through their repetition.”
Judith Butler

A conceptual history of “trafficking” could be written which starts on the bridge between 1869 and 1870, when a metaphor of “white slavery” began to denote the idea of white women and girls being coerced into transnational and imperial spaces where they were forced to sell sex. The unfolding of this history overtime would then continue into the present-day debates on “trafficking in women and children” or “human trafficking” in a period when a metaphor of “white slavery” had long past congealed into a transnational and gendered concept though under different terminology.

As part of an edited volume entitled *Human Trafficking: Global History and Perspectives*, I have already made a cursory attempt at writing such a history of the concept from the 1870s to current UN developments under the 2000 Convention on Transnational Crime.³ The complexity of conflict, coincidence, and contingency, however, demands far more careful attention to the varying debates, events, and contexts which made this historical development possible. The special issue in the *Journal of Women's History* edited by Philippa Hetherington and Julia Laite also looks at a similarly long span of time, offering highly productive thoughts on how historians should avoid the “conceptual trap” of “trafficking”.⁴

In its late nineteenth-century conceptualisation, the meaning and understandings of “trafficking” are confusing at best. It is for this reason that I focus on what I call the incubational period of conceptual development. Based on a small set of interrelated sources, I have identified this period as 1866–1881. As a result, this book proposes a possible way around what Hetherington and Laite believe to be the “methodological and theoretical challenges [of ‘trafficking’ which are] impossible to transcend”.⁵

3 Ruth Ennis, ‘Recalibrating Moral Compasses: A Global Conceptual History of Human Trafficking, 1870–2020’, in *Human Trafficking: Global History and Perspectives*, ed. by Elisha Jasper Dung and Augustine Avwunudiogba (Lanham et al.: Lexington Books, Rowman and Littlefield, 2021), 23–52.

4 Philippa Hetherington and Julia Laite, ‘Introduction to the Issue: Trafficking, a Useless Category of Historical Analysis?’, *Journal of Women's History* 33, no. 4 (2021): 27.

5 Hetherington and Laite, ‘Introduction to the Issue: Trafficking’.

In the nineteenth century, the semantics of slavery out of late eighteenth-century abolitionism had come to denote all that was considered evil. Into the present day, the power of a particular story of “trafficking” has endured. It pertains to the idea of networks of illegitimate non-state actors coercing young (white) females into prostitution abroad. This concept was framed by the late nineteenth-century notion of slave trafficking. Subsequently, in an era post the abolition of slavery, the logical Eurocentric conclusion at the end of the nineteenth century was to increase state controls in the name of repressing “white slavery”.

This moral frame, which placed prostitution and pornography on a par with slavery, remained the hegemonic opinion of western feminists, and arguably much of the broader western populous for some 100 years, until 1978, when the US-born and based Carol Leigh described herself as a “sex worker”.⁶ Leigh’s self-categorisation subsequently triggered explosive debate, calling a century of morality into question. She had self-articulated her social role as a worker, which over the subsequent decades led to demands for the labour rights recognition of those who sold sex. The slavery paradigm which framed prostitution and pornography over the previous century was thus in the midst of change. Just as moral compasses had shifted around enslavement in the late eighteenth century, so were they on the question of selling sex in the late twentieth century.

Seen in current debates around “human trafficking” today, the question remains as to whether late nineteenth-century “white slavery” and its abolition had any relation to European colonial slavery and abolitionism beyond that of discourse? While the answer to this rhetorical question might seem like an obvious no, two centuries of meanings being entangled have produced a conceptual history of “human trafficking” that continues to produce a semantic minefield which offers little clarity in the face of morality. In systematically working through this problem in the broader historical and historiographical context, this book works toward examining a particular period in the second half of the nineteenth cen-

⁶ Carol a.k.a. Scarlot Harlot Leigh, ‘Inventing Sex Work’, in *Whores and Other Feminists*, ed. by Jill Nagle (New York/London: Routledge, 1997), 223–31. When I speak about the West or western ways of thinking, I am basing my heuristic imaginary on Michel-Rolph Trouillot who notes, that “the West was created somewhere at the beginning of the sixteenth century in the midst of a global wave of material and symbolic transformations. The definitive expulsion of the Muslims from Europe, the so-called voyages of exploration, the first developments of merchant colonialism, the maturation of the absolutist state set the cate for the rulers and merchants of Western Christendom to conquer Europe and the rest of the world.” Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 74.

tury which formed the incubational period of conceptual development (1866–1881) behind what was then called “white slavery”.

1.1 State of Research and Historiographical Problem

In 1904, the first international agreement was signed against the “white slave traffic”, followed by a convention of the same name in 1910. The former allowed for bureaucratic steps to be taken between European states, such as data sharing on suspected “traffickers”, while the convention related to treaties of extradition and repatriation.⁷ The use of the language of “white slavery” in these international legal documents remained metaphorical; a race and gender-based phenomenon of enslavement was never defined. The legal terminology used rather pertained to dealing with problems of illegitimate transnational movement involving the sale of sex and the facilitation thereof.

Following the First World War, the League of Nations updated the convention in 1921, with the metaphor of “white slave trafficking” being renamed to fit the by then broadly conceptually understood phenomenon of “Trafficking in Women and Children”. This remained the formal international terminology until the United Nations began speaking about “Human Trafficking, especially in Women and Children” toward the turn of the twenty-first century.⁸ This name for a cognitively understood global phenomenon developed historically, but the issue lies in how it had congealed over time from a metaphor into a concept, which is so morally charged and discursively present, that it verges on impossible within a state-centric moral economy to understand it as not having a referent in social reality.

The negotiations running up into the 2000 Palermo Protocol and the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime had provided opportunity for the emerging sex workers’ rights movement of the 1990s to push their agenda. At the same time, this international high-level meeting also made it possible for self-designated sex workers to become globally visible. The event was, however, framed by a huge polarisation of feminist positions whereby clashes took place between anti-human trafficking efforts and a sex worker labour rights agenda. The original intention of this book was driven by a desire to historicise these arguments. What I have, however, ended up with is a global gender history of migration control since the late 1860s.

⁷ Ennis, ‘Recalibrating Moral Compasses’, 29–32.

⁸ Ennis, 32–35.

Debates over the past fifty years indicate that the moral frame of the late nineteenth century has been called into question. The emerging field of critical trafficking studies has already achieved much to build epistemological bridges in debates within the broader social sciences.⁹ Nevertheless, numerous issues remain open in terms of historical process as well as how narratives have been told about that process. Here I set the groundwork for this exploration by examining how the historical categorisation of “migrant” and “trafficker” came about; how “white slavery” related historically to anti-Semitic developments in the period given the particular emphasis in discourses on the Jewish involvement in the “trade”; and how the emergence of “white slavery” between 1866 and 1881 related to the approaching period of “new imperialism” at the end of the nineteenth century.

Present day discourses on human trafficking tend to give the impression that the global phenomenon of trafficking is new and ever growing.¹⁰ State and police practices in the name of anti-trafficking, however, have a history; and it is in fact because of this history and the resulting experiences of people who sold sex under the conditions of anti-trafficking policies, that the historical environment emerged within which a sex workers rights discourse in the late twentieth century could be born. In the late 1970s, Carol Leigh had been fed up of her wage labour being made more difficult by moralists wrapping it in a discourse of slav-

⁹ This field of Critical Trafficking or Sex Work Studies is far greater than my review of the literature can do justice to. Entire scholarly working groups are beginning to emerge, such as the German based Gesellschaft für Sexarbeit- und Prostitutionsforschung e.V. For foundational texts which are informed by a historical perspective, see Rutvica Andrijasevic, *Migration, Agency and Citizenship in Sex Trafficking* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010); Elizabeth Bernstein, *Brokered Subjects: Sex, Trafficking and the Politics of Freedom* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2018); Jo Doezema, *Sex Slaves and Discourse Masters: The Construction of Trafficking* (London/New York: Zen Books, 2010); Kempadoo Kamala and Jo Doezema, eds., *Global Sex Workers: Rights, Resistance, and Redefinition* (New York/London: Routledge, 1998); Kamala Kempadoo, ed., *Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights*, 2nd ed. (Boulder/London: Paradigm Publishers, 2012); Penelope Saunders, ‘Traffic Violations: Determining the Meaning of Violence in Sexual Trafficking Versus Sex Work’, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 20, no. 3 (March 2005): 343–60; Patrizia Testai, ‘Debt as a Route to Modern Slavery in the Discourse on “Sex Trafficking:” Myth or Reality?’, *Human Security Journal* 6, no. Spring (2008): 68–77; Rodríguez García, Van Voss, and Van Nederveen Meerkerk, eds., *Selling Sex in the City*.

¹⁰ Adam McKeown has argued that an inherent character of globalisation is an obsession with its own culture of newness. For an analysis of the history of human trafficking discourse along these lines, see Ennis, ‘Recalibrating Moral Compasses’; Adam McKeown, ‘Periodizing Globalization’, *History Workshop Journal*, no. 63 (Spring 2007): 227–28.

ery. Twenty years later, the scholar Jo Doezeema brought this discussion into academic debates when, in 1999, she published an article in *Gender Issue*.

Doezeema's work marked a critical moment in knowledge production on the history of trafficking. A UK-based scholar in Development Studies, she had herself been active in the sex-workers' rights movements of the 1990s. Her activism brought her to participate in international advocacy campaigns during the UN negotiations. The main outcome of this high-level event had been the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, which was supplemented by the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children; referred to in short as the Palermo Protocol.

Doezeema was the first scholar to link contemporary discourses on trafficking back to the "white slavery" agitations of the late nineteenth century. Her findings set the stage for a new research agenda based on her argument that a historical myth was in the midst of re-emerging.¹¹ In the post-Palermo era, several other scholars also began to seek out understanding for the shifting discourses and practices against "trafficking" which were being expressed and implemented all around them. This includes ongoing knowledge production on the history of the alleged global phenomenon. However, different strands of historical literature were entangled in the process of scholars trying to answer questions on the history of "white slavery" and "trafficking" from the point of view of their post-Palermo era.

Shortly after Doezeema's article was published, two extensive source-based accounts of the myth of "white slavery" followed in 2002. One of them was a monograph by the Belgian sociologist Jean-Michel Chaumont in which he revealed the fabrication or false presentation of evidence by the League of Nations committee on trafficking in the interwar period.¹² The second was an examination of the research carried out by German criminologists and Anglo-American social scientists at the beginning of the twentieth century, which the journalist and social scientist Dietmar Jazbinsek analysed and wrote about.¹³ As with Doezeema's re-emergence of a late nineteenth-century myth and Chaumont's interwar fabrication of evidence, Jazbinsek showed that critical researchers at the beginning of the twentieth century had already proved that forced prostitution as an organised crime did not per se exist.

11 Jo Doezeema, 'Loose Women or Lost Women? The Re-Emergence of the Myth of White Slavery in Contemporary Discourses in Women', *Gender Issues* 18 (1999): 23–50.

12 Jean-Michel Chaumont, *Le mythe de la traite des blanches: enquête sur la fabrication d'un fléau* (Paris: La Découverte, 2002).

13 Dietmar Jazbinsek, *Der internationale Mädchenhandel: Biographie eines sozialen Problems* (Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin, 2002).

In 2002, the same year that Chaumont and Jazbinsek sought to explain the production, countenance, and continuation of a historical myth, Professor emeritus of modern history Jacques Solé argued the truth of historical globalised trafficking based on the early twentieth-century investigative journalism of Albert Londres. At the same time, global historian Harald Fischer-Tiné distinguished the term “white slavery” from the truth of the “trafficking”, arguing how white subaltern prostitutes in British India became visible after a small group of British moral reform campaigners broke the silence on the international trade from the mid-1880s on.¹⁴

Even if these authors were not directly speaking to one another, a debate about history and a particular problématique was emerging across the European humanities. At first glance, for the early 2000s, it would seem as if non-historians were proving a historical myth, while historians were pointing to a truth of trafficking in the archives. This, however, did not remain the case for long, when, in 2009, Esther Sabelus published her careful historical analysis and explanation of how the myth of “white slavery” was not only a myth, but that life was breathed into it through the production and practices of the media and social institutions.¹⁵ Still not engaging directly with one another, this was soon followed by a number of works by scholars of law and criminology, who published contradictory findings in German language academia. Based on their examination of national police files and the developments in international laws, these authors by contrast argued the undisputable truth of historical trafficking.¹⁶ Rather than the debate

14 Jacques Solé, ‘Traite des blanches: la mondialisation du trafic’, *L’histoire* 264 (2002): 54–59; Fischer-Tiné, “White Women Degrading Themselves to the Lowest Depths”.

15 Esther Sabelus, *Die Weiße Slavin: Mediale Inszenierungen von Sexualität und Großstadt um 1900* (Berlin: Panama Verlag, 2009).

16 Stefanie Lauben, *Weißer Markt: Frauenhandel und Völkerrecht vom Ausgang des 19. bis zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 2014); Jürgen Nautz, ‘Frauenhandel Ost-West. Märkte und Netzwerke’, in *Zwangsfreiheiten: Multikulturalität und Feminismus*, ed. by Birgit Sauer and Sabine Strasser (Vienna: Promedia Verlag, 2008), 204–20; Jürgen Nautz, ‘Der Kampf gegen den Frauenhandel in Österreich vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg’, *SIAK-Journal – Zeitschrift für Polizeiwissenschaft und polizeiliche Praxis*, no. 2 (2011): 47–60; Christiana Weidel, ‘Internationales Abkommen gegen Frauenhandel – Eine Zeitreise’, *SIAK-Journal – Zeitschrift für Polizeiwissenschaft und polizeiliche Praxis* (2016): 85–93. There are many other scholarly works written in German which insist on or assume the historical reality of trafficking in women. See, for example, Malte Fuhrmann, “Western Perversion” at the Threshold of Felicity: The European Prostitutes of Galata-Pera (1870–1915), *History and Anthropology* 21, no. 2 (2010): 159–72; Julia Roos, ‘Eine dunkle Seite des Auswanderungsgeschäfts: Mädchenhandel und Prostitution’, in Diethelm Knauf and Helga Schröder, eds., *Fremde in Bremen: Auswanderer, Zuwanderer, Zwangsarbeiter* (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 1993), 36–48; Anna Staudacher, ‘Die Aktion “Girondo”. Zur Geschichte des internationalen Mädchenhandels in Österreich-Ungarn um 1885’, in *“Das Weib existiert nicht für sich”*.

being between historians and non-historians, those who looked at police case files and archives were convinced of the truth of historical trafficking, while those who looked elsewhere for discourses and facts were not.

Due to the linguistic structures of academia, German and French-language works have not been as widely read. Rather, a number of English language monologues published in 2010 came to predominantly frame how the history of international trafficking is to be understood and questioned. These included Doeze-ma's *Sex Slaves and Discourse Matters* which was based on her dissertation and an extension of her early arguments of a re-emerging myth.¹⁷ It was accompanied by the simultaneous and independent works of sociologists Stephanie Limoncelli and Paul Knepper who approached the history of trafficking in terms of international law and international crime.¹⁸ Framed through a perspective of internationalism, all of these works made clear that the transnational question of trafficking was by no means new.

Doezema had started this conversation in English-world academia. This was continued by Limoncelli, who sought to understand the politics of the international movements which formed to combat trafficking in the early twentieth century. Although engaging with sources to a greater extent than Doeze-ma's theoretical reflections have, Limoncelli's work as well as that of others, lack historical contextualisation and falls short of understanding people and events in their own time.¹⁹ Instead, Limoncelli's presentation of historical actors in early twentieth-century international movements is a projection of the debates in her present

Geschlechterbeziehungen in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft, ed. Heide Dienst and Edith Saurer (Wien: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1990), 97–138.

17 Doeze-ma, *Sex Slaves and Discourse Masters: The Construction of Trafficking*.

18 Stephanie A. Limoncelli, *The Politics of Trafficking: The First International Movement to Combat the Sexual Exploitation of Women* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010); Paul Knepper, *The Invention of International Crime: A Global Issue in the Making, 1881–1914* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010); Paul Knepper, *International Crime in the 20th Century: The League of Nations Era, 1919–1939* (Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011).

19 Indeed, Marc Bloch argued the benefits of doing history backwards, but he equally warned of anachronistically projecting the knowledge and spirit of present times onto those past. Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992). For examples of projecting the present onto the past in terms of the debates around trafficking, see Stephanie A. Limoncelli, 'International Voluntary Associations, Local Social Movements and State Paths to the Abolition of Regulated Prostitution in Europe, 1875–1950', *International Sociology* 21, no. 1 (2006): 31–59; Limoncelli, *The Politics of Trafficking: The First International Movement to Combat the Sexual Exploitation of Women*; Gunther Peck, 'The Shadow of White Slavery: Race, Innocence, and History in Contemporary Anti-Human Trafficking Campaigns', in *The Power of the Past: History and Statecraft*, ed. by Hal Brands and Jeremi Suri (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2016), 209–33; Solé, 'Traite des blanches: la mondialisation du trafic'.

around sex work and trafficking, which she used to read and categorise actors and institutions of times past.

Like Limoncelli, Paul Knepper also sought to understand the history of internationalism and the invention of international crime. His findings and approach to sources published over two monologues are, however, more historical in how he explored and sought to understand state collaboration and efforts against anarchism, “white slavery”, and terrorism since the late nineteenth century.²⁰ All non-historians, these three scholars, Doezeema, Limoncelli, and Knepper were all the first to the table, or at least the only ones to be widely heard at the table in the post-Palermo period. Their work opened up the topic of trafficking for historical research by showing that discourses, movements, and laws on trafficking were nothing new in the second millennium.

In contradiction to the media discourses since 2000, which give the impression that transnational “trafficking” is a recent and ever-growing phenomenon, the scholarly work from the past two decades leaves no doubt about a century and bit history of international efforts against this alleged transnational crime. Looked at, however, from a global historical or post-colonial perspective, these accounts took on a normative assumption of the natural existence of the state, and thus, their internationalist takes on the history of “trafficking” tended to reinforce, rather than unpack organisational and spatial containers. This is to the most part due to their narratives having been shaped through an international lens which was produced upon the logic of state and organisational archives, memoirs and records.

Historians on the topic are no less innocent of reinforcing the spatial container; far from it. Ever since the cultural and then the spatial turn, there is a consensus that the archive, without critical reflection, is a catalyst for the reproduction of normative thinking. It was, however, Anglophone experts in development studies, sociology, crime, and the law who were the first to open up the past of international “trafficking” and the efforts against it. Their training not only had an impact on the questions they asked about the past and how they approached the archives, it also shaped how they read and interpreted the works of historians which they drew upon in order to historicise.

Starting in the 1970s, sex, class, and race became a lens through which marginalised groups in society could be examined in historical research. Among the cultural histories available in this emerging field, the works of Judith Walkowitz and Alain Corbin (in English), which looked at prostitution in London and Paris re-

20 Knepper, *The Invention of International Crime*; Knepper, *International Crime in the 20th Century*.

spectively, were among the most read after the initial post-Palermo research on the history of trafficking.²¹ Corbin's and Walkowitz's ventures into the archives to find histories of prostitution brought them into confrontation with sources referring to "white slavery".²² The reason that these cultural historians received the most attention by non-historical scholars applying an international lens to the history of trafficking was because of how the history of trafficking is presented in the UN archives.

The UN archives on "prostitution" and "trafficking" make up a large part of their records categorised as related to "women". For the twentieth century, the geographic span, organised alphabetically by state, is much broader, but for the nineteenth century, Britain and France crop up in the sources as being of importance; France, because that is where anti-regulationists of the late nineteenth century historicised the system they were fighting against as having originally formed under Napoleon; Britain, due to the sources produced by anti-regulationists involved in the fights against state regulation and "white slavery", which named British actors Josephine Butler, Alfred Stace Dyer, and William Alexander Coote as having been at the forefront of their struggles and institutional histories. It is surely for this reason that post-Palermo scholars writing on the history of trafficking turned to the works of Walkowitz and Corbin who wrote on nineteenth-century prostitution in London and Paris.

Simultaneous to urban cultural histories, though not always clearly being part of the trends of the cultural turn, a number of historians in the 1980s had

21 Alain Corbin, *Les filles de nocé: misère sexuelle et prostitution au XIX^e siècle* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1978); Alain Corbin, *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France after 1850*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1980).

22 There are also other scholars of the cultural turn, who examined prostitution, but who are less widely cited in the historiography on trafficking, see Laurie Bernstein, *Sonia's Daughters: Prostitutes and Their Regulation in Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1992); Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790–1920* (New York/London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992); Ruth Rosen, *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900–1918* (Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982). For historians of Imperial history, who dealt with questions of "white slavery" in the colonies, see Kenneth Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex and Class under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and Their Critics, 1793–1905* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1979); Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865–1915* (Chapel Hill/London: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Robert Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience* (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 1990).

also begun producing specific knowledge on the topic of turn of the twentieth-century Jews and “white slavery”. There is a growing consensus among more recent scholarship that perceptions of Jewish “white slavery” was the result of “media exaggeration” and “cultural hysteria”.²³ Post-Palermo scholars were, however, reliant on the work of historians from the 1980s, who focused on either the Western European Jewish elite communities’ attempt to combat “white slavery”, or on the proletarian Eastern European Jewish alleged involvement in it. The conclusions of scholars like Edward Bristow and Lloyd Gartner resulted in the writing of Jewish histories which by and large frame the past of Eastern European “Jewish white slavery” as being regrettable, but to the most part historically true.²⁴

The historical literature since the 2010s has, however, tried to complicate this story of migrant subalterns and their involvement in the sale of sex or the facilitation thereof. Stepping away from the narratives of elites (Jewish or otherwise), who produced discourse on “white slavery”, several monologues shift the perspective away from state structures to submerge into the lifeworld’s of the lower urban classes. With Jews having often been among them, they look at subaltern actors who sold sex, or facilitated the sale thereof, in varying turn of the twentieth-century global cities and spaces, most notably in Argentina, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East.²⁵

23 See Frederick K. Grittner, *White Slavery: Myth, Ideology, and American Law* (New York: Garland, 1990); Aleksandra Jakubczak, ‘The Issue of Jews’ Participation in White Slavery and Prostitution as Reflected in Hebrew Press at the Turn of the 19th and the 20th Centuries’, *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów* 262, no. 2 (2017): 183–99; Laura Barberán Reinares, ‘Frankly Speaking, “The Men That Is Now Only All Palaver and What They Can Get out of You”: Migration and White Slavery in Argentina in Joyce’s “Eveline”’, *Irish Migration Studies in Latin America* 8, no. 2 (2013): 47–62; Esther Sabelus, *Die Weiße Sklavin: Mediale Inszenierungen von Sexualität und Großstadt um 1900* (Berlin: Panama Verlag, 2009); Claire Solomon, ‘Reconsidering Anti-Semitism and White Slavery in Contemporary Historical Fiction in Argentina’, *Comparative Literature* 63, no. 3 (2011): 307–27; Daniel M. Vyleta, *Crime, Jews and News: Vienna 1895–1914* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007).

24 Edward J. Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice: The Jewish Fight Against White Slavery 1870–1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); Lloyd P. Gartner, ‘Anglo-Jewry and the Jewish International Traffic in Prostitution, 1885–1914’, *Cambridge University Press on Behalf of the Association for Jewish Studies* 7, no. 8 (1983 1982): 129–78.

25 Francesca Biancani, *Sex Work in Colonial Egypt: Women, Modernity and The Global Economy* (London/New York: I. B. Tauris, 2018); Siobhán Hearne, ‘“Prosecuting Procurement in the Russian Empire”’, *Journal of Social History* 54, no. 1 (2019): 185–209; Hearne, *Policing Prostitution*; Liat Kozma, *Policing Egyptian Women: Sex, Law, and Medicine in Khedival Egypt* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011); Liat Kozma, *Global Women, Colonial Ports: Prostitution in the Inter-war Middle East* (Albany: State University of New York, 2017); Keely Stauter-Halsted, *The Devil’s Chain: Prostitution and Social Control in Partitioned Poland* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press,

While these histories seek to provide perspective on or uncover the agency of marginalised actors in history, they do not romanticise the labour of selling sex or facilitating it. For this reason, and compared to scholars writing a history of trafficking through an international institutional perspective, they are an important contribution to the building of bridges in contemporary debates on trafficking, by complicating knowledge on the life experiences, agency, and choices of those who lived under precarious conditions and in the face of state regulated prostitution, often referred to in the nineteenth century as the “French system”.

Since the structures stemming out of the French revolution, modern states are built upon systems of regulation, which result in data production on marginalised populations under observation. While many of the most recent studies on “white slavery” have made a critical and sensitive attempt to extract subaltern perspectives from police files, one of the major issues with this literature is their reliance upon sources which were produced as part of the populist and state explosion of knowledge production after the 1880s.

By the early nineteenth century, the “vagrant” and the “prostitute” were familiar figures in the church-state files of Europe: but the 1880s form a turning point in western state observation of populations on the move. This is not only clear in how newspaper and police archives began filling up with evidence on “white slavery”; it is also a visible trend for the same period if looked at through the historiographies on new policing practices, the emergence of border controls, and the codification of citizenship.²⁶ Common to all of these fields, be it “white

2015); Tracie Wilson, ‘Migration, Empire, and Liminality: Sex Trade in the Borderlands of Europe’, *Aspasia* 11 (2017): 71–96; Nancy M. Wingfield, ‘Destination: Alexandria, Buenos Aires, Constantinople: “White Slavers” in Late Imperial Austria’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 20, no. 2 (May 2011): 291–311; Nancy M. Wingfield, *The World of Prostitution in Late Imperial Austria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Mir Yarfitz, *Impure Migration: Jews and Sex Work in Golden Age Argentina* (New Brunswick et al.: Rutgers University Press, 2019).

²⁶ See Cecil Bloom, ‘The Politics of Immigration’, *Jewish Historical Studies* 33 (1994–1992): 187–214; Tobias Brinkmann, ‘The Road from Damascus: Transnational Jewish Philanthropic Organizations and the Jewish Mass Migration from Eastern Europe, 1840–1914’, in *Shaping the Transnational Sphere: Experts, Networks and Issues from the 1840s to the 1930s.*, ed. by Davide Rodogno, Bernhard Struck, and Jakob Vogel (New York/Oxford: Berghahn, 2015), 152–72; Jens Jäger, ‘International Police Co-Operation and the Associations for the Fight Against White Slavery’, *Paedagogica Historica* 38, no. 2–3 (2002): 565–79; Jens Jäger, *Verfolgung durch Verwaltung: Internationales Verbrechen und internationale Polizeikooperation 1880–1933* (Konstanz: UVK, 2006); Andreas Fahrmeir, ‘Passports and the Status of Aliens’, in *The Mechanics of Internationalism*, ed. by Martin H. Geyer and Johannes Paulmann (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 93–120; Andreas Fahrmeir, *Citizenship: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Concept* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2007); Andreas Fahrmeir, Oliver Faron, and Patrick Weil, eds., *Migration Control in the North Atlantic World: The Evolution of State Practices in Europe and the*

slavery”, “policing”, “citizenship”, or “migration control”, is that there were already hints of new problems and state processes in the 1870s. Yet empirical research for all of these topics only begins for the 1880s on, a point in historical time, when states had already established clear infrastructure and practices. Thus, in trying to understand how these new structures came about, I focus on how certain figures such as the “migrant” or the “trafficker” first came to be conceptualised or categorised by empire and the state through language as well as through the law. This object of research stems from the problems of historicising the gradual emergence of such figures just prior to production of archived evidence within state structures since the 1880s upon which multiple historiographies rely.

In the 2000s, the post-UN Convention social scientists, who wished to produce knowledge on the international movements of the twentieth century, had no perfectly fitting works to fall back upon for historical context. Thus, they relied upon a generation of histories of the nineteenth century, which had either been written by cultural historians, historians of empire, or historians of Jewish history. The cultural histories, predominantly written in the 1980s, were however looking within specific urban localities (i.e. Paris, London, and New York), and were not seeking to answer questions about international, transnational, or global processes. The works of imperial history concentrated on the British Empire and only cursorily touched on the topic of “white slavery”. While the Jewish histories published in the same period stemmed beyond Britain to take German language sources into consideration and to look at Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe, they were explicitly about the topic of “white slavery”, and by and large produced problematic knowledge about global criminal networks as a result of an unreflected reproduction of state and institutional *facts*.

Combining these histories to contextualise global processes of the past has on the one hand resulted in a British-centric narrative in which actors such as Josephine Butler, Alfred Stace Dyer and William Alexander Coote play the heroes who

United States from the French Revolution to the Inter-War Period (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2003); John Torpey, ‘Passports and the Development of Immigration Controls in the North Atlantic World During the Long Nineteenth Century’, in Fahrmeir, Faron, and Weil, eds., *Migration Control in the North Atlantic World*, 73–92; Adam McKeown, *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Christiane Reinecke, ‘Policing Foreign Men and Women: Gendered Patterns of Expulsion and Migration Control in Germany, 1880–1914’, in *Illegal Migration and Gender in a Global and Historical Perspective*, ed. by Marlou Schrover, Joanne van Der Leun, Leo Lucassen, and Chris Quispel (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 57–76; Christiane Reinecke, *Grenzen der Freizügigkeit: Migrationskontrolle in Großbritannien und Deutschland, 1880–1930* (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010).

forced the British state to be the first to react to the problem of “trafficking”. On the other, it has resulted in a reinforcement of state centric and anti-Semitic claims about the “criminal Jew”.²⁷

While the lifeworld histories since the 2010s challenge and complicate some of these issues, they too are restrained by a state-centrism in that their investigations can only begin in periods after which there has been a significant amount of state and police data to work with. The sources which these historians draw upon are all from the 1880s or later, a period when different European states (particularly the Habsburg and British Empires) began producing huge archives on the alleged phenomenon. Lost in the current deafening cacophony of discourses on “sex work” or “sex slave” is the forgotten history of the concept of “human trafficking”. At some point and by some means before the 1880s, transatlantic slavery was borrowed as a metaphor and imagery which was then given a new gendered and racialised meaning as it became entangled with a notion of Jewish criminal underworlds.

The historiography on anti-trafficking makes no claim of a practice-based relation between discourses on “white slavery” at the end of the nineteenth century and the European transatlantic traffic in people from Africa which began in the mid-fifteenth century. A consensus, I am sure, would be easily reached that this historical juxta positioning of terms was a metaphor or idiom at best. That said, the acclaimed scholar on slavery studies, Orlando Patterson, claims that the “current massive trafficking of Slavic women into West European sexual slavery” is a “tragic historical pattern repeating itself” “since the eighth century”, when Slavs became the typical slave trafficked to Western medieval Europe.²⁸ Making this unsubstantiated link, while overlooking the “white slavery” campaigns of the late nineteenth century which fell in between his points of relations upon the continuum of time, the historiography for the period in question remains plagued with a “myth”/“truth” conundrum as to whether migrant women selling sex had indeed been systematically coerced by underground networks of criminals, or

²⁷ This observation in the historiography contributes to the efforts of Michael Berkowitz in bringing light to the little recognised historical relationship between the history of criminology and that of anti-Semitism. See Michael Berkowitz, ‘Unmasking Counterhistory: An Introductory Exploration of Criminality and the Jewish Question’, in *Criminals and Their Scientists: The History of Criminology in International Perspective*, ed. by Peter Becker and Richard F. Wetzell (New York/Washington: Cambridge University Press & German Historical Institute, 2006), 62.

²⁸ Orlando Patterson, ‘Trafficking, Gender and Slavery: Past and Present’, in Jean Allain, ed., *The Legal Understanding of Slavery: From the Historical to the Contemporary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 690.

whether these tales were part of emerging nineteenth-century mass media and popular sensationalism.

At the same time and for the same period, there is a growing historiography which shows that despite the legal abolition of slavery earlier in the nineteenth century, practices of enslavement, exploitation, and human trafficking continued outside of Europe, but more often than not under the auspices of Europeans. Here lies a problem inherent in a globalised concept; one term, namely “human trafficking”, whose meaning is flexible enough to signify many non-historically-related practices in many a diverged and distant context. Thus, I hypothesise that the concept of human trafficking has a split history, which bears serious consequences on how power and asymmetrical dependency are to be understood.²⁹

Human trafficking as a practice of kidnapping, transporting, and enslaving can be arguably found throughout human history.³⁰ The term *traffic* and its European linguistic equivalents, which otherwise meant *trade*, can be traced to the fifteenth century; while this term’s use in relation to the trade in humans can be understood as having emerged thereafter to describe the European transatlantic trade in people from Africa. Human trafficking as we understand it in popular discourse today however, has its roots in the late nineteenth century.

Emerging out of an incubational period (1866–1881), a newly constructed concept of “white slavery” metamorphosed over the subsequent 100 years, appearing in the signifier of “human trafficking” today. Whether “white slavery” then, or “human trafficking” now, both bear within them an inherent Eurocentrism which, on the one hand, serviced regimes of migration control back then as they continue to do today; on the other, this Eurocentrism arguably produces a European amnesia toward colonialism and the slave trade, which may also be given the signifier of “human trafficking” depending on who is speaking and about what.

The history of “white slavery” has long been written as a development of transnational European feminist and moral reformist organisations, which are understood to have emerged to hold governments to account. It is a linear reading of predominantly UN and British archives which has resulted in the reproduction of this British-centric narrative. The problem with this established account of events is not simply that it mistakenly puts British non-state actors centre stage, it is that this misguided focus produces silences on a whole array of western colonial and imperial dynamics.

²⁹ The term asymmetrical dependency is taken from the Bonn Center for Slavery and Dependency Studies. <https://www.dependency.uni-bonn.de/en>.

³⁰ Catherine M. Cameron, *Captives: How Stolen People Changed the World* (Lincoln/London: University Press of Nebraska, 2016).

A very different sense of “white slavery” can be gleaned when looked at from the global gender historical perspective on “new imperial” history as well as from the history of migration control and that of international police cooperation. The knowledge produced in this book is thus based on critical engagement with the secondary literature and sources, the results of which are in conversation with scholars such as Peter Becker, Isa Blumi, Valeska Huber, Jens Jäger, Gavin Murray-Miller, and Richard F. Wetzell; not to mention the broader historiographies on migration control, passports, citizenship, and international law.

1.2 Incubational Period of Conceptual Development (1866–1881)

Peter Becker, Jens Jäger, and Richard F. Wetzell examine the shifting structures around criminology and policing practices in the later nineteenth century.³¹ Isa Blumi and Valeska Huber look at the shifting dynamics on the edges of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the nineteenth century in terms of the different categories of mobility.³² Gavin Murray-Miller points out how stringent passport restrictions introduced in the Ottoman region of North Africa in the 1880s enabled the European Empire to surveil trans-territorial groups such as the Brotherhood networks who posed a threat to their competing territorial project.³³ As with the above discussion on the historiographies on migration control, policing, citizenship, and “white slavery” more broadly, these scholars tend to hint at new practices of inclusion and exclusion as having begun in the 1870s, though there is little discussion of what, where, and how. Rather, the springboard for further discussion tends to begin in the 1880s, when state practices were already clearly visible.

The sources on “white slavery” beyond the British and UN archives give indication of the implementation of passport controls around the Mediterranean and

31 Becker and Wetzell, *Criminals and Their Scientists*; Jäger, ‘International Police Co-Operation and the Associations for the Fight Against White Slavery’; Jäger, *Verfolgung durch Verwaltung: Internationales Verbrechen und internationale Polizeikooperation 1880–1933*.

32 Isa Blumi, ‘Agents of the Ottoman States: The Precariousness of the Berlin Congress Boundaries of Montenegro and How to Define/Confine People’, in *War and Diplomacy: The Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 and the Treaty of Berlin*, ed. by M. Hakan Yavuz with Peter Sluglett (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2011), 226–52; Isa Blumi, *Ottoman Refugees, 1878–1978: Migration in a Post-Imperial World* (London et al.: Bloomsbury, 2015); Valeska Huber, *Channelling Mobilities: Migration and Globalisation in the Suez Canal Region and Beyond, 1869–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

33 Gavin Murray-Miller, *Empire Unbound: France and the Muslim Mediterranean, 1880–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 50, 145.

in the Ottoman region as having begun under the auspices of the British and Habsburg Empires sometime around 1870. However, the established British-centric narrative on “white slavery” would have it that the British Select Committee of 1881 on the Law Relating to the Protection of Young Girls was the first proactive move of a state to try and address a newly discovered transnational phenomenon. For this reason, the cut-off point of my time frame became 1881 and this elitist British event. The starting point for analysis, namely 1866, came from three sources and one scholarly work, the topics of which did not necessarily have any relation in 1866, but the meanings and memories of which became warped and entangled over the course of the 1870s.

Valérie de Gasparin (1813–1894) is missing entirely from the historical literature on late nineteenth-century prostitution, its regulation, and the fights against the “French system”. Yet it was her metaphor of “*la traite des blanches*” (trade in white women) in 1870 that congealed over time into the transnational and gendered concept of “white slavery”.³⁴ In 1866, Gasparin had made her second trip to the “Orient” and published her second travelogue thereafter, which was entitled *À Constantinople*.³⁵ This journey included her first time in a Turkish harem, which she read through a history of orientalist imaginaries. This knowledge and these memories informed her metaphorical depiction of “*la traite des blanches*”. Her travelogue is the first source to pin my time frame down to 1866. The second is a painting by the French artist Jean-Léon Gérôme entitled *Le Marché d’esclaves* (Slave Market) which depicted a light-skinned slave in an oriental slave market.³⁶ Whether Gérôme and Gasparin had any exchange is neither clear nor relevant. They were building on Orientalist knowledge since Napoleon’s expeditions to Egypt and Syria at the turn of the nineteenth century, and they both would go on to have an impact on knowledge of “white slavery” to come. The third source that defines the beginning of the incubational period of conceptual development is an 1866 report in the Austrian press regarding a “*Mädchenhandel*” (trade in girls) in British Colonial India. Previous to this point in time, “*Mädchenhandel*” referred to a largely local matchmaking or brothel trade in German-speaking Europe. This report gave it new meaning in a colonial context amid the efforts of the British state to crack down on ongoing slaving practices among its colonial subjects in an

34 Ruth Ennis, “Narrating ‘White Slavery’ in and out of Fiction, 1854–1880,” in *Naming, Defining, Phrasing Strong Asymmetrical Dependencies. A Textual Approach*, ed. by Jeannine Bischoff, Stephan Conermann and Marion Gymnich, (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2023), 103–148.

35 Valérie de Gasparin, *À Constantinople*, deuxième édition (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1867).

36 See figure 6, p. 67.

era after the abolition of slavery.³⁷ The fourth basis for beginning the analysis in 1866 is the finding by Sucheng Chan that a law against “Chinese Houses of Ill Fame” was passed in California that year, but as it failed to achieve the goal of reducing the amount of women arriving from China, a second law was passed in 1870 which made it illegal to bring Asian women by land or sea into the state, unless it could be proved that they were coming voluntarily and of “good character”.³⁸ Knowledge of these legal developments in California were thereafter transferred to Europe and entangled with orientalist discourse on “white slavery”.

1.3 Sources and Actors

Over the course of fifteen years, a network of state actors, women’s issues activists, and moral reformists began to frame prostitution as inherently exploitative and on a par with slavery. While the agendas behind these debates were often competing or conflicting with one another, they commonly shared a moral or political concern about the threat that the global condition posed to established social order. This network of elite or aspiring actors which feature to different degrees throughout the three main analytical chapters of this book (chapters five to seven) total at nineteen and have been heuristically divided into four groups; Those who sought to critique the state using moral arguments (Josephine Butler, Valérie de Gasparin, and Yves Guyot); those non-state actors who legitimised a statist agenda to different kinds of publics (Theodore Borel, Alfred Stace Dyer, Xavier de Montépin, Albrecht Sellin, Berthold Woltze); those who pushed for particular structures to be established, and whose own careers relied upon the stability of the state (Émile de Laveleye, Judge Snagge, Vilmos Tóth, Howard Vincent, a certain Mr. Macky, and A. E. J. Modderman); and finally, a number of British and Austro-Hungarian diplomats and ministers of foreign affairs who, it would appear, had different degrees of oversight and control over developments regarding “white slavery” (Gyula Andrassy, Henry Barron, Hoffer von Hoffenfels, the Marquess of Salisbury, and Carl Ritter von Sax).

These actors have all been identified due to their articulations in the sources, and the sources were defined due to their relationships to one another made evident through an analysis of two cultural transfers. The retracing of these transfers will be made transparent in chapter four, but here it needs to be noted that

³⁷ Anonymous, ‘Mädchenhandel’, *Fremden-Blatt*, 26 February 1866, 55th edition.

³⁸ Sucheng Chan, ‘The Exclusion of Chinese Women, 1870–1943’, in *Entry Denied: Exclusion and the Chinese Community in America, 1882–1943*, ed. by Sucheng Chan (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 74–149.

the source base is small in number but diverse in type. It comprises of press reports, diplomatic correspondences, a travelogue, a painting, a novel, non-fictional narratives, campaign publications, the minutes of a legal process, and parliamentary debates. Much like the cultural transfers that form what we reconstruct as History, this work is thus interdisciplinary at its core, dipping in and out of disciplines and genres. Ideas circulated, practices were appropriated, and people from Europe became increasingly aware of the chaos of their own connectedness under the global condition of the late nineteenth century.

While the identification of two cultural transfers enabled transnationally dispersed sources to be brought together in terms of their historical relationship, it is nevertheless important to point out that my ability to revise the established British-centric narrative cannot be accredited to method alone. It has benefitted greatly from the following: holding a European passport with which I could travel to different archives with ease; access to finance from European institutions; and my living at a particular moment in historical time when digitalisation has made certain sources easily available, which would simply not have been the case for my colleagues writing, for example, in the 1980s.³⁹

1.4 Conceptions, Method, and Approaches

Edward Said's work on Orientalism was seminal, yet it faced many critiques, in part because his study was based entirely on European sources, predominantly written by men from Britain and France. This, at times, led to the debatable accusation that he does the same essentialising with the west which he sought to deconstruct about the "Orient".⁴⁰ Like Said, I have also only engaged with European

³⁹ Throughout this book, I dissect the work of Edward Bristow in particular and make many critiques based on his misuse or problematic interpretation of sources and citations. Nevertheless, it needs to be noted, that he was working in a different context, with different tools and possibilities available to him. This is not a justification, but a possible explanation for why so many tail ends were left hanging, and why I was able to tie some of the up due to, for example, using digital archives. That said, he was more than well-funded for the research he undertook, and he travelled much further than I did or could have for the project. See his acknowledgements: Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice*.

⁴⁰ For a comprehensive overview of critiques of Said and an attempt to respond to them, see F. Güven, 'Criticism to Edward W. Said's Orientalism', *RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* 15 (2019): 418–30, <https://doi.org/10.29000/rumelide.580700>. For a discussion on his neglect of European women's contribution to Orientalism, see Natascha Ueckmann, *Frauen und Orientalismus: Reisetexte französisch-sprachiger Autorinnen des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (Ergebnisse der Frauenforschung 56) (Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler, 2001).

sources, with the extension of some female authors and two other languages. That said, with the aid of a cultural transfers approach, combined with elements of microhistory, I use European sources and archives to question and destabilise Europe's construction of itself, by unpacking the European mind and memory reliant on the "white slaver" as *other*.

Throughout the book, I sporadically refer to the "European mind" or Europeans "memory". This does not have a clear definition, but is a hermeneutic tool to indicate the process of Europeans developing an idea of the geographic continent and the personification of themselves as distinct to *others*.⁴¹ This cognitive process continues to have an impact on the memory politics of Europe and Europeans. This cognitive-historical process, if it can be so said, emerged out of the spatial imagining of the "Orient" since the mid-eighteenth century, but intensified as a frame of reference to the *self* through the technological possibilities and circulation of knowledge under the global condition.

Class in the late nineteenth century played a role in the self-conception of Europeans, in how the understanding of the *self* in face of *other* moved from an elitist sphere of knowledge to a populist one. The means by which the European *self* became more broadly understood and the *other* was categorised had an intimate relationship with the developments under the global condition, as well as the European wars of the 1870s. Thus, in this context, knowledge of late nineteenth-century "white slavery" benefits from a view that is not limited exclusively to women's and moral reformist history, but which also includes global, imperial, and migration history using a critical lens to examine categories of difference so as to make new connections visible.⁴²

As outlined in the object of study, this book assumes and claims to show a period of conceptual development beginning to take place from 1866. The meaning and practices behind this new concept differed from historical slave trades, such as those across the Sahara or Atlantic Ocean, despite having been confusingly expressed in similar terms. Conceptual history or *Begriffsgeschichte* sets out to examine the shifts in meaning of so-called "basic concepts" such as "democracy", "civil society", "revolution", or "liberal", so as to reconstruct social under-

⁴¹ For an insight into how Europeaness is constructed and how the European recalls itself through history, see Matthias Middell, 'Constructing Homo Europaeus from Inside and Outside the European Continent', *Comparativ: Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung* 25, no. 5–6 (2015): 7–14.

⁴² Joan Wallach Scott calls for critical questioning of the usefulness of categories of difference (racial, sexual, religious, national, etc.) that historians take as "self-evident characteristics of people of the past". Joan W. Scott, 'Feminism's History', in *The Feminist History Reader*, ed. Sue Morgan (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 395–96.

standings as well as semantic and historical change.⁴³ It is for this reason that the core analysis concentrates on the incubational period of “white slavery’s” conceptual development between 1866 and 1881.

While researching, it occurred to me that the explosion of discourses around the concept of “white slavery” after the 1880s was in itself producing a silence. My thinking throughout the book has been guided by Michel-Rolph Trouillot,⁴⁴ but in terms of practical methodology to deal with the problems of archival silences, I have drawn on a history of cultural transfers, combined with elements of a microhistorical approach.

Cultural transfers research first emerged in the mid-1980s with the seminal work of Michel Espagne and Michael Werner, who looked at how Germany was constructed in France.⁴⁵ Both timely and compatible with the “spatial turn” of the 1990s, this approach thereafter became well established within the broader field of history – as a tool for studying intercultural spatialisation processes and a means for dealing with some of the issues presented by the comparative method.

I have set out to examine the incubational period of “white slavery’s” concept’s development (1866–1881.) This periodisation is justified by the sources and the circulation of knowledge up until the point that “white slavery” exploded in the 1880s as a global problem known or knowable to the European populous. The meaning of this concept, whether cognitive or related to practices, did not emerge in a particular place, nor was it attached to a particular phenomenon. Rather, it developed transnationally as a result of the circulating knowledge between a small group of elite or aspiring transnationally mobile European actors. Fittingly, Michel Espagne already made the observation that “concepts do not have a genealogy exclusively connected to a single linguistic zone. Rather, their meaning is also the result of displacement” which then demands “adaptation and linguistic enrichment”.⁴⁶ “White slavery” was transnational or global in how knowledge of it was produced and in how the concept was constructed, not in how networks operating a crime by the name had been organised.

⁴³ In the beginning, the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* charted concepts used in political and social language within German-speaking Europe, this later developing to include French vocabulary. For developments in Global Conceptual History, see Margrit Pernau and Dominic Sachsenmaier, eds., *Global Conceptual History: A Reader* (London/New York: Bloomsbury, 2016).

⁴⁴ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*.

⁴⁵ Michel Espagne and Michael Werner, ‘La construction d’une référence culturelle allemande en France: genèse et histoire (1750–1914)’, *Annales ESC* no. 4 (1987): 969–92.

⁴⁶ Michel Espagne, ‘Comparison and Transfer: A Question of Method’, in *Transnational Challenges to National History Writing* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 30–36.

Cultural transfer research assumes and shows the circulation and entanglement processes in and behind forms of resemantisation. As an approach, there is no centre and periphery, but rather space is understood as transforming in the process of transfers, while being adapted in a receiving context out of what is owed to the foreign exportation. However, not only have I used a cultural transfer approach to explain the presence of the *foreign* in a particular spatial format, I have also used it as an analytical framework or tool for defining and selecting my set of sources based on their relations, so that a second round of deeper analysis would be conducted upon the sources and their internal dynamics in light of a microhistorical approach.

As a craft, microhistories aim at capturing the fine details and the complexity of change over time by focusing on a smaller unit; but unlike most microhistories, I am not examining one person, one event, or one place, rather my unit is the incubational period of a global concept. Methodologically, microhistory is highly compatible with cultural transfer research, which is just as concerned with microlevel interactions through its examination of the receiver, sender, and third parties involved within global processes. While a history of cultural transfers offered me a method of finding transnationally dispersed sources and grasping the development of a concept which a microhistory could not, the latter provided me with an art of handling the sources so as to invigorate their potential for in-depth contextualisation as well as to look for their subtle contradictions.

The microhistorical approach is, however, not designed for analysis across vast transnational or global space. Yet I have found great potential in combining it with a history of cultural transfers in practical and analytical terms. The Italian tradition of *microstoria* from the late 1970s developed the method of “following” so that identical names could be picked up in different (geographically close) archives, thus allowing the historian to reconstruct interactions amid diverse events and affairs.⁴⁷ Doing so, for networks of mobile actors scattered across transnational space and enmeshed in the global condition, is obviously no feasible task; even in times of digitalised archival catalogues.⁴⁸ Micro-interactions in the form

47 John-Paul Ghobrial, ‘Introduction: Seeing the World like a Microhistorian’, in *Global History and Microhistory*, ed. by John-Paul Ghobrial (Past and Present Supplement 14) (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 19.

48 There is, nevertheless, a growing body of literature which not only indicate the compatibility of microhistory and global history conceptually, but which also points to the advantages in method and perspective that each can bring to the others respective field, see Christian G. De Vito and Anne Gerritsen, ‘Mirco-Spatial Histories of Labour: Towards a New Global History’, in *Micro-Spatial Histories of Global Labour*, ed. by Christian G. De Vito and Anne Gerritsen (Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018), 1–28. For examples of how this methodological approach can translate in empirically based examples of how this works, see Timothy Brook, *Vermeer’s Hat: The Seven-*

of idea exchange and circulation nevertheless also occurred on the transnational level. By identifying such micro-interactions based on cultural transfers to be found in and between geographically dispersed sources, the (global) historian, it would seem, is enabled “to carve out that particular area to which his [sic] tools apply” despite “the vast chaos of reality”.⁴⁹

1.5 Gender History, Global History and Post-Colonial Studies

Beginning in the 1860s and for want of betterment or fleeing from Pogroms, Jewish migrants were leaving Russia to head toward the Ottoman Empire and either to or across Prussia. With the onset of the Great Eastern Crisis (1875–1878) even more refugees and migrants began fleeing in both directions across the receding Ottoman territories. The 1878 Congress of Berlin put an end to this crisis, but the Ottoman Empire lost control over territories to its North and South West.

In the years following the Congress, the situation for refugees and migrants had worsened, with thousands of Jewish refugees stranded on the border between Russia and the Austrian province of Galicia. Of the state-based data that is available, it would seem that there had been a rapid increase of (Jewish) migration in the 1880s and 1890s, at the same time that there were emerging new practices of returning “undesirables”. As states began categorising migrants in the name of territorial control, migrants responded by building networks and developing other knowledge sharing strategies to counter obstacles to their goal.

Given that the thread running through this book pulls together uneven modes of interaction in space, with unequal categories of social difference, the central topic and research questions comfortably sit on the slope connecting the field of gender history to the basin of global history.⁵⁰ To my benefit, several authors have already started to map out the productive overlap between these fields, in terms of their deconstructive approaches and through empirical exam-

teenth Century and the Dawn of the Global Age (London: Profile Books, 2009); Angelika Epple, *Das Unternehmen Stollwerck: Eine Mikrogeschichte der Globalisierung* (Frankfurt am Main/New York: Campus Verlag, 2010).

⁴⁹ Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, 19.

⁵⁰ Matthias Middell and Katja Naumann have referred to Global History as a basin (rather than a field of study) in which numerous research perspectives meet, bringing with them a variety of methodological tools and approaches, see Matthias Middell and Katja Naumann, ‘Global History and the Spatial Turn: From the Impact of Area Studies to the Study of Critical Junctures of Globalization’, *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010): 161, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740022809990362>.

ples.⁵¹ Peter Stearns was perhaps the earliest to the table in 2000, when he published his book *Gender in World History*.⁵² His understanding of “gender”, however, is naïve, rather than critical, in that he assumes it to be synonymous with “woman”, applying it as an a-historical binary opposite category to “man” instead of examining gender relations.⁵³ In contrast to this assumption of pre-existing *natural* groupings, I am working with the concept of gender more commonly used in gender history, which aims to explain shifting categories of difference as they changed over time. In other words, rather than assuming there are any globally fixed social groups, an examination is carried out to understand how these groups have been constructed historically.⁵⁴

In looking at European actors moving in and out of the European context, neither Europe nor the categories for grouping people are treated as fixed containers or objects, but rather examined along the lines of what Maria Bühner and Maren Möhring have suggested as a means for exposing the networked divisions and exclusions imposed with reference to *othered* peoples and contexts in the processes of European self-stabilisation.⁵⁵ Global history and gender history apply critical thinking and deconstructive approaches in their examination of how categories emerged historically within power structures as well as through lived experience. In global history, these categories tend to be spatially related, looking at how fraught and cooperative interactions between people produced new discourses and materialities via the building of bridges or borders between groups within processes of respatialisation.⁵⁶ At the same time, global history makes a

51 Angelika Eppler, ‘Globalgeschichte und Geschlechtergeschichte: Eine Beziehung mit großer Zukunft’, *L’Homme* 23, no. 2 (2012): 87–100; Oliver Janz and Daniel Schönplüg, *Gender History in a Transnational Perspective: Biographies, Networks, Gender Orders* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2014); Clare Midgley, Alison Twells, and Julie Carlier, eds., *Women in Transnational History: Connecting the Local and the Global* (London/New York: Routledge, 2016); Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, ‘Crossing Borders in Transnational Gender History’, *Journal of Global History* 6 (2011): 357–79, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740022811000374>.

52 Peter N. Stearns, *Gender in World History* (London/New York: Routledge, 2000).

53 For a distinction between naïve and critical applications of gender, see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London/New York: Routledge, 1999), 30.

54 For a foundational text of Gender History, see Joan W. Scott, ‘Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis’, *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053–75.

55 Maria Bühner and Maren Möhring, ‘Einleitung’, in *Europäische Geschlechtergeschichten*. Ed. by Maria Bühner and Maren Möhring (*Europäische Geschichte in Quellen und Essays*) (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2018), 22.

56 For example, see Michael Geyer and Charles Bright, ‘Globalgeschichte und die Einheit der Welt im 20. Jahrhundert’, *Comparativ: Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung* 4, no. 5 (1994): 13–45; Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2014); Steffi Marung and Matthias Middell, ‘The Respatialization of the World as

conscious effort to more broadly contribute to historical understandings of unevenness and inequalities amid global entanglements, connectivity, and interdependence.⁵⁷ The problem of using the nation as an investigative category has after all also been long recognised by gender and post-colonial historians, who point out how gender and race have functioned in its very production.⁵⁸

While gender and global historians produce knowledge on historical narrative and historical processes, the work of a post-colonialist is to detect the silences in texts and in the historiography; subsequently to tease them out and reveal what the text does not say, all the while making transparent whose presence it privileges, to whom, and to what, speech has been given through imperial vocabulary. Although it is unclear to what degree I, as a white, though Irish, person, can follow in the footsteps of post-colonial scholars, this book walks alongside these traces in solidarity with, and in confirmation of “critics of Eurocentric humanism who draw attention to its false universalising and masculinist assumptions”.⁵⁹

Londa Schiebinger made issue with historical works which treat the study of sex and race separately. She argued that in the scientific constructions which came out of the eighteenth century, these categorisations for humans developed simultaneously.⁶⁰ I examine such constructs in my analysis, but ultimately what

One of the Driving Dialectics under the Global Condition’, in *Spatial Formats under the Global Condition*, ed. by Steffi Marung and Matthias Middell (Dialectics of the Global 1) (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019), 1–12; Bruce Mazlish and Akira Iriye, eds., *The Global History Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

57 For example, see David Armitage, ‘Are We All Global Historians Now?’, interview by Martine van Ittersum and Jaap Jacobs, 2012, http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0165115312000551; Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present and Future* (Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013); Middell and Naumann, ‘Global History and the Spatial Turn’; Susan Zimmermann, ‘Transparent Global History? The Contributions of Vienna Global Studies’, *Historical Reflections* 38, no. 2 (2012): 123–38.

58 For example, see Burton, *Burdens of History*; Ann-Marie Gallagher, Cathy Lubelska, and Louise Ryan, eds., *Re-Presenting the Past: Women and History* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2001); Andrew Parker et al., eds., *Nationalisms & Sexualities* (New York/London: Routledge, 1992); Mrinalini Sinha, ‘Gender and Nation’, in *The Feminist History Reader*, ed. Sue Morgan (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 323–38; Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnel Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley et al.: University of California Press, 2002).

59 Sally Mathews, ‘Decolonising While White: Confronting Race in a South African Classroom’, *Teaching in Higher Education* 26, no. 7–8 (2021): 1113–21; Chandra Talpade Mohanty, ‘“Under Western Eyes” Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles’, *Signs* 28, no. 2 (2003): 503.

60 Londa Schiebinger, ‘The Anatomy of Difference: Race and Sex in Eighteenth-Century Science’, *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 23, no. 4 (1990): 388.

this work shows is the power of categorising people and territory for imperial goals. In so doing, I address a silence in the history of “white slavery” in terms of its misappropriation of the pain and trauma experienced by people from Africa, who were forcibly transported and enslaved; just as it was also a misappropriation of the experiences of European women and children who worked in brothel prostitution.

“Human Trafficking” today speaks of a global phenomenon affecting the poorest of populations around the world. Concealed within its history, however, is a gaping silence on imperialism and the Eurocentrism of a gendered and racialised conceptual development which came out of late nineteenth-century “white slavery”. Through the semantic entangling of “whiteness” and “enslavement” in a European culture of anti-Semitism, European amnesia toward its history of enslavement was arguably produced in the 1870s; all the while the incomparable traumas and violence of different groups were rendered the same and invisible, by allegedly making the exploitation of white women visible, though only in cases which justified the expansion of the European state and colonial practice via policing and migration control.

1.6 Layout of the Book

The incubational period of “white slavery” is defined as beginning in 1866. The trope of the “white slaver” and the “white slave” can, however, be found in European orientalist works since the beginning of the nineteenth century. The “white slavery” metaphor and concept of the late nineteenth century drew, in part, on this knowledge, but it was also partially enmeshed with understandings of the Napoleonic system of state-regulated prostitution. What’s more, the specificities of the late nineteenth-century global condition informed the incubational development of “white slavery” over the course of the 1870s. It is because of this messy entanglement that the meaning of “white slavery” can be identified as having changed. That said, it is also the reason why two whole chapters of this book are dedicated to the contextualisation of all of these threads. This is done by using primary sources as well as secondary literature.

The history of state-regulated prostitution is important for the way in which historical actors and contemporary historians historicised the problem of late nineteenth-century “white slavery”. Chapter two thus details the early modern backdrop to the history of the revolutionary “French system” and how it was adapted in other geographies throughout the nineteenth century. In the broader frame, the chapter shows how law and regulatory systems served European states in categorising people and thus producing the *self* and the *other*. This is done in

terms of how categories of gender and race developed historically through European imperial exploration and how this knowledge came to inform the late nineteenth-century meaning behind the language of “white slavery”.

The orientalist trope of the “white slave” emerged from the Napoleonic project in North Africa, but knowledge of it could only make sense against the backdrop of eighteenth-century sciences. However, the “white slave” of the 1870s became embedded in a very different political and social European context as the broader populous gained sensational knowledge of the phenomenon amid their own growing understandings of the global condition. Chapter three thus goes on to examine violent interaction via culture and war and the technological means through which knowledge on the “Orient” was produced and became entangled.

Following this contextualisation, I move on to revise the established narrative within the historiography on late nineteenth-century “white slavery” and European prostitution. For this reason, chapter four (building upon chapter two) is on the one hand a far more detailed state of the art than has been presented above; on the other, it is a methodological critique and contribution to how state archives might be used and subverted to tell histories they were intended to conceal. This is done by firstly laying bare how two transfer processes were identified within which “white slavery” was appropriated and adapted. Thereafter a methodological contribution of this work is fully described in terms of how the historical relationships between geographically dispersed sources and the actors behind them can be identified despite their different contexts.

By looking for cultural transfers, borrowed ideas, and appropriated practices and terms, I was able to trace hints and references to sources from within other sources, following them back upon themselves. In doing this, two complex and simultaneous transfer processes were isolated, which took place in the period 1866–1881 across transnational space, through the efforts and networks of a relatively small group of actors, who had been essential to the formation of a new global concept. These transfers did of course not occur with the smooth linearity that my heuristic map might present. They were part of the chaos of both process and perception under the global condition. Thus, chapters five to seven offer an in-depth analysis and presentation of these transfers, broken down into parts using an approach inspired by microhistory.

Simply describing and explaining the multiple transfers is not enough to illuminate the intricacies of how a concept had metamorphosed overtime out of a metaphor. The reading of the history of the archival order presented in chapter four leads into the explanation given in chapter five as to how the metaphor of “*la traite des blanches*” from the Swiss context congealed into a concept through translation in the process of gaining the linguistic equivalent of “white slavery” in Britain. This new gendered and transnational concept gained power through its

circulation among populist media. This was, however, not only a misappropriation of a minority of women's experiences in brothel prostitution, but also of the experiences of millions of people from Africa, who had been forcibly transported across the Atlantic. Attention is then drawn to the historical outcome of this double misappropriation, by arguing how a simple metaphor and its subsequent development into a popularly understood concept of "white slavery" perhaps contributed an amnesia among Europeans toward the history of European colonial slave trading.

Chapter six then moves into German-speaking Europe to explain how, over the same period, "*Mädchenhandel*" or "*weiße Sklaverei*" was also entangled in this process and how this new transnational concept was presented to different kinds of European publics in legitimization of new laws ostensibly against the idea of "slave-trafficking". The Austrian discourses were explicitly and unashamedly concerned with Jewish criminality and migration toward the "Orient" and South America. That said, the knowledge of "white slavery" which was produced by the British and the Habsburg Empires tended to highlight the Jewishness of the problem through case building, categorisation, and profiling. Upon closer examination, however, these claims and their supporting evidence appear highly shaking. Rather, a transfer of knowledge is shown in the chapter on how the discourse of slavery was misused in the name of migration control laws. This transfer came from the Americas via an Austrian diplomat and seemingly thereafter circulated among a number of diplomats and statesmen in Europe and the Ottoman Empire.

"White slavery" discourses (narrative and visual) are shown as having presented different kinds of European publics in the period with an idea which legitimated a globally shifting legal dogma. A closer look at the network of actors who produced this knowledge is then taken in chapter seven, the final analytical chapter. These actors to different degrees, knowingly or unknowingly, supported changes in the law and in state practice through their articulations and depictions of the problem. These discourses were, however, not floating, but rather clearly connected to structural transformations which played out in contexts of refugee and migration crisis, at the edges of the Ottoman empire, where territorial shifts were about to roll in to the gain of the Habsburgs and the British Crown.

This work and these findings have been guided by Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Silencing of the Past*. In line with his thinking, a history of "white slavery" has not been written which simply makes a constructivist argument; claiming that a narrative was invented and designated a sensational name so as to legitimise an alternative political motive. Rather, it is driven by rethinking the relationship between process and narrative of the past, and for this reason the final chapter, aptly titled "toward a conclusion", is an invitation to debate and conversation. It does so with some empirically grounded theoretical consideration for the life-

world histories on “white slavery” as well as for a multitude of unexpected historiographies, such as those on migration control, international policing, new imperialism and so on. It invites for reflection on how state produced categories of the migrant and her trafficker created the conditions on the ground, at the borders, for the documentation of *others* in the archives and newspapers which fuelled the rapid increase of discourse from the 1880s on and which provided *evidence* of the alleged existence of a new transnational and gendered phenomenon in need of combatting since the end of the nineteenth century.