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THE BELIEF IN A JUST FINLAND AS A FORM OF CULTURAL VIOLENCE

The Effects of Victim Blaming on the Identification and Assistance of Victims of Human Trafficking

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ABSTRACT

Mari Ek: The Belief in a Just Finland as a Form of Cultural Violence: The Effects of Victim Blaming on the Identification and Assistance of Victims of Human Trafficking
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The identification of human trafficking is often referred to as the greatest challenge in anti-trafficking action. Both the offenders and the victims may seek to avoid the attention of public authorities, which is why human trafficking is described as an invisible crime. However, the invisibility may be sustained not only by the actors involved, but also by our own tendency to deny, belittle, or justify an injustice by blaming the victim. The research aim of this study is to explore how blaming human trafficking victims functions as a form of cultural violence in Finland: what kinds of victim-blaming attitudes there are, and how they affect the identification and assistance of trafficking victims. Victim blaming is approached with the theoretical framework of the just-world hypothesis, according to which people may react to victims with denial, derogation, and blame in order to restore their fundamental belief in a just and orderly world. The qualitative content analysis is based on two types of data fulfilling each other: a face-to-face qualitative survey among 61 participants and expert interviews of four employees of the Finnish National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking. The qualitative survey represents the lay people's beliefs related to human trafficking, while the expert interviews elaborate the effects of Belief in a Just World (BJW)-related beliefs on the identification and assistance of trafficking victims.

The findings indicate that there are a variety of victim-blaming attitudes related to the just-world hypothesis, which may affect the identification and assistance of victims depending on their background and form of exploitation. The attitudes were often connected to the general lack of awareness and misleading depictions of human trafficking, but connections to personality, life experience, empathic concern, and working circumstances were also indicated. By using Lerner's just-world metaphor of "Our just world" and the "world of victims", I interpreted the various beliefs to be parts of the same entity of the "Belief in a Just Finland". In this belief system, there is no human trafficking in Finland and it does not concern Finnish nationals, men are not vulnerable, women can stay safe by being careful, yet strong and independent, and individuals are rational and in control of their fate by demonstrating adequate character or behaviour. The "world of victims" portrays the realities and people that are excluded from the perceived "Our just world": human trafficking as an extreme form of violence and slavery, the feelings of inability, guilt, and helplessness, "innocent victims" and derogated sex workers, foreigners and drug users. These beliefs contribute to the invisibility of victims from various backgrounds, they increase the likelihood of victims to be encountered with disbelief, derogation, and blame, and the subsequent threshold to seek help, they may contribute to reluctance of both laymen and public authorities to intervene on behalf of the victims, and they may affect the processes of criminal procedures and residence permit policies. However, alternative approaches to these beliefs were detected from the data: awareness, empathy, and positive examples were found as avenues towards cultural peace.

Keywords: human trafficking, victim blaming, Belief in a Just World (BJW), cultural violence, identification, assistance

The originality of this thesis has been checked using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

The Assistance System	The Finnish National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking
AWOL	Running Away and Absent Without Official Leave
BJW	Belief in a Just World
EU	European Union
FinnWID	Finnish Women in Development
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
HEUNI	The European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning
Migri	Finnish Immigration Service
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
TENK	The National Advisory Board on Research Ethics
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

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1. Introduction

> "My story is exceptional in many ways. When people hear it for the first time, the first reaction of many of them is disbelief. It cannot be true. That cannot happen, not in Finland. Those kinds of people do not really exist. It cannot be possible that those things happened and you were treated like that even after the hell you went through. One cannot survive from something like that.
>
> All this is true, and I have survived.
>
> […] I have noticed that some people draw too hasty conclusions about why those things happened to me as they did. Their assumptions are often connected to a thought that I would be somehow to blame for the evil that was done to me. Those kinds of attitudes exist. It is often thought so especially about women who fall into victims of sexual violence or other kind of abuse.
>
> Sometimes I wonder what someone else would have done in my position. I am wondering about this because I have unfortunately encountered people who spout out truths about how to avoid evil situations. But for one to understand my situation, one should be me, look like me, talk like me, have lived one's life like me and have the same kind of personality like mine. To understand me one should simply be me."[1]
>
> Jaakola & Väntänen (2018, 8)

The disbelief and victim blaming described by Finnish human trafficking survivor Marissa Jaakola showcase a cognitive bias which many scholars of social psychology refer to as the 'just-world hypothesis'. According to this line of research, the motivation to believe in a just world leads people to rationalise an inexplicable injustice by naming things the victim might have done to deserve it. The founding father of just-world research, Melvin J. Lerner, calls this assumption "a fundamental delusion", which has an adaptive function for the wellbeing of an individual, but enforces deteriorating behaviour against victims of violence (Ross & Miller 2002, 3; Lerner 1980). This is why the belief in a just world (BJW) and the victim blaming intertwined to it are approached in this thesis as forms of cultural violence which contribute to direct and structural violence by making them

[1] "Tarinani on monella tavalla hyvin poikkeuksellinen. Kun ihmiset kuulevat sen ensimmäisen kerran, monen ensimmäisen reaktio on epäusko. Ei voi olla totta. Ei tuollaista voi tapahtua, ei Suomessa. Ei tuollaisia ihmisiä olekaan. Ei voi olla mahdollista, että vielä sen helvetin jälkeenkin tapahtui tuollaista ja sinua kohdeltiin noin. Ei tuollaisesta voi selvitä.
Tämä kaikki on totta, ja minä olen selviytynyt.
[…] Olen huomannut, että jotkut ihmiset muodostavat turhan nopeasti näkemyksen siitä, miksi minulle kävi niin kuin kävi. Usein heidän käsityksiinsä liittyy ajatus siitä, että olisin itse jollakin tavalla syyllinen siihen pahaan, jota minulle tehtiin. Sellaisia asenteita todella on olemassa. Niin ajatellaan usein etenkin naisista, jotka joutuvat seksuaalisen väkivallan tai muun kaltoinkohtelun uhreiksi.
Mietin joskus, mitä joku toinen olisi tehnyt minun asemassani. Mietin sitä siksi, että olen valitettavasti törmännyt ihmisiin, jotka latelevat totuuksia siitä, miten pahat tilanteet vältetään. Mutta jotta ymmärtäisi täysin minun tilanteeni, pitäisi olla minä, näyttää minulta, puhua kuin minä, olla elänyt elämänsä niin kuin minä ja olla luonteeltaan samanlainen kuin minä. Ymmärtääkseen minua täysin pitäisi yksinkertaisesti olla minä." Jaakola & Väntänen (2018, 8)

justified or invisible (Galtung 1990, 291). Invisibility is how human trafficking is often described; it is defined as an 'invisible crime' with 'invisible victims.' The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that human trafficking is made invisible not only by the actors involved, but also by our own tendency towards just-world fallacy and subsequent victim blaming.

There were two experiences in 2018 that sparked my interest on this topic. In the spring of 2018, I attended a course on "The Psychology of Evil", where I became familiar with a variety of theories of social psychology which explain the causes of harmful behaviour committed by ordinary people. One of the theories was the 'Belief in a Just World Hypothesis', which conceptualised why and how people sometimes tend to disbelieve, derogate and blame the victims instead of helping them. A few months later, in summer 2018, I was an intern at the National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking (later referred to as the 'Assistance System'), a governmental authority responsible for both assisting victims and providing information and knowledge on human trafficking in Finland. There, through the focus of the work of the Assistance System on the identification and assistance of trafficking victims, and the discussion on identification as the key challenge in anti-trafficking work, I started to outline possible research areas for my thesis. The defining moment for the research aims of this study was when I was inserting the following text to the authority's home page:

> "Human trafficking is often confused with the effects linked to it. Victims may be treated as illegal immigrants, smuggled migrants, petty criminals, prostitutes, victims of domestic violence or illegal workers, rather than as trafficking victims who have been subjected to exploitation."
>
> Ihmiskauppa.fi (2019f)

I came to think of the role of socially constructed attitudes and belief systems: could it be that BJW and subsequent reactions of disbelief, blame and derogation contributed to the challenges in identification and assistance of trafficking victims? There appeared to be no previous research focusing on victim blaming, or even general attitudes related to human trafficking in Finland. International research seemed rather scarce too. Hence, I decided to run an empirical study. During the summer and autumn of 2018, I conducted a face-to-face qualitative survey among 61 passers-by in the streets of four cities of Southern Finland: Lappeenranta, Helsinki, Tampere and Turku. At that time, I was not sure whether victim-blaming attitudes would appear in the data as general or significant enough to focus on, so the preliminary research aim was to explore general awareness and attitudes related to human trafficking, and to detect the most pressing issues. As my research interest was also to understand the effects and significance of certain attitudes to identification and assistance of trafficking victims, I interviewed four experts from the Assistance System. It transpired that the

variety of attitudes detected from the data were in fact applicable to the just-world hypothesis, and narrowing the research to victim blaming was justifiable. The verification of results of this study has entailed following the development of news reporting on human trafficking in Finland since the summer of 2018, attending a seminar by FinnWID (Finnish Women in Development) and interviewing Nigerian human trafficking survivor Itohan Okundaye.

Considering the diversity and complexity of human trafficking, this research could have been narrowed to a specific form and/or affected group of people. However, this study focuses on human trafficking as defined by the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime, also known as the Palermo Protocol:

> "“Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs."
>
> UN General Assembly (2000), article 3(a)

Hence, human trafficking is defined by acts, means and purpose: the victim is held under the perpetrators' control by violent, oppressive and/or manipulative means for the purpose of exploitation. The offenders may deceive the victim and/or take advantage of a victim's vulnerable position in order to gradually drive them into a situation from where they cannot leave without serious consequences. A vulnerable position that may expose a person to exploitation may be due to serious illness, homelessness, foreign nationality, refugee status, irregular stay in another country, poverty, being underage, low level of education, substance abuse, mental health problems and earlier traumatic experiences, or belonging to a discriminated group in a society. (Ihmiskauppa.fi 2019b). Various forms of human trafficking include sexual exploitation, labour exploitation and forced labour, forced marriage, forced adoption, forced begging, forced criminal activity and trade in human organs and tissues. (Ihmiskauppa.fi 2019c). Thus, human trafficking is a rather wide concept, which affects people from diverse backgrounds in many different forms.

There are several reasons why this study considers all these aspects. First, there is a clear research gap: human trafficking in Finland has been described as an understudied phenomenon (Jokinen et al. 2011b, 8), and there appears to be no previous research on the role of victim-blaming attitudes in identification and assistance of trafficking victims of any form or background. Thus, this study aims

to fill the research gap by providing a general overview of the affecting beliefs through the theoretical framework of the just-world hypothesis. Second, popular depictions of human trafficking (elaborated in the subchapter 2.2.) tend to be rather one-sided and misleading. There has been stated a need for an approach that takes into account the diversity and complexity of human trafficking (Mende 2019, 239; O'Brien 2016, 210). Third, when exploring victim-blaming attitudes and their effect on the identification and assistance of victims, it is crucial to acknowledge that these beliefs bear different consequences and significance according to the situation and the position of an individual victim. Therefore, attention will be paid to the form of exploitation and the background of the victim when considering the different levels of attributing blame.

Thus, the research aim of the current study is to explore how BJW-related victim blaming functions as a form of cultural violence in terms of the identification and assistance of trafficking victims in Finland. This involves two research questions:

1. *What kinds of BJW-related victim-blaming attitudes are there among people residing in Finland?*
2. *How do the victim-blaming attitudes affect the identification and assistance of trafficking victims?*

By 'victim blaming', I refer to reactions of disbelief, derogation and blame, which are the defence mechanisms researched by Lerner (1980) and his colleagues. All three reactions are included in the same category of victim blaming, because they often occur simultaneously, they stem from the motivation to restore one's BJW, and they imply the culpability of a victim by scrutinising the victim's credibility, character or behaviour. In terms of private citizens (represented by the participants of the qualitative survey), identification refers to the general ability to recognise exploitation and its victims, and assistance refers to any kind of helping behaviour, for instance reporting to the police or contacting the Assistance System or a relevant non-governmental organisation (NGO). In the context of the work of the Assistance System, identification and assistance refer to the work of public authorities in various sectors, such as social and health care, cooperation networks, the police and the judicial system. Identification also refers to the official processes, which entail the stages of criminal procedure where the classification of offence is determined and judged.

The structure of the thesis consists of the literature review, methodology, analysis and a conclusion. In the literature review ("Previous research: beliefs and blame in human trafficking"), I will first elaborate the critique on popular depictions of human trafficking as 'modern slavery' in subchapter 2.1. In subchapter 2.2., I will present both the occurrence of and research on human trafficking in

Finland. In subchapter 2.3., previous research on victim blaming is presented, and in 2.4., I will discuss the just-world hypothesis as the theoretical framework of the study.

In the methodology chapter, I will elaborate the processes of research design and data collection in both the qualitative survey and the expert interviews, after which I will justify the use of data triangulation. Then I will discuss research ethics, limitations of the study and my positionality. Finally, I will present the qualitative content analysis as the method of analysis of this study.

In chapter 4 ("Components of the Belief in a Just Finland"), I will provide the findings and analysis of the research process. I will discuss the causes and consequences of BJW-related beliefs using Lerner's just-world metaphor of "Our just world" (4.2.) and "the world of victims" (4.3.), which I approach as intertwined beliefs belonging to the greater entity of "Belief in a Just Finland". I will also discuss the avenues for cultural peace in chapter 4.4. Finally, the summary of the findings, verification of results, discussion, and suggestions for future research and policy will be presented in the conclusions.

2. Previous Research: Beliefs and Blame in Human Trafficking

The aim of this chapter is to present the background, the research literature and theoretical context of the current study. I will first elaborate on the common portrayals of human trafficking and their criticism, after which I will discuss the occurrence, research and approach to human trafficking in Finland. In the third subchapter, previous research on victim blaming is elaborated, and the final subchapter will introduce the just-world hypothesis as the main theory of this study.

2.1. 'Modern Slavery Discourse' and its Critique

In order to understand common beliefs surrounding human trafficking, the narratives on and representations of the phenomenon produced by the media, NGOs, and states need to be inspected. Probably the most common way to frame human trafficking is through the discourse of 'modern slavery', which, however, has also been a term widely criticised among scholars and experts of the field. In contexts where human trafficking is described as modern slavery, human trafficking is often defined as an extreme form of exploitation and coercion, whose victims are foreigners (from the global South) smuggled to a destination country (to the global North) against their will (Viuhko 25.3.2013; Mende 2019, 237). In these representations, human trafficking is framed as a phenomenon interconnected solely with migration and prostitution (Mende 2019, 237). The victims are portrayed as innocent, heterosexual women and children (O'Brien 2016, 206; Dennis 2008, 12). The critical points to elaborate here are the portrayals of modern slavery as an absolute evil, human trafficking victims as absolute victims, human trafficking as phenomenon connected solely to issues of migration and prostitution, and the resulting depoliticisation and repressive policies.

According to Mende (2019, 234), 'modern slavery' is criticised for being a homogenous concept that does not take into account the different forms that slavery takes in different times, places and societies, and neglects other kinds of exploitation, unfreedom, and force. This results in portraying 'modern slavery' as a distinctive, 'absolute evil' (Ibid. 235). In similar vein, Natalia Ollus, the Director of the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, has criticised the term 'modern slavery' for constructing an image of extreme exploitation, violence and coercion: "[I]n the cases of human trafficking, which have also occurred in Finland, it is often a much more everyday matter: more subtle exploitation and coercion".[2] (Turtola, 14.8.2018). According to Pia Marttila, the Coordinator of Assistance to Victims of Trafficking at Victim Support Finland, the extreme portrayals lead to

[2] "Ihmiskauppatapauksissa, joita Suomessakin on ollut, kyse on usein paljon jotenkin arkipäiväisemmästä asiasta: hienovaraisemmasta hyväksikäytöstä ja pakottamisesta". Natalia Ollus, Turtola 14.8.2018.

situations where exploitation is not identified as human trafficking either by the victims themselves or by the people that could otherwise identify them (Ibid.) Indeed, Kervinen and Ollus (2019, 97) underscore the importance of focusing on exploitation as a continuum which begins with more subtle forms and acts, proceeding gradually to more severe acts and human trafficking.

Modern slavery discourse is also criticised for producing an imagery of ’absolute victims’ through highly emotionalised language (Mende 2019, 236; O’Brien 2016, 206). For example, anti-trafficking campaigns have been criticised for representing unambiguously a specific victim narrative, which results in situations where some victims believe they cannot access victim services unless they fit the dominant idea of a ’pure victim.’ (O’Brien 2016, 206). According to O’Brien (Ibid. 208), this depiction fits Chistie’s anatomy of an ’ideal victim’, “one who is powerless, blameless and sympathetic.” Mende (2019, 236) refers to these representations of victims as the emotionalisation of slavery. According to the critique, this discourse is based on the eighteenth and nineteenth century abolitionists’ way of constructing the slave as ’the other’, that contributed ”to the racist image of the European, enlightened, civilised, emphatising, abolitionist, white subject, on the one side, and the African, passive, suffering, enslaved, depressed, victimised, black object, on the other side.” (Ibid. 236). According to Davidson (2010, 257), modern slavery discourse sets the threshold of victimhood extremely high, and the suffering of those few who manage to reach the threshold is understood to disqualify them as political subjects, implying that others need to act on their behalf.

Dennis (2008, 16) would add here that this orientalist view on victims of trafficking contains a gender-polarised frame, where the Western male exerts a controlling gaze over a female native, which may be a reason why there is a lack of discussion of the male victims of trafficking. Indeed, many authors point out the concern over the fact that male victims are highly underrepresented, or even absent, from discourses on human trafficking. O’Brien (2016, 209-210) describes the representation of male victims within awareness campaigns as being “extremely rare”, whereas “women and children” are depicted as the potential victims in need of protection. In their research on the invisibility of men and boys in scholarly discussions of the global sex trade, Dennis (2008) states that male sex workers – and male victims of trafficking and other abuse - are rarely addressed, and when they are, they are trivialised, their sexual orientation is always discussed (whereas female sex workers are always assumed to be heterosexual) and they are assigned notably more agency than female sex workers. The vulnerable position of males, such as abusive childhoods or homelessness, is not taken into consideration. (Ibid. 19). According to Dennis (Ibid. 18; 21), this might be due to beliefs such as that the world of a male sex worker is violence-free, and that neither men nor adolescent boys can be coerced into sexual acts. The author also refers to gender stereotypes, “perceiving girls as soft,

passive, fragile, and in need of intervention and support, but boys are hard and tough, able to take care of themselves". (Ibid. 21). The female victim – male perpetrator perspective may also explain why there is little to no discussion on female human traffickers (Jones 2014, 146), even though research has indicated that women play a key role as offenders of human trafficking (UNODC 2009, 10). The invisibility and exclusion from 'absolute victimhood' also affects lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning victims. In addition, LGBTQ+ victims are more eagerly othered, blamed, and placed at the bottom of a hierarchy of human trafficking victimisation. (Boukli & Rentz 2019, 76).

The modern slavery discourse is found to represent human trafficking concerning solely the issues of migration and prostitution (O'Brien 2016, 211; Mende 2019, 236). O'Brien (2016, 208; 210) describes the anti-trafficking campaigns as drawing the overwhelming majority of attention to trafficking for sexual exploitation. The author states that this focus does not reflect current estimates of the proportion of people trafficked for different forms of exploitation (Ibid. 210).[3] For example the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has estimated that in 2016 there were 40.3 million victims of human trafficking, of which 4.8 million people were forced into sexual exploitation, whereas 24.9 million were in forced labour and 15.4 million people were living in a forced marriage (ILO 2017, 9-11). Mende (2019, 236) emphasises that the focus on migration and prostitution contributes to the marginalisation and the invisibility of other forms of human trafficking. Along the similar vein, approaching human trafficking as an issue of migration is somewhat misrepresentative, as human trafficking can and does happen within a country's own borders, or even within a family unit (UNODC 2009, 7; UNODC 2018, 13; Ihmiskauppa.fi 2019d). Yet Mende (2019, 237) states that the focus is most often on trafficking from the global South to the global North and from East to West. O'Brien (2016, 216) elaborates how both government statements of Western countries and NGO awareness campaigns enforce an image that the causes of, and solutions to, trafficking are rooted in issues in source countries, such as poverty, crime, discrimination and corruption. Human trafficking is then framed to be a problem of security, where trafficking constitutes a 'danger to the state' from the outside (Mende 2019, 238).

[3] According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) global report on trafficking in persons, in the global scale sexual exploitation has been the most commonly identified form of human trafficking (79 %), which the UNODC admits may be due to a statistical bias. The exploitation of women and girls tends to be visible and hence more frequently reported, while other forms of exploitation (i.e. forced labour; domestic servitude and forced marriage; organ trade; the exploitation of children in begging, and warfare) are less likely to be identified." (UNODC 2009, 6).

There are several interests at play when we explore the reasons why both state authorities and NGOs depict human trafficking as "modern slavery", an outside threat interrelated with prostitution and migration, where absolute victims – the innocent, blameless women and children – suffer at the hands of villains committed to absolute evil. The purpose of the awareness raising campaigns generated by NGOs is to raise compassion, public attention and funding, which is why modern slavery discourse may appear to be a more effective tactic than representing the complexity and diversity of human trafficking (O'Brien 2016, 210). These campaigns tend to frame offenders of trafficking as organised crime syndicates and demonised 'men who buy sex', who are also blamed for the existence of human trafficking (Ibid. 208-209). O'Brien (2016, 214) criticises this approach for rendering invisible the global exploitation structures on which Western capitalist systems rely. O'Brien (Ibid. 215) notices that the awareness campaigns around ethical consumerism constitutes an exception to this trend; here, not only the perpetrators, but also those who consume the goods and services resulting from exploitation, are blamed. The framing of an individual consumer as being responsible for human trafficking is still narrow in its focus, as it does not incentivise governments to take any action on enforcing labour laws.

Modern slavery discourse is criticised for contributing to the depoliticisation of human trafficking (Anderson & Andrijasevic 2008, 135; Davidson 2010, 257; Mende 2019, 235). The kind of representation of human trafficking which highlights individual responsibility over structural problems is actively promoted by state authorities and policy makers, as it frees governments from responsibility (O'Brien 2016, 216). Governments benefit by appearing compassionate to the suffering of trafficking victims, representing themselves as heroes that fight against the absolute evil "out there", instead of villains that put people into vulnerable position by repressive policies (O'Brien 2016, 218; Mende 2019, 235). O'Brien (2016) states there is a contradiction of how governments engage in demonising language over migrants while appearing compassionate towards victims of human trafficking.

This critical approach emphasises that the framing of human trafficking as an absolute evil, concerning only the issues of migration and prostitution, is used to legitimise not only other forms of exploitation, but also repressive state policies that affect all migrants and sex workers (Anderson & Andrijasevic 2008, 135; Mende 2019, 237). Davidson (2016, 109) notes that comparison between modern-day human trafficking and the Trans-Atlantic slave-trade is wrong on the grounds that migrants who are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse have more in common with those escaping historical slavery than those entering into it. Instead, the restrictive immigration policies of contemporary states are similar to the strategies developed by slave states to stop slave mobility (Ibid.

111). Anders & Andrijasevic (2008, 135) describe the state's approach to migration and employment to "effectively construct groups of non-citizens who can be treated as unequal without impunity". The authors refer to repressive state policies on migration as one example of the dimension of structural violence that modern slavery discourse ignores (Ibid.)

In conclusion, several scholars and experts of the field have criticised modern slavery discourse for providing a misguiding image of human trafficking, which contributes to further marginalisation, vulnerability and invisibility of victims of human trafficking and those who are at risk of being exploited. Special focus has been paid to the interests of states to refrain from any responsibility of their contribution to human trafficking, and also the repressive state policies that have detrimental effects not only on the victims of human trafficking, but also on all migrants, sex workers, the exploited labourers in legal industries and those who still have no legal ways to migrate for work (O'Brien 2016, 220). Mende (2019, 239) calls out for a need for the kind of analysis that acknowledges the axes of gender, class, cast, ethnicity, family status, age, citizenship, and their social and cultural meanings, with a focus on structural violence and social circumstances, in order to approach human trafficking as a phenomenon especially affecting vulnerable, marginalised, poor, or otherwise disadvantaged people.

2.2. Human Trafficking in Finland

Like everywhere else in the world, human trafficking has always existed in Finland, too. The history of slavery in Finland is not limited to the medieval period when Finns were captured in raids, and trafficked and sold as slaves in far-away markets in Asia and the Mediterranean (Korpela 2014). A practice called "slave market" ran from the beginning of the nineteenth century all the way to the 1950s, in which the elderly, mentally ill, disabled, and children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds – orphans, fatherless, abandoned, and poor – were auctioned away to the lowest bidders, who would use them as free labour on their farms, in which arbitrary violence, sexual abuse, and famine were commonplace (Halmekoski 2011; Kiiski 3.2.2012). There are still Finns who have childhood memories of Soviet prisoners of war working on their farms during the Continuation War (1941-1944), who were actually used as forced labour, and over 20,000 Soviet prisoners of war died working in prison camps due to hard labour, malnourishment, diseases, and the cold (Danielsbacka 2013, IIV; Eskola 2017). Industrial child labour was customary and unregulated up until the last decades of the nineteenth century (Schrumpf 2009, 577-578), and child soldiers were used in all the Finnish wars of the 20th century (Pekkalainen 2014; Kuokkanen 8.12.2009; YLE Lappi 24.4.2010). Until quite recently, Finnish law has been rather advantageous for the prevalence of exploitation

similar to forced marriages: married women were under the legal guardianship of their husbands until 1930, the law that exonerated men or boys from prosecution for rape if the offender married the victim was abolished only in 1994, the same year when marital rape was criminalised, and domestic violence only became subject to public prosecution in 2011 (Hämeen Sanomat 17.1.2016). Prostitution – also including organised pandering and related phenomena such as violence, extortion, and sexual abuse of minors - have existed at least for centuries in different forms both in the countryside and especially in the cities of Finland, and they have increased in times of uncertainty and economic deprivation (Häkkinen 1995, 67-71; Meriläinen 1999, 10).

Even though human trafficking in its different forms is anything but new to the Finnish society, it was not until 2004 that Finland first adopted a definition on trafficking in human beings to its Criminal Code. The law reform was a reaction to the international pressure set by the Palermo Protocol (2000), the European Union (EU) Framework Decision on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (2002), and the United States' 2003 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report's heavy criticism for Finland's inefficient anti-trafficking measures (Koskenoja et al. 2018, 1; 17; Roth 2012, 281). Since then, the anti-trafficking policy has developed significantly in Finland. The Assistance System initiated its work in 2006 under the leadership of Joutseno reception centre. Amendments considering the grounds for a residence permit for a trafficking victim were made to the Aliens Act in 2006, and law reforms that consider the assistance of trafficking victims were put into force in 2007. The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman was named the Finnish National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings in 2009, and the post of the Government Anti-Trafficking Coordinator was established in 2014. Law reforms on the Criminal Code and the Aliens Act were put into force in 2015 (Koskenoja et al. 2018, 1).

The reason for the late awakening to trafficking problem and the international pressure as a driving force for changes in Finland might be explained by the notion put forward by Niemi-Kiesiläinen (2001, 302): "[L]ike other Nordic countries, Finland has been proud of its human rights record. […] In Finnish discourse, human rights are easily understood as something "out there", the concern of foreign policy or refugee admission." Indeed, the first National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Human Beings introduced by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland stated that preventing trafficking in human beings and helping victims is necessary "[E]ven in Finland" (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2005, 2). The home page of the Assistance System explains the reason for locating it at a reception centre and later moving it to the Finnish Immigration Service (Migri):

> "[W]hen the Finnish legislation for helping trafficking victims was drafted in early 2000s, it was generally thought that human trafficking was a crime that only concerned foreign nationals. […]
>
> However, the first Finnish citizens were admitted to the system already during its early days. It has become clear that human trafficking is not focused on, or limited to, foreign nationals. It can be a completely Finnish problem, since both the victim and the offender may be Finnish."
>
> (Ihmiskauppa.fi 2019a)

Roth (2012, 281) notes that there would have been domestic reasons for Finland to already recognise human trafficking earlier due to the drastic change in the field of prostitution in the turn of the 1990s and early 2000s. Resulting from the fall of the Soviet Union and the independence of many Eastern European states and the subsequent political, economic, and social instability, the number of foreign prostitutes multiplied and the involvement of transnational organised crime in pandering operations increased (Roth 2012, 281; Kauppinen 1999, 25). In her doctoral thesis, Penttinen (2004) depicts the trafficking of Russian women for prostitution in Lapland in the early 2000s as so common that locals had been used to the sight of a person withholding passports and papers of the women they accompany. Penttinen (2004) also describes the local police's rather reluctant stance to interfere with prostitution "which does not disturb the people and the public", even though they acknowledged the women's background of poverty and unemployment, that the women were under the control of their traffickers, and that some of the women - and men - seemed to have been forced to prostitution (Ibid. 227; 232-233). According to Roth (2012, 281; 283), the lack of initiative from Finland in relation to this situation may be due to Finnish authorities' reluctance to regard foreign women in prostitution as victims, which might be related to the traditional understanding of prostitutes as threats to society, and the perception of these women as opportunistic migrants.

According to Jokinen et al. (2011b, 8), research on human trafficking is very scarce in Finland, and most of the research literature mainly covers sex trafficking and forced prostitution. For example, Lehti and Aromaa (2002) studied the 'trafficking of women' and 'illegal immigration' in Finland from a legal perspective, and Kimpimäki (2009) elaborated on the legislation related to prostitution, procuring, and human trafficking. Viuhko and Jokinen (2009) produced a study on trafficking for sexual exploitation and organised procuring in Finland, and a similar study by Viuhko was published in 2010. Most of these studies focus on the intercollision of migration, prostitution, and organised crime, and Finland's legal responses to them. Jokinen et al. (2011, 8) state that human trafficking related to forced labour has gained significantly less attention in Finnish research. These studies mainly focus on the exploitation of migrant workers from Eastern Europe and the Global South. There have been two extensive empirical studies on forced labour and exploitation of migrant workers in

Finland published within the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control (HEUNI). Firstly, research conducted by Jokinen, Ollus and Viuhko (2011) focuses especially on the Finnish context. Secondly, Jokinen, Ollus and Aromaa (2011) elaborate on the results of the international research on the situation in Finland, Poland, and Estonia. Jokinen and Ollus (2014) from HEUNI have also researched the exploitation of foreign employees in the restaurant and cleaning sectors.

According to the report by the national rapporteur on trafficking in human beings (Non-Discrimination Ombudsman 2014, 50-51), human trafficking for labour exploitation is connected to the structures that put migrant workers in a vulnerable and dependent position. The research focuses on migrant workers on the grounds that the phenomenon is potentially attached to those tens of thousands of migrant workers who arrive in Finland every year: seasonal farm workers from Eastern Europe and Asia, Romani beggars from Eastern Europe, berry pickers from Thailand, and construction workers from the Eastern Europe and beyond (Kontula 2010, 17). The studies by Kontula (2010) on migrant workers in the construction site of the power plant in Olkiluoto and by Alho and Helander (2016) on seasonal foreign berry and vegetable pickers study the issue from a framework of structural violence. Migrant workers are expected to work for a lower salary, pay taxes to Finland without entitlement to national social insurance provided by the Finnish state, and be separated from their families and stay in the country for a temporary period of time. They do not speak the language and they do not possess profound knowledge on their legal rights nor means to demand them (Kontula 2010, 103-104; Alho & Helander 2016, 148-149). Kontula (2010, 104) blames Finnish legislation for creating the dependency of migrant workers on their employers, where they are left with options of either agreeing to any kind of conditions or returning home. According to Kontula (Ibid. 55), the criminal exploitation of labour is enabled by both the dependent position of a migrant worker and the lack of official supervision. Kontula (Ibid. 105) raises concerns over a formulation of ethnic class society in Finland, where foreign workers are expected to do the physically heavy, low-paid jobs to which the native population is not attracted to (referred to also by Alho & Helander 2016, 155).

Other forms of human trafficking in Finland have been significantly less covered in research. According to the Assistance System, forced criminal activity and forced begging are the least identified forms of human trafficking in Finland, which may be caused by the fact that even though they are not new phenomena, they are relatively new conceptualisations (Assistance System 2018a, 5). This may also explain why there appears to be no profound research on these phenomena. The Assistance System reports that there have been only a few identified victims of forced criminal activity, although it is likely that the actual number is significantly higher (Ibid.). Public discussion

has speculated whether there is forced begging in Finland, until the Assistance System identified two victims of this for the first time in 2019 (Assistance System 2019, 6). The semi-annual review by the Assistance System (2018a) also elaborates on the reason behind the challenges of identifying victims of forced criminal activity, which is often the case in the collection of drug-related debts: "[V]ictims arrested for crimes are easily branded as 'common petty criminals' who have caused their own problems. If a victim also suffers from substance abuse, for example, they may not be regarded as a very credible victim of human trafficking." (Assistance System 2018a, 5).

As Toivonen (2017, 3) states in her report compiled by The Institute of Criminology and Legal Policy at the University of Helsinki, the research on forced marriages in Finland is very scarce, and there are no statistics available. The report researches both the observations of forced marriages by many different actors, and the contradicting statistics of the police and the court, where this form appears to be nearly non-existent (Ibid). Toivonen (Ibid. 11) has created three categories for the types of forced marriages that have been detected in Finland. The first category entails forced marriages of foreign nationals that have been conducted outside of Finland and which are identified in the asylum-seeking process. The second category refers to situations where a girl of migrant origin (who lives in Finland and is often a Finnish citizen) is married to a man living abroad. The third category refers to situations where a Finnish man marries a foreign woman by consent of both parties, but where a marriage proceeds to a stage where the woman is exploited, and does not have possibility nor knowledge on how to exit the marriage. The project report by Finnish League for Human Rights (Hansen et al. 2016) also states that men and boys are subjected to forced marriages, but their experiences are more often left unnoticed by the authorities. LGBTQ+ youth are an especially vulnerable group with regard to forced marriages and honour-based violence. (Ibid. 86). The report notes the lack of resources and operational models that constitute a part of the challenges in the identification and assistance of victims of forced marriages in Finland (Ibid. 89). Toivonen (2017, 12-13) raises concerns over the lack of knowledge required in identification and correct action among authorities and professionals.

The first study on the trafficking of children and young people in Finland was conducted by the HEUNI and the Assistance System in 2019 (Kervinen & Ollus 2019). According to the report of this research project, experts estimate that the exploitation of children in Finland is most often sexual exploitation, such as forced prostitution, commercial sexual exploitation, and sexual exploitation taking place on and/or initiating from the internet. Children and young people have also fallen victims of forced marriages and forced criminal activity (Ibid. 6). Unstable family situations and/or a lack of family is a significant factor contributing to the vulnerable position of a minor. Adolescents going

AWOL from reform schools have been subjected to criminal exploitation. Those children who disappear during the asylum process are also especially vulnerable to exploitation (Ibid. 43). The report states that there are significantly less child victims identified in Finland than in other Nordic countries, which could be due to a smaller number of child asylum seekers who have arrived in the country without a guardian, but also because Finland does not have as comprehensive guidance for the identification and assistance of child trafficking victims as Sweden, for example. The authors also refer to the effect of possible attitudes of authorities on the way in which children and young people talk about their experiences and how their experiences are framed. (Ibid. 98).

Today, human trafficking in Finland occurs in various forms both as local and global phenomena. According to the Assistance System's 2019 semi-annual review, the most identified forms of trafficking in Finland in 2019 have been sexual and labour exploitation, although forced begging, forced criminal activities, and forced marriages were also identified (Assistance System 2019, 6). Labour exploitation has been the most identified form of trafficking in Finland, and it has been detected in restaurants, construction, domestic work, cleaning, farming, greenhouse work, and berry picking (ihmiskauppa.fi 2019e). However, in 2018, sex trafficking was the most detected form among the new clients of the Assistance System. The widespread phenomenon of the sexual exploitation of Nigerian women in Europe also takes place in Finland (Assistance System 2018b, 10). The increased risk of human trafficking in armed conflicts is reflected on the statistics of the Assistance System: many of its clients who have been victims of human trafficking outside Finland have been exploited in conflict zones such as Libya, Iraq, Somalia, and Afghanistan (Ibid. 3). It is also crucial to note that no statistic reveals the true number of victims of trafficking. The statistics of the Assistance System, for example, show only the victims that have been referred to and admitted in the organisation (Assistance System 2019, 8). For instance, the exploitation of persons addicted to substances often remains unidentified. Undocumented migrants can also be vulnerable to exploitation (Ihmiskauppa.fi 2019e). Koskenoja et al. (2018, 199) report that one of the most crucial challenges in the assistance of trafficking victims in Finland is related to the assistance of Finnish citizens and persons living permanently in a municipality, as municipal anti-trafficking work relies heavily on individual workers and their capabilities to address human trafficking and its victims.

2.4. Previous Research on Blaming Victims of Human Trafficking

In the field of research on human trafficking in Finland, the victim-blaming attitudes are acknowledged as crucial factors in identification and assistance of victims of trafficking, yet there appears to be no studies focusing on them. The occurrence of referrals to attitudes such as victim

blaming reflect the research field in Finland in general. In literature on forced labour, referrals to victim blaming are scarce. As most Finnish research on human trafficking has concentrated on sex trafficking, the detrimental attitudes have been most discussed in relation to this form of exploitation. This may also be due to gendered forms of trafficking: most of the identified victims of sexual exploitation are female whereas most of the identified victims of labour exploitation are male. It could be that victim blaming is a more pressing issue within sexual exploitation and attitudes to women, but it is also possible that feelings of shame and guilt of a male victim and authorities' reactions to them remain undiscussed due to gender stereotypes.

In their study on human trafficking of children and young people in Finland, Kervinen and Ollus (2019, 98) refer to findings from British research (Gearon 2018; Pearce et al. 2009) on suspicion and blaming of child victims committed by public officers to potentially affect the identification and assistance of child victims of trafficking in Finland too. The authors describe this as "the culture of disbelief", which refers also to public officers' difficulties to believe how extensive the violence and exploitation experienced by a child is (Ibid.). The same study (Pearce et al. 2009) is referred to by Jokinen, Ollus & Viuhko (2011, 154-155) in discussion on human trafficking for labour exploitation in Finland. The authors (Ibid. 151) state that one of the challenges of victims in terms of seeking help from outsiders is the fear that they themselves would have done something criminal. Exploited labourers may remain silent because they do not see themselves as victims. They can also be afraid that they are deported from a country or that they would be labelled as criminals. (Ibid. 154). The authors refer to the problem that even authorities working with potential victims may not think that there is human trafficking related to exploitation of labour in Finland. (Ibid. 155).

The study by Roth (2012) on prostitution-related trafficking sheds light on the detrimental attitudes within the Finnish legal system. The author states that the application and interpretation of the penal provisions on sex trafficking at the Finnish courts of law have been both rare and inadequate due to the way of distinction between victims of sexual exploitation to the "innocent" (deceived, disabled, powerless objects of extreme forms of violence) and the "guilty" ("opportunistic migrants" who have originally consented to sex work, the "able selves" who have committed to "irresponsible behaviour" of "voluntary" engagement) (Ibid. 213, 218, 284). Roth (Ibid. 283) elaborates that coercive means are seen as "natural" in prostitution, for foreign women are understood as having agreed to the rules set by traffickers. Furthermore, it has been historically difficult in Finland to recognise and conceptualise violence against women as a social problem that requires legal and other measures (Ibid. 283-284). Feminist authors have also argued that Finnish women are reluctant to see themselves

as victims, and they are perceived as strong, equal, "responsible selves", and are therefore easily held responsible for the violence they have experienced (Ibid. 245).

Roth (2012, 244) states that difficulties with sex trafficking mirror the difficulties that the legal system has with the offence of rape. Roth refers to the study by Viitanen (1980) which found widespread victim-blaming attitudes in Finnish society in general and in the judiciary, and the study by Sulavuori (1992) which state that the police and judiciary often blame the victim of rape for "provocative" behaviour. Roth states that this situation has not changed since the 1990s. (Roth 2012, 244-245). Indeed, according to the recent research by Amnesty Finland (Piha, 2019) on rape offences targeted against women and realisation of the rights of a victim, rape survivors still encounter victim-blaming attitudes by the police, health care personnel, lawyers and judges (Ibid. 30-41). The legal process has been described by the interviewed survivors of rape as heavy, stressful, scary, and the kind that labels and blames the victim. Many of the interviewed survivors suspected whether they would have reported the offence if they had known what it would entail. One of the interviewed survivors commented: "[I]f you are a foreign sex worker, do not report to the police. You lose your health, nerves, money and faith in people, the whole life is ruined."[4] (Ibid. 31-32). Amnesty Finland (Ibid. 52) recommends that the Finnish criminal code on rape and other sexual related crimes should be changed so that the crimes would be defined based on the lack of consent of a victim. This perspective is relevant for the discussion on sex trafficking. Roth (2012, 255; 258) states that if the lack of consent of a victim was adopted as a basis of examination of whether the requisites of human trafficking are met, the attention would be adequately shifted to surrounding circumstances, such as more subtle methods of control and suppression, and the vulnerabilities and dependencies of the victim.

Victim-blaming attitudes in Finland are detected in studies related to other forms of violence. In the results of the survey study conducted by the European Commission in 2010, Finland had one of the highest frequencies in terms of victim-blaming attitudes against victims of domestic violence: 74 per cent of the Finnish respondents answered that "provocative behaviour of women" is a cause of domestic violence against women, while the EU average was 52 per cent. (European Commission 2010, 184). The same study reveals that far more people (32%) in Finland than across the EU as a whole (12%) saw domestic violence as unacceptable but not always requiring punishment, while in Greece, 93 percent or in Sweden, 89 per cent of respondents said that violence against women is unacceptable and should always be punishable by law (Ibid. 46). The report on victim's experiences of hate crimes in Finland 2014-2018 (Ministry of Justice 2018) elaborates victim-blaming attitudes

[4] "Jos olet ulkomaalainen seksityöntekijä, älä ilmoita poliisille. Siinä menee terveys, hermot, rahat, usko ihmisiin, koko elämä menee pilalle." Piha (2019, 32).

of authorities, health care personnel, family and friends that victims of hate crimes have encountered (Ibid. 21-22). The report states: “[A]n unambiguous result of the survey is that public discourse and prevailing attitudes are significant in the victim’s recovery. […] Downplaying or evaluating the victims’ experiences and blaming the victim must be avoided. This applies to all levels: from social discourse to interactions between the victim of a hate crime and eyewitnesses to the crime, the police or other authorities, representatives of NGOs or friends and relatives of the victim.” (Ministry of Justice 2018, 25).

International research focusing on victim-blaming attitudes against trafficked persons appears to be rather scarce. In Britain, the issue has been elaborated in the context of child trafficking. Pearce et al. (2009, 9) indicate that there may be situations where trafficked minors are not listened, believed nor helped by practitioners, as ignoring the situation may be easier for the worker than trying to respond without adequate resources. The authors use the metaphor of a “wall of silence” to depict the challenges in the identification of victims of child trafficking: on one side of the wall there are children and young people who are afraid or unable to speak, and on the other side there can be lack of awareness by the general public and some practitioners, enhanced by a culture of disbelief (Ibid. 82). A culture of disbelief manifests itself in practitioners’ ways of meeting a child’s disclosure, for example when practitioner disputes the young person’s immigration status or age, not believing that a child or a young person is under 18 years old, or not believing the extent of the violence and abuse experienced by the child. This disbelief has been detected to be related to perceived control of a young person on their situation, or even their “willingness” to be re-trafficked (Ibid. 103-104). The authors emphasise that a culture of disbelief may silence the child or a young person (Ibid. 83). Gearon (2018) interviewed young people who were trafficked to England when being under 18, and found that these young people experienced the home office, police, children services and the court to treat them as illegal immigrants, culpable and ’consenting’ to their circumstances, and not as victims of trafficking (Ibid. 8). Gearon’s study showcases also young people’s experiences of being both overtly disbelieved and blamed for their circumstances by practitioners in front-line services (Ibid. 10).

International literature focusing specifically on victim blaming covers mainly human trafficking for sexual exploitation targeted against women, and even these studies underscore the lack of previous research on blaming the victims of sex trafficking in particular (Silver et al. 2015, 934; Casarella-Espinoza 2015, 2-3) and public attitudes about human trafficking in general (Cunningham & Cromer 2016, 228; 232). Silver et al. (2015) found just world beliefs and attitudes towards prostitution to affect the level of victim blame, and Casarella-Espinoza (2015) explored the interrelations of gender and ethnicity in blaming of sex-trafficking victims. Both Casarella-Espinoza (2015, 49-50) and

Cunningham and Cromer (2016, 229) refer to rape myth acceptance, which is defined as culturally supported myths or false beliefs about the characterisation of rape, rape victims, and perpetrators that contribute to persistence of rape by blaming the victim and minimising the responsibility of the perpetrator (Ibid. 229). The studies have found that men were more accepting of rape myths than women (Cunningham and Cromer 2016, 229). Drawing from rape myth acceptance and its increasing effect on disbelief and victim blame, Cunningham and Cromer (2016, 240) developed a human trafficking myths scale[5]. Their study indicated human trafficking myth acceptance as a significant predictor of both belief and victim blame (Ibid. 237). The study found male respondents to be more accepting of human trafficking myths. (Ibid. 237). The authors underscore the need for future research related to other forms of human trafficking, the influence of perceived locus of control on attitudes about trafficking victims, and the role of moral development and reasoning in the attribution of blame to victims. (Ibid. 238). It seems that there are practically no research focusing on victim-blaming attitudes related to other forms of human trafficking.[6]

As there appears to be a clear research gap on disbelief and victim blame targeted against trafficked persons especially in Finland, this thesis aims to increase understanding on the issue from a theoretical framework of the Belief in a Just World hypothesis, which will be presented in the next sub-chapter.

2.5. Victim Blaming Explained by the Belief in a Just World Theory

Belief in a just world theory (BJW, also known as the just world hypothesis) provides the most feasible framework for understanding mechanisms behind the disbelief, blame and derogation targeted against victims of human trafficking that appear both in Finland and beyond. Firstly, the

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[5] "Human Trafficking Myth Scale

1. Human trafficking is another term for smuggling.
2. Human trafficking must include elements of physical force, restraint, bondage, and/or violence.
3. Human trafficking does not happen in the United States.
4. If someone did not want to be trafficked, he or she would leave the situation.
5. U.S. citizens are trafficked in their own country (reverse coded).
6. Human trafficking victims will seek help as soon as they have the opportunity.
7. People from other countries who are trafficked in the United States are always illegal immigrants.
8. Normal-appearing, well-educated, middle-class people aren't trafficked.
9. Human trafficking victims will tell authorities they are being trafficked as soon as they have the opportunity.
10. Human trafficking must involve some form of travel, transportation, or movement across state or national borders.
11. If persons are trafficked in the United States, they are always from poor, uneducated communities.
12. If a child solicits sex from an adult in exchange for money, food, or shelter, he or she isn't a victim.
13. Only foreigners and illegal immigrants are trafficked.
14. Human trafficking is always controlled by organised crime."
    (Cunningham & Cromer 2016, 240).

[6] Research review on victim-blaming attitudes against trafficked persons is partly limited due to the language barrier, as the literature search has been conducted only in Finnish and English.

BJW theory is the most befitting: the very questions of why and how people tend to blame the victims of suffering led social psychologist Melvin Lerner and his colleagues to establish a research territory for BJW theory (Hafer 2002, 109). Secondly, research on BJW has produced reliable, in-depth understanding on the blaming reactions. Through a great number of psychological laboratory experiments and survey data from over 50 years of research, BJW theory has been shown to be stable and cross-culturally generalisable (Bartholomaeus & Strelan 2019, 1; Furnham 2003, 795). Third, Lerner's BJW theory is suitable to the sphere of peace and conflict studies. The fields of social psychology and the peace, mediation and conflict research are bridged in the subfield of peace psychology. Sapio and Zamperini (2007, 271) mention Lerner's (1980) theory in particular as an important example of peace-thinking, which they define as a "specific type of difference-thinking which is capable of questioning those dominant sociocultural frameworks of thought which impose conformity in cases where we find aspects of structural violence that cause suffering to people."

The notion of Sapio and Zamperini (Ibid.) leads us to the concept of cultural violence developed by the pioneer of peace research Johan Galtung. Cultural violence is defined as any aspect of a culture that can be used to justify or legitimise violence in its direct or structural form. The opposite of cultural violence would be cultural peace, which means aspects of a culture that serve to justify and legitimise direct and structural peace. (Galtung 1990, 291). Galtung places cultural violence as one category or "super-type" in a "violence triangle" with two more "super-types", direct violence (direct acts of violence, conflict, war) and structural violence (exploitation, marginalisation, repression), cultural violence being the legitimiser of both. (Ibid. 294). The concept of violence triangle by Galtung illustrates well the significance of BJW in identification and assistance of human trafficking victims. Human trafficking consists of direct acts of violence, which is most often directed at people already suffering from discrimination, thus structural violence. This study aims to show how BJW-related reactions of disbelief, blame and derogation function as a form of cultural violence. The role of BJW theory in this study is central for its explanatory power, while the role of the concepts of Galtung is to provide a framework within peace research.

Next, I will first provide the definition of the BJW, introduce briefly the development of the theory, and elaborate the origin and functioning of the BJW. Finally, I will elaborate the individual and societal significance of the BJW stressed by the researchers.

Definition of BJW

According to the belief in a just world theory, people are motivated to believe that they live in a world where they get what they deserve. The BJW is manifested in figures of speech such as "everything

happens for a reason", "bad things happen to bad people", or "you reap what you sow". Following this line of thought, good actions bring positive outcomes and bad actions negative ones, and a person avoids misfortune by taking adequate precautions. In a just world, it is not only the person's behaviour, but also the personal qualities that count: the cruel, lazy, ugly, stupid, unfriendly persons will be punished and the kind, generous, energetic, intelligent, beautiful people will be rewarded. (Lerner 1980, 11). Lerner points out that "no adult bright enough to tie his shoelaces" would allow themselves to believe in such a naive worldview (Ibid. 18). Yet, Lerner emphasises that all people, including those who "should know better", though to a varying degree, have tendency to hold on to this belief (Ibid. 147; 121).

According to this theory, people are reluctant to abandon their BJW because it serves such an important adaptive function. The BJW can be seen as a coping mechanism: it assures an individual to think that one will be safe in an orderly world when following good patterns (Lerner & Miller 1978, 1030-1031). Furthermore, believing in a just world that is predictable and manageable enables an individual to engage in long-term goal-oriented activity. It also creates hope and faith in the future in times of elevated stress (Hafer 2002, 123). The need to defend the BJW is so powerful that people take action to correct injustices, or psychologically restore justice. Having to testify suffering of an innocent victim is a strong threat to the BJW, and the emotional reaction, empathy, is painful for the observer. Negative responses to victims, such as withholding their actions or personal qualities as root causes for their suffering or denying or belittling their suffering altogether, are irrational tactics and psychological defences, in which the purpose is to reduce the pain of the observer and to maintain their fundamental BJW (Lerner 1980, 20-21).

The Development of the BJW in an Individual

There are cognitive-developmental, cultural and psychological explanations why the BJW is so ubiquitous in people's lives (Rubin & Peplau 1975, 72-74). Young children develop a belief in "immanent justice" through the experiences of being punished and awarded for a certain behaviour by a parent, who they perceive as an absolute authority. This belief usually declines or finds other more sophisticated forms with processes of maturation and experiences of injustice (Piaget 1965, 256; Lerner 1980, 19). Children learn to deny immediate pleasure in order to earn greater long-term awards. Experiences of being awarded for one's efforts confirms a child's sense of control and BJW. (Bartholomaeus & Strelan 2019, 3). A child's BJW can be reinforced also by, for example, school education where those in power are portrayed only in a positive light, or through tales such as Santa Claus who brings presents only to the deserving children (Rubin & Peplau 1975, 73).

Cultural norms and morality tales contribute to the development of BJW. Lerner (1980, 13) refers to Western religions, the Judeo-Christian tradition and the protestant ethic as powerful forces in the culture that convey that this is a "just world." The three aspects reinforce ideas of the causal links between sin and suffering, one's fate on earth and virtue, and financial or other kind of success and Christian virtues of diligence and self-sacrifice. Anglo-Saxon folk wisdom, fairy tales and mass media repeat the same morality tales. The popular series and films portray the heroes and heroines as virtuous, diligent, beautiful and the villains as evil, lazy, and often ugly. The most common ending is that Good triumphs over Evil, and the wicked is punished. (Ibid. 14). Psychological explanations to the development of the BJW refer to its motivational significance for the individual (Rubin & Peplau 1975, 73-74). The BJW supports an individual's "internal locus of control", which has been stated as fundamental for an individual's wellbeing (Hafer & Sutton 2016, 150).

The Justice of "Us" and "Them"

Cultural norms determine the judgements of what is deserved in the "just world". Having a status role in the society creates expectations that are commonly understood as appropriate for anyone in the same position. There are also institutionalised deviant statuses, often occupied by minority-group members, that are commonly judged to be ”worse and different", disqualified from specific entitlements: ”[J]ews, people on welfare, the ugly, the crippled, the mentally ill, criminals, women, are potentially dangerous, inferior, undesirable in important ways, and therefore deserve less, and, indeed, deserve punishment at times." (Lerner 1980, 16). Lerner (Ibid. 17) refers also to the studies conducted by Henri Tajfel (1970) on the tendency of people to divide themselves to Us and Them, to the in-group and the out-group, and the resulting thinking that similarity implies superiority and greater worth, "thus we deserve more than they."

In fact, Lerner (1980, 22-23) notes that the metaphor of a just world appears to refer to a subculture: people do not believe to a whole world or a society that is just, but rather they perceive themselves and others belonging to the same "caste" to be part of a just meta-world. Furthermore, the just world metaphor entails an idea of two separate worlds: "our" just world and the world of victims. In the world of victims, "they" are doomed to live in a world where they cannot affect their fate, where their destiny is to live in state of chronic suffering or deprivation. In the just world we live in, we and the people we care about get what we deserve. But in our world, people are fully responsible and in control of their fate. Their destiny depends solely on their "talent, character, willingness to work – with minor modifications in terms of luck". (Ibid. 24-25). Lerner (Ibid. 25) describes how most of our lives we know we live in a just world, but there are occasions that we encounter members of the world of victims. And when we do, we might feel compassion, sense of identity and urge to help, but

more often than not we do nothing and turn our thoughts elsewhere. Part of the reason for this, according to Lerner, is based on the recognition of the two separate worlds:

> "[A]t times I know we are the same, or at least I recognise the same feelings, needs, and hopes, but essentially, at a much deeper level, I know we live in different worlds, are of different "castes", and mine is a just one and theirs is not. Theirs is a world of victims.
>
> [---] We all know that there are times when people of the Just World caste give in to the urge to help "victims", but at other times they appear to go through considerable effort to avoid any involvement, any recognition of the hint of any possible relation – they avoid, ignore, and possibly revile them."
>
> Lerner (1980, 25-26).

Both separating of "our" just world and a world of victims and by extending the timeline of deservingness ("*eventually* everything will turn out fine") are strategies how to protect the BJW from any contradictory evidence that one is bound to encounter (Ibid. 22-23).

Rational and Non-Rational Tactics Against Injustice

According to Lerner (1980, 19-21) there are rational and non-rational tactics to deal with the injustices which threaten the BJW. Both of the two rational tactics are based on the acceptance of "the reality of injustice", both its occurrence and one's reaction to it. The first rational tactic to deal with this reality is to prevent or alleviate the effects of suffering. This tactic is manifested often by many social devices, such as emergency services, social security or NGOs. The second tactic is to accept one's limitations. A person can accept that their resources are limited and finite, and they must prioritise their actions. The non-rational tactics are psychological mechanisms we employ in order to reduce the distress caused by witnessing an injustice. The first one of these psychological defences is denial-withdrawal. One can simply arrange themselves to not see the injustice by intelligent selection of information to which one is exposed. The second non-rational tactic is reinterpretation of events. Here, the injustice can be reinterpreted in many ways so that it disappears, and so does the reason for being upset. One can reinterpret the outcome of the injustice, which could be that suffering brought later greater benefit. One can also reinterpret the cause of the injustice to be something that the victim did or failed to do, or the character of the victim can be reinterpreted. (Ibid. 19-21).

The Development of BJW Theory and Research

In order to understand people's rather irrational willingness to blame and derogate victims of innocent suffering, social psychologist Melvin J. Lerner and his colleagues conducted a series of laboratory experiments in the 1960s and 1970s. Lerner (1980) summarised and framed the findings of these experiments in his widely cited monograph "A Belief in a Just World: a Fundamental Delusion"

(Hafer 2002, 109; Aguiar et al. 2008, 50). Especially crucial spark for the just world research was the study “Observer's reaction to the "innocent victim” (1966) by Lerner and Simmons (Bartholomaeus & Strelan 2019, 2). In this experiment, study subjects were made to believe that they were witnessing a situation where the study conductor is giving strong electric shocks to a young female student who has presumably volunteered to participate as part of her course requirement. The conditions of the experiment were altered according to the hypotheses; Lerner and Simmons tested how study subjects would react to the experiment and how they would evaluate the “victim” depending on whether she was given positive reinforcement for a task (few dollars as a reward) negative reinforcement (electric shocks) or neutral feedback. The authors also tested how the study subjects would evaluate the victim depending on the outcome of the experiment, when there was some kind of interdependency of fate between them, and when the voluntary participant was portrayed as a martyr taking the electric shocks in order to enable the study participants to gain their study credits. (Lerner 1980, 41-45).

The data revealed that most people will reject, or at least devalue, an innocent victim. Majority of the observers in the experiment (45 out of 65) seemed to re-establish justice in their world by deciding that the victim was a relatively “inferior” person who happened to be suffering for a good cause (Ibid. 50). The authors noticed three common distortions in the reactions of the observers. At the end of the session, most of the study subjects would express their feelings of indignation for the victim and their fury towards the person who conducted the experiment. They would also condemn the victim and emphasise that they would never sit there and let anyone give them electric shocks. The second common distortion among observers was the denial of the event. The observers stated that the victim was faking the reaction, and that the shocks were actually very mild. The third distortion was the alteration of the details how the victim ended up in the situation: “she knew where she was getting into when she signed up for the experiment”. (Ibid. 51-52). The findings of this experiment were replicated by Lerner and their colleagues in following studies (Lerner & Miller 1978, 1030).

A second school of thought emerged during the early 1970s, when Rubin and Peplau (1973, 1975) noted that in the traditional innocent victim experiment, not all participants derogated the victim (Bartholomaeus & Strelan 2019, 2). Rubin and Peplau (1975, 65) developed a BJW scale to rate the extent of an individual’s tendency to the BJW. Their hypothesis was that an individual’s score in BJW scale would vary according to individual attributes such as age, gender, class, personal experiences of injustice, socio-political ideology (especially authoritarianism), and religious beliefs (Ibid. 76). The results of their studies and the ones of their colleagues confirmed the expected pattern: people who believe most strongly in a just world are most likely to see victims as deserving their misfortune and/or “asking for trouble” (Ibid. 71). The research on individual differences in BJW

emerged. Even though the BJW scale by Rubin and Peplau has been criticised and remodelled, these findings have been replicated in various studies (Hafer & Sutton 2016, 151).

The research and development of the BJW scale resulted in assessing BJW in different domains of life and different ways of believing in a just world (Hafer & Sutton 2016, 147). Different dimensions of BJW scale entail for example a belief in immanent justice vs. belief in ultimate justice by Maes (1998), or hope for a just world and self-efficacy to promote justice in the world by Mohiyeddini and Montada (1998) (Furnham 2003, 799). While multi-dimensional approach to the BJW is still spreading to different directions to the extent that Hafer & Sutton (2016, 154) are stating a need for integrating them into a coherent theoretical framework, the division between a belief in a just world for the self (BJW-self) and a belief in a just world in general (BJW-general) has been well established (Bartholomaeus & Strelan 2019, 1).

The distinction between personal and general BJW is also connected to the line of research where the positive effects of BJW has been addressed. This research development started in 1990s when Dalbert conceptualised BJW as “a positive illusion”, a belief that is psychologically beneficial, yet unwarranted by facts and logic (Hafer & Sutton 2016, 151). Dalbert (1998, 87-88) emphasised that BJW influences the reconstruction and perception of one’s life course, leads to prosocial behaviour in specific situations where substantial help is viable, enables people to cope in daily hassles, and is well adaptive for the victims of unjust fate. Inspired by Dalbert’s conceptualisations, researches have gathered a large body of data showcasing the connection between BJW, psychological adjustment and even physical health. Especially the personal BJW has been connected to better wellbeing of an individual, whereas general BJW has been shown to have detrimental outcomes for the self and greater tendency to victim blaming (Hafer & Sutton 2016, 151; Bartholomaeus & Strelan 2019, 4). Furnham (2003, 808) notes that the studies on positive benefits of holding BJW beliefs help to explain the resistance of people in changing these beliefs.

However, Bartholomaeus and Strelan (2019, 6) stress that general and personal BJW are not fully separate belief systems from each other, and it is not known whether BJW is contributing to an individual’s wellbeing and is then an important belief to hold on, or whether experiencing high levels of wellbeing cause the world to appear just. This leads us to the important critique by Thomas & Mucherah (2016, 246) about a study bias: most of the BJW research has been conducted among middle-class samples in Europe. Their study among Kenyan students provided results showcasing significant differences of BJW according to one’s sex and tribal status. People in a more unequal position, such as women and members of tribes of inferior status in the Kenyan society, had significantly lower scores on BJW, while students in more privileged position tended to have higher

perception of justice (Ibid. 244). BJW research in its early decades have been predominantly white and Western. Studies focusing on racial inequality and cross-cultural approach emerged in the 1990s and early 2000s, whereas BJW studies conducted by researchers from the global South have been increased only in recent years. (Furnham 1993; Calhoun & Cann 1994; Hunt 2000; Thomas & Mucherah 2016; Gouveia et al. 2018; Kim & Kim 2017). The BJW theory has been found plausible in different cultural contexts, but there are context-specific cultural variables that shape BJW (Furnham 2002, 811; Thomas & Mucherah 2016, 246).

While BJW research has developed to different directions, the traditional line of research focusing on victim blaming has persisted. The association between BJW and victim blaming has been examined and found true of many categories of "victims": poor people in the third world, refugees, the handicapped, AIDs patients, rape victims and cancer patients, among others (Furnham 2003, 803; see also Montada 1998; Nudelman & Shiloh 2011; Khera et al. 2014; Kleinke & Meyer 1990). Silver et al. (2014, 936) state that there are no previous data available on how BJW relates to attitudes and opinions toward trafficked people. In their study on reactions to sex-trafficked persons, they found correlations between BJW, empathic concern and prosocial behaviour, personal BJW having a significant, positive effect and the general BJW detrimental consequences (Ibid. 945). Research on victim blaming has mainly focused on female victims while there are much less data available on the ways how i.e. gender or age of a victim affects attributions of blame (Strömwall et al. 2013, 207). Furthermore, most of the studies on BJW has focused on reactions to others. Self-blame has been addressed to some extent, but the need for more research has been noted. (Furnham 2003, 806; Hafer & Sutton 2016, 149).

For the research purposes of this thesis, I will be focusing on the BJW theory framed by Lerner (1980), where BJW is approached as "a fundamental delusion", withholding the negative reactions to victim as main research interest. To maintain a theoretical cohesion, different ways or domains of BJW will not be further discussed.

Lerner Meets Galtung: The Effects of BJW on Individual and Society

The derogatory effects of victim blaming both in individual and societal level are in the core of the BJW research. Especially the causation between attribution of blame and helping behaviour has been addressed. According to the BJW hypothesis, when given the opportunity, people will aim to restore justice by helping the victim, but only if help does not appear too costly for the individual to engage in, and only when the victim is perceived as innocent (Furnham 2003, 801-802). The perception of the victim's innocence or culpability has its consequences:

> “[T]he terrible truth is that we spend grand fortunes on procedures to ensure that we, as a society, come to the aid of only those who are truly innocent of any culpability for their state of dependency. And, for whatever it may be worth, there are also sufficient experimental data available which document the general principle that people are moved to come to the aid of innocent victims, and are relatively indifferent to the needs of those whose dependency was caused by the victim’s own behaviour or character.”
>
> Lerner (1980, 96).

The role of an innocent victim found in BJW research is extremely narrow. In Lerner’s and their colleagues’ early experiments, a young female was always portrayed as an “innocent victim.” Strömwall et al. (2013, 207) found in their study that young male victims of rape were attributed more blame than i.e. young female or middle-aged male victim, particularly by participants scoring high on BJW. Studies have also found that gay male rape victims are often attributed more blame than heterosexual male victims (ibid. 214). Haynes and Olson (2006, 664) found that study subjects were willing to help only a victim that is both likeable and not responsible for their fate, whereas a likeable but responsible victim was blamed and an unlikeable but not responsible victim was derogated. It is crucial to bear in mind that social norms, such as stigmatisation and discrimination of certain groups, shape the perceptions of a person’s likeability.

The BJW is associated with harsh attitudes to victims: it has been found to motivate people to blame the people in need for their self-infliction, minimise their existing needs and justifying their own advantages (Furnham 2003, 803; Hafer & Sutton 2016, 152). This bears detrimental consequences in both individual and societal level. Blaming victims increases victim suffering (Furnham 2003, 802). The fear of being disbelieved or blamed can prevent victims from reporting a crime to the police or even seeking medical help, as illustrated for example in the study by Walker et al. (2005, 69) on male rape victims. The few study subjects who had reported the crime had experienced that they have not been met with interest and sympathy, and they felt they were held responsible for the rape in court hearings (Ibid. 74-75). Blaming the victim for the actions of the perpetrator prevents the victim from coming to terms with their trauma (Brems & Wagner 1994, 363). Negative social reactions can cause further damages, such as worsened PTSD (Silver et al. 2015, 935). The tendency to disbelieve, derogate and blame the victim poses a threat to adequate measures and care performed by both the professionals and the private citizens (Walker et al. 2005, 74-75; Silver et al. 2015, 935; Haynes and Olson 2006, 664; Khera et al. 2014, 440). On a societal level, harsh attitudes to victims may lead to harmful social outcomes such as deepened disadvantage and inequality (Hafer & Sutton 2016, 152). The BJW serves also societal functionalism by reducing or preventing guilt of the privileged and legitimising a country’s structural and societal factors (Furnham 2003, 811). Indeed, the BJW predicts perception of less discrimination and less willingness to take action against changing the status quo

(Hafer & Sutton 2016, 153). Thus, the BJW may contribute to the perpetuation of social injustice (Rubin & Peplau 1975, 83).

Finally, the functioning and effects of BJW lead us back to the connection of BJW to the concept of cultural violence by Galtung (1990). After elaboration of the logics and consequences of avoiding, derogating and blaming victims of suffering in order to psychologically restore justice, one can see BJW locating rather neatly to the sphere of cultural violence:

> "[T]he irony inherent in the "justice" aspect of the belief in a just world is that it often takes the form of justification."
>
> Lerner (1980, 155).

> "[C]ulture preaches, teaches, admonishes, eggs on, and dulls us into seeing exploitation and/or repression as normal and natural, or into not seeing them (particularly not exploitation) at all."
>
> Galtung (1990, 295).

In the next chapter, I will introduce the methodology used in the present study in exploring how BJW contributes to us seeing human trafficking as normal and natural, or not seeing it at all.

3. Methodology

This chapter sheds light on the methods and the process of collecting, processing and analysing the data, along with the reflections on research ethics, limitations of this study and my positionality. In order to explore how victim blaming functions as a form of cultural violence when it comes to identification and assistance of victims of human trafficking, I have used both a qualitative survey and expert interviews as my data collection methods. The statements of 61 participants of the survey are approached as reflections of a wider phenomenon or belief system occurring in the society. Some general phenomena relevant to identification and help of the victims are detected from the data, and then they are tested, reflected and elaborated in the expert interviews with the staff members of the Assistance System. This way, issues drawn from the survey are approached as diverse reflections of the reality, and the role of the expert interviews is to explain and contextualise these reflections, in addition to providing information that few people in Finland possess on issues related to identification and assistance of the victims of human trafficking. The surveys and the transcribed content of the expert interviews are analysed together using qualitative content analysis.

In the following subchapters, I will first present the key definitions, research design and data collection process of the qualitative survey and the expert interviews, after which I will explain and justify the combination of the two methods. Then I will move on to reflect the research ethics, limitations of the study and my positionality. Finally, I will introduce qualitative content analysis as the method of analysis of this thesis.

3.1. Qualitative Survey: Research Design and Data Collection

A survey is a research method developed for collecting information from or about people to describe, compare, or explain their knowledge, attitudes and behaviour (Fink 2003, 1). Most literature on social science research methodology define a survey as a quantitative method used in order to produce numeric descriptions of the attributes of the study population (Fowler 2002; Groves 2004; Joye et al. 2016; Nardi 2018; Punch 2012). The approach of the survey conducted for this thesis is not quantitative, as it falls into the category of qualitative survey elaborated by Jansen (2010). Jansen (Ibid. 3) states that the academic literature covering qualitative survey as a data collection method is rather scarce, but it has been used in a great number of researches and case studies around the world. According to Jansen (2010, 1), the qualitative type of survey aims to determine the diversit*y* of some topic of interest within a given population. The author (Ibid. 4) categorises two types of qualitative survey, open (inductive) and pre-structured (deductive) ones. While in the open/inductive qualitative

surveys the relevant topics, dimensions and categories are identified from the interpretation of raw data, in the pre-structured/deductive surveys some main topics, dimensions and categories are defined beforehand. The survey used in this thesis can be described as a hybrid of inductive and deductive type: while the self-generated questionnaire does entail some main themes and structure, the questions are open-ended, producing the kind of raw data where new relevant topics, dimensions and categories can be detected from.

The aim of the survey used for this thesis is not to produce statistical generalisations of the people living in Finland, but on the contrary, to explore different standpoints towards victims of human trafficking. The focus is then on the diversity of opinions and their meanings. The purposes of this study correlate with the uses of qualitative survey elaborated by Fink (2003), according to whom qualitative surveys provide data to answer questions such as: "What is X, and how do different people, communities, and cultures think and feel about X, and why?" (Ibid. 61). Fink (Ibid. 62) describes qualitative surveys to be particularly suited to examine the feelings, opinions, and values of individuals and groups. They are also useful when there is access only to small samples. Qualitative survey generates research questions and hypotheses and adds depth, meaning and detail to statistical findings. Finally, qualitative survey is meant to find out how people think, feel, or behave when standardised measures are not available. (Ibid. 64).

The survey research process of this thesis has followed the categories and standards presented by Leinonen et al. (2017). The authors categorise the process of preparing and conducting a survey to four stages: preparing the questionnaire, planning the practicalities of conducting the survey, conducting a survey sample, and finally, conducting the survey research (Ibid. 91-92). Back in June 2018, when the first stage of this survey took place, my research questions were not as defined as they are today. Like in many qualitative surveys, in this one too one of its purposes was to find out which problems and questions are important and should be addressed (Fink 2003, 64). The preliminary object of the survey was to explore which kinds of knowledges and attitudes are "out there". The questions were formed according to some preliminary topics I had in mind for my research plan. Aiming for a logical order, I structured the survey to start with some basic questions exploring the knowledge about human trafficking, then moving on to discuss attitudes and worldviews related to the just-world hypothesis.

The concept of qualitative survey provided the framework for preparing the questionnaire form, which is why the questionnaire consisted of mainly open-ended questions. This way, the respondents give their answers in their own words, which is useful when the aim is to learn about the world as the respondents really see it (Fink 2003, 35). I wrote a four-page long questionnaire form and one

document explaining the purpose of the study and ethical considerations with my contact details attached. The questionnaire and the document were both written in Finnish. My target group were people over 15 years of age living permanently in Finland, so the vast majority of them would understand Finnish. In case a person would not speak Finnish, I would interview them in English.

In the stage of planning the practicalities of doing the survey research, decisions are made on which are the best means and time for reaching the study group, whether the survey is conducted online or face-to-face, which timing is the most efficient in order to reach participants, and what are the standards for the surveyor's behaviour. The survey would be conducted in the afternoons after 16:00pm and at the weekends in public places that are often popular during summer in Finland, such as streets in city centres, beaches, and market squares. One main reason why I chose to conduct a survey face to face is that the focus of my survey is the diversity of opinions. By approaching people in the street, I had the opportunity to consciously approach individuals of different profiles. I was aware that my own subjectivity and behaviour would play a crucial role in the construction of the answers. While I had decided to reach people face to face for the reasons related to validity, quality and diversity of data, I decided to reduce my own influence as a surveyor by letting respondents to fill out the self-generated questionnaire. Yet, I had prepared to conduct interviews based on the questionnaire in case respondents wished so. For the purposes of standardised and efficient data collection, I had planned my role as surveyor to be both friendly, open and neutral. I would emphasise to the participants that there are no right or wrong answers, as any kind of answer constitutes as data. In two occasions, I had a friend assisting in conducting the survey, in which cases I instructed them beforehand about the standardised role of a surveyor. It is still possible that having different people as surveyors may have affected the data. However, I would not have reached as many participants without their help, and they may have gained answers containing different perspectives than I have, which might even increase the reliability of the data in the sense that my personal role has not been as central in the data collection process.

The purpose of the sample is to evaluate the quality of the questionnaire form and to make changes and enhancements if needed. The relation between the research questions and the questionnaire form and the validity of the questions are mainly under evaluation. Based on the sampling experience, the questions are redefined and the methods of conducting the survey are evaluated (Leinonen et al. 2017, 99). After receiving feedback from the 12 participants of a sample, I decided to do some minor changes to the questionnaire form, yet include the data from this sample to the actual data as they still presented crucial qualitative material. The sample questionnaire and the final version of it together with the info document can be found in annexes 1-4, pages 109-118.

In the fourth stage of conducting the survey research, Leinonen et al. (2017) emphasise the awareness of the surveyor on a number of issues. The interactive conditions (face-to-face/self-generated questionnaire, surveyor's behaviour, the level of flexibility in order to reach the mindset of the participant) of the methods of conducting the research play a role in the construction of answers. Other factors related to the context and the culture have an effect too. (Ibid. 92). The actual data collection of survey took place in the public spaces of Lappeenranta, Helsinki, Tampere and Turku. Participants were informed that the form is filled anonymously, and their answers may be quoted in the final version of the thesis, but only in a manner in which they cannot be identified. Most of the participants filled out the form themselves, and in few cases I asked the questions and wrote the answers of the participants to the form. Once the form was filled, the participants were given a small treat to thank them for participation, and to incite motivation to participate. I gained 61 participants in eight days in the period starting from 26th July to 15th October 2018. One reason to conduct the survey in different cities is to strengthen both the diversity and the anonymity of data. Furthermore, Helsinki-Turku-Tampere axis represents the centre of urban growth in Finland, whereas Lappeenranta adds views from the Eastern border of the country. In a qualitative survey, smaller samples are sufficient. After receiving answers from 61 participants, I evaluated the content of the data to be extensive enough to serve for the purpose of my research.

Since the beginning of the process, I understood that I could end up subconsciously or even consciously choosing certain types of people, which is why I kept updating an anonymous Excel file listing the age, gender, education, occupation, and home municipality of participants. I noticed that young women and students were overrepresented in the data, and I started to consciously approach participants from different profiles. In the end, among the 61 participants of the survey research, 27 were women and 34 men. There were people from all age groups from 15 to 72, the average age being 36 years. The participants represented 20 different municipalities, all of them locating in Southern Finland. The educational and occupational backgrounds were diverse: educational level varied from compulsory school to PhD degree, and occupational fields covered social and health sector, farming, construction, logistics and business, just to name a few. Five participants were non-native Finnish speakers.

Next, I will present expert interview as my second data collection method, and then move on to discuss the means and purposes for combining these two types of data.

3.2. Expert Interviews: Research Design and Data Collection

In addition to the qualitative survey, the data used in this thesis consists of four semi-structured expert interviews conducted on 20th October 2018 in the reception centre of Joutseno, where the head office of the Assistance System is located. I had the opportunity to interview four staff members of the Assistance System, as I had become familiar with the organisation and its staff during my internship there during summer 2018.

Interview is a flexible method that can be applied to various purposes and settings in order to gain in-depth knowledge, which is probably the reason why it is one of the most popular research methods in social and behavioural sciences (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2014, 11). The social interaction between the interviewer and the respondents is highlighted by Tiittula et al. (2005, 10) as a crucial part of knowledge-creation process. Therefore, the context of the interview, the directive role of the interviewer, and the power dynamics between the researcher and the respondents ought to be taken into consideration in any research. Context, social interaction and power dynamics are emphasised also in the case of expert interviews by Alastalo et al. (2017, 214). Furthermore, the authors state that expert interview is not an independent research method in itself, but rather it refers to experts as a special study group. An expert is a person that possesses the kind of knowledge and potentially the kind of skills that laymen do not have. (Ibid. 215). Expertise is not a skill nor a permanent characteristic; it is acquired via professional tasks and/or institutional position. People in institutional positions of an expert often work in a rather exclusive field. On the other hand, expertise does not necessarily require academic or professional background, as an expert can be an individual who has gained specific knowledge through his/her own experience or active participation in a community (Ibid. 215; Bogner et al. 2009, 24).

The type of an expert interview used in this thesis is the explanatory expert interview. It allows a researcher to acquaintance him/herself with a new topic in an efficient manner, and it is applied to a phenomenon that is not much covered in previous research, which is why it is best suited for the purposes of this thesis. (Alastalo et al. 2017, 219; Bogner et al. 2009, 7). The interviews of this thesis have been conducted according to the method commonly used in Finnish social science research, which lacks clear equivalent in other languages, but can be directly translated as “thematic interview” (*teemahaastattelu*) (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2014, 47). “Thematic interview” is semi-structured in the way that the main topics or themes are determined and same for all interviewees. This method does not require a detailed and standardised formulation and order of questions, as the themes provide the structure and standard. This freedom from strict limitations to the questions has been promoted as an

advantage of this method, as it provides more space for the interviewee's input. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2014, 48).

Hyvärinen (2017, 36-40) has presented the guidelines and principles of an interview research to the three causal phases of before, during and after an interview. The first stage entails planning and preparing both the practicalities and the content of the interview. The practicalities were rather easy to plan, as I had had conversations about my thesis during my internship at the Assistance System, and the specific date and place for the interviews were agreed on via e-mail. In the planning phase, the type of an interview, the most crucial questions, and any additional questions should also be determined. Exploratory expert interviews were a natural choice of method for encountering staff members of the Assistance System, whose role is to provide official expertise on human trafficking in Finland. The exploratory approach also led to thematic interviews becoming the type of the interview. The research design was based on the studies of Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2014), Hyvärinen et al. (2017), Ruusuvuori et al. (2010) and Ruusuvuori et al. (2005).

The planning and preparing of the interviews took place in September and October of 2018, when I had already collected most of the data for the qualitative survey. I could already recognise some recurring themes from the raw data, which affected the planning of central themes in the questions, along with the original research aim. I planned the interviews according to the themes of overall awareness of human trafficking in Finland, victim blaming in particular, other attitudes, the relation between awareness and attitudes, and the effect of all these features to the identification and assistance of the victims. Even though thematic interview does not necessarily require a defined set of questions, I had prepared the crucial and additional questions to support the interviews. The role of this set of questions was directional, as my approach to interviews was exploratory and interactive, and my aim was to give space for experts' insights and the interaction between us. The themes and preliminary questions are attached in annex 5 in page 119, although not all questions were asked from all experts, as the conversation was planned to follow the themes rather than the set of questions.

All four expert interviews were conducted on 23rd October 2018 in a conference room of the Joutseno Reception Centre. The duration of each interview varied from 30 to 45 minutes. The recording and transcribing the interviews together with the use of data had been previously agreed on via e-mail with the Assistance System. In the beginning of an interview, I presented the topic of the research, the overall research aims and questions, and the main themes. The focus was on the insights of the expert, so I varied the questions according to input coming from the interviewees. Alastalo et al. (2017, 223-224) elaborate the power relations in expert interview, and emphasise the importance of expertise demonstrated by the interviewer too in order to gain epistemic access to the insights under

research. The authors also highlight the importance of the role of an interviewee as a main source of knowledge (Ibid. 225). I found that these two principles were present in the interviews: as a former intern with a certain academic background I had some shared knowledge on the topic, but in the same time I was in a role of a student interviewing experts that had extensive education and professional experience on the matter.

After the interviews, I transcribed the recordings manually. The level of precision of transcript and narrowing the data are chosen according to the research questions and the method of analysis (Ruusuvuori & Nikander 2017, 427). As I was exploring the content, not the discourse or interaction of the interviews, using content analysis as my method, there was no need to transcribe filler words, tones of voice, or pauses (Ibid. 430). All content directly related to the topic under research was transcribed. Transcribing entails also the process of anonymisation, which is why the names, places and other potential signs of identification were not included in the transcript. Transcription is also the first stage of analysis. During transcription, a researcher already makes decisions on which content is relevant to the research questions. The final transcript is in the end just one interpretation of an interview, not an exact description. (Ibid. 437).

Ruusuvuori et al. (2010, 14-15) emphasise the importance of reading the data in a manner that allows redefinitions of questions, narrowing down the research and being open to the surprising, new insights. The data from both the survey and the expert interviews provided something else and more than I had expected, hence requiring reformulation of research questions and narrowing down the topic. By the end of the data collection process, I found my data collected with the two methods to provide rich, complex approach to the topic under research. Next, I will further elaborate the use of two different types of methods.

3.4. Combining Two Types of Data

Collection of data from different sources (or from different surveyors in different places), as pursued in this thesis, is referred to as triangulation. The idea is that if various sources of information produce similar results, the credibility of the survey's findings is strengthened. (Fink 2003, 74). According to Wilson (2014, 74), triangulation is used in research in order to get richer, fuller data and/or to help confirm the results of the research. There are four different types of triangulation; data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation, and methodological triangulation (Flick 2002, 226). Data triangulation refers to using different sources of data, including different times of data collection, different places from which to collect data, and different people involved in the research study. In investigator triangulation, the data collection and analysis are conducted by several actors. In theory

triangulation the data is approached with multiple theories or perspectives. Methodological triangulation refers to using more than one method of data collection. (Ibid. 226-227). In this thesis, one can detect all four types of triangulation.

Not all scholars are that enthusiastic about the potential of triangulation, as Bryman elaborates (2004, 1143). Bryman accuses triangulation for “its apparent subscription to a naively realist position”, as he claims it to be implying that there can be a single definitive account of the social world. According to him, various constructionists argue against using triangulation as they state that the research findings should be seen as just one among various possible interpretations of social life. However, I would argue that one reason for triangulation having become a common approach in social science research (Wilson 2014, 75) is its potential to enrich the data by multiple perspectives. Reaching out for data that is rich and complex does not automatically imply a naive motive of finding “the whole truth” instead of one more viewpoint to a given topic, nor does it imply that a researcher would deny her subjective role in the process of data collection and analysis. Bryman himself notes that writers from constructionist framework see potential in triangulation for its utility in adding a sense of richness and complexity to a study (Bryman 2004, 1143). The critique of triangulation has been addressed by the idea of a “systematic triangulation of perspectives”, in which different research perspectives within qualitative research are combined with one another in order to complement their strong points and to illustrate their different limitations. The combination of methods is then contextualised in the combination of theoretical and research perspectives. (Flick 2006, 306).

Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2014, 38) refer to triangulation as methods fulfilling each other. The authors refer to the advantage of triangulation being the widening of perspective in research. According to the authors, researchers should be flexible, and choose a mix of methods that is most suitable for solving their research puzzle. (Ibid. 38-39). These are also reason why I find the qualitative survey and the expert interviews together constituting a data which is the most suitable for my research aim and the context of this thesis. Blaming of human trafficking victims as a form of cultural violence is a topic that has not been researched before in Finland. The two methods allow a researcher to explore this new field from various perspectives. They provide two types of data, which can answer to the two interlinked research questions. The survey provides insights on the diversity of attitudes and existence of victim blaming, whereas the expert interviews offer information on the societal origin and effects of these attitudes to the identification and assistance of the victims.

The following table on “the use of interviews in the analysis of descriptions of phenomena and cultural parse” presented by Alastalo and Åkerman (2010, 374) illustrates the purposes of these two types of methods, and their role in the analysis:

Table 1. Use of interviews in the analysis of descriptions of phenomena and cultural parse.

Study subject of the interview	Expert	Member of a culture
Choosing of interviewees	- expert of a limited historical process or phenomenon - the interviewee is not often replaceable	- anyone can be a member of a culture under research - interviewee is usually replaceable
Collected information through interviews	- a phenomenon under research, process, conventions, facts - it is possible to have wrong answers	- cultural meanings, narratives, experiences, interaction - it is not possible to have wrong answers

Alastalo and Åkerman (2010, 374).

The role of the qualitative survey is to provide primary information about the diversity of opinions related to victim blaming, and the expert interviews provide secondary information about the presence of victim blaming in a professional level and the effects of blame to the identification and help of the victims. The survey elaborates the content of victim blaming, expert interviews also the context and effects of it.

3.5. Research Ethics

Throughout the research process of this thesis, the ethical considerations have been based on the guidelines defined in "Ethical principles of research in the humanities and social and behavioural sciences" by the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics (TENK 2009), an organisation appointed by The Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland (TENK 2019). Next, the research process will be elaborated in terms of the three main domains of the ethical principles: respecting the autonomy of research subjects, avoiding harm, and privacy and data protection (Ibid. 5).

The autonomy of research subjects entails the principles of voluntary participation, autonomy and research involving minors, autonomy and age limits, and information for subjects. The first principle refers to the fact that participation in research should be voluntary and based on informed consent. (TENK 2009, 5-7). Both with the survey and the interviews consent was given verbally by participants. I told to the participants of the survey that I am doing a thesis related to the knowledge and attitudes towards victims of human trafficking in Finland, as I had not yet at that stage of the research narrowed the research to victim blaming. Also, giving too much details of certain attitudes

under focus could have influenced the answers to a significant extent. The probability of advance information distorting the results of the study is counted as an exception from the principle of informed consent by TENK (Ibid. 8). However, I explained to the participants the overall research aim, the data collection process and matters related to privacy, and I also gave them a document with all this information together with my contact details (annex 3, page 117). For the expert interviews the participants had given a verbal consent during my internship, and I later confirmed it via e-mail correspondence. The interviewees were also given information on the research aim and the proceedings related to privacy. The age limit of 15 of the survey is based on both the principle of autonomy and research involving minors and the principle related to autonomy and age limits (TENK 2009, 6-7).

The second ethical principle of research, avoiding harm, refers to potential mental, social and financial harm, which can arise from the collection of data, the storage of data and consequences following the publication of studies. Avoiding mental harm entails treating subjects with respect and reporting findings in a respectful way in research publications. According to TENK, the sensitivity and privacy of the topic depend primarily on the study subjects themselves (Ibid. 8). TENK states that the risk of harm from a publication of a research is greatest if results are presented judgmentally, in a prejudiced way or disrespectfully (Ibid. 9). Any damage or harm that may be caused by research publications should be avoided. However, TENK states that "…this principle should not prevent the publication of research findings that may not be pleasing to subjects in all respects. A researcher's task is to produce new information without having to fear the reaction of authorities or other research subjects." (Ibid.). In the writing process of the analysis of this thesis, special attention has been paid on being truthful, just and neutral towards the participants, but also reporting the results – also the inconvenient ones – following comprehensive, systematic and transparent conduct of research.

The protection of data privacy is both a right protected by the Constitution of Finland and an established principle in research ethics. This domain has been divided into three categories, which are protecting research data and confidentiality, storing or disposing of research data, and research publications. The aim is to balance between confidentiality and openness of science and research (TENK 2009, 10). All the data of this thesis has been stored without direct identifiers and carefully destroyed in the moment of submitting the thesis. In the published thesis, the survey data is anonymised to the extent that an individual respondent cannot be identified from it. As agreed with the staff members of the Assistance System, the data derived from the expert interviews is also anonymised. In the published data, protection of privacy has been carefully considered and anecdotes with potential identifiers have been altered in a way that any individual – expert or a person referred

to – cannot be identified. However, TENK reminds that in studying organisations or other social actors, where subjects generally participate as individual representatives of their professional role, anonymity in research publications does not necessarily prevent identification among those who are familiar with the organisation in question. (Ibid. 13).

3.6. Limitations, Reliability and Validity

The crucial points to reflect on related to the limitations to the study are the reliability and validity of the methods as well as the limitations of the data and methods. What is crucial to acknowledge in relation to limitations of the study is that the research was conducted in particular places, at a particular time, and under particular circumstances, with a focus on a topic that has not been yet previously researched in Finland, with a scope and quantity that does not allow – nor aim for – generalisations about Finnish people or Finnish culture per se. Both empirical methods, the qualitative survey and the expert interviews were based on interaction between me and the study subjects, and therefore my role and behaviour played a significant role in the knowledge production. The survey was conducted in the cities of Lappeenranta, Helsinki, Turku and Tampere, which implies that the data may not reflect viewpoints of people living in other parts of Finland. The respondents were those individuals who volunteered to help an unknown person in her thesis studies, and mainly those whom I took the initiative to approach, which have an effect on the content of the data. The expert interviews are limited to only a few staff members of one organisation, so the data could be different would the organisation or the individuals were others than those presented here.

The survey does not provide grounds for making generalisations of people in Finland, and the data from expert interviews cannot be generalised to present the official standpoint of the Assistance System nor of its employees. The interviewees have provided their individual interpretations on the topic from their personal standpoint. However, some generalisations can be made based on this data. The potential to generalise qualitative data has been highlighted for the grounds of the "obvious pervasiveness of the social forms" or the "machinery" (Silverman 2013, 148). This data is not generalisable as descriptions of knowledge and attitudes of people in Finland, but it is generalisable as descriptions of what knowledge and attitudes people in Finland, laymen and professionals, can have. As society affect its members' worldviews, individual statements can be interpreted to reflect some wider societal narratives or phenomena. The focus in the expert interviews were on those harmful beliefs that the employees encounter most often. Thus, the detected beliefs may indeed represent the most common victim-blaming attitudes one encounters in the anti-trafficking work.

Reliability refers to questions such as how consistent the data is, whether the findings are independent of accidental circumstances of the research process, and whether same results and interpretations could be generated with the same methods by future researchers (Fink 2003, 47; Silverman 2014, 83). Validity refers to the accuracy of data: a valid research instrument serves the intended purpose and provides correct information (Fink 2003, 47). The qualitative survey and the expert interviews were successful in generating results that have some commonalities (reliability), and the kind of information that serves the research aim of the thesis (validity). The reliability and validity were reinforced in this thesis by paying attention to the standardised behaviour of the surveyors and the interviewer. My personal role and the interactive nature of the encounters cannot be denied in the knowledge production of this research, which is why the question of whether someone else conducting a similar study would generate similar results is left unanswered, although multiple sources of data imply that some common traits could be recognised in future studies.

Triangulation and respondent validation are two forms of validation that have been indicated especially suitable to the logic of qualitative research (Silverman 2014, 91). Respondent validation in this context means that the first version of this thesis has been derived to the study subjects of the expert interviews for them to study, comment, critique or verify the findings. When it comes to triangulation, I refrain from making claims on the grounds of validity, following the critique of the positionalist approach (Bryman 2004, 1143; Alastalo et al. 2017, 219; Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2014, 185). Instead, I find the use of two different methods to ensure the quality, depth and complexity of the data. The limitation of the data from expert interviews is that it does not provide perspectives of ’laymen’ unfamiliar to the professional anti-trafficking field, and the limitation of qualitative survey is that it does not provide information on the societal significance or effects of certain attitudes. This is why I find the combination of the two methods fulfilling each other’s gaps, resulting in data which serves the research aim of this thesis.

In fact, the whole requirement for validity and reliability in research have been questioned, as they are based to the idea that some kind of objective truth can be reached in research (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2014, 185). Exploratory expert interviews have also been problematised by Alastalo et al. (2017, 219) for assuming that there are knowledge and unambiguous truths independent from the purposes of data collection or who the researcher is or how he/she is interpreting the data. The authors state that a researcher using data derived from experts does not need to rely on a naive understanding of objectivity of knowledge. Instead, the researcher should acknowledge the contextual, value-based and jointly productive nature of expert information (Ibid.). Furthermore, Alastalo and Åkerman (2010, 390). emphasise that combining expert interviews with other data allows an interpretation where the

intersubjective construction of knowledge is acknowledged. The authors (Ibid. 391) also note: "[R]esearcher's task is to constantly question her own truths". Indeed, the question of "my own truths" will be elaborated in the next subchapter.

3.7. My Positionality

An increasing number of social scientists emphasise that simply neutral or value-free position of a researcher is not possible (Silverman 2014, 402; Boyne 2006, 294). Researcher's lived experience in its historical, political and physical contexts, along with her moral and political beliefs, inevitably affect the research process from formulating the research topic and questions to the processes of data collection and analysis (Boyne 2006, 294; Schwandt 2007, 280; Silverman 2014, 403). For example, in this thesis, I have been the one defining the themes and questions, approaching the study subjects, and framing and interpreting the data, which is why the interactive nature of knowledge production and my positionality should be taken into consideration when evaluating the analysis and results of this study.

One crucial issue to acknowledge in relation to my positionality is my past experience as an intern at the Assistance System. My tasks included updating the website of the organisation, participating in meetings with clients and the staff members, preparing a panel discussion on human trafficking, and communication with clients, interpreters, lawyers, police, social and health care personnel, and staff members of other reception centres. Through this experience, I gained some expertise on the field, so my role as a researcher in interviews was not completely one of an outsider. This means that I have been somewhat internalised to the Assistance System's point of view on the field of anti-trafficking work in Finland. At the same time, it was also an advantage that I was familiar with the organisation and its work beforehand in order to access epistemic knowledge of the experts.

It is no surprise that this thesis stems from a normative stance, which is characteristic to the Peace and Conflict Research. My position to this topic is that we should become aware of our tendency to victim blaming, refrain from it altogether, and target the blame to the actors responsible for direct and structural violence. The aim of this thesis is not to blame nor judge the individuals for their statements, but to grasp a better understanding of the relationship between victim blaming and human trafficking. Some social scientists emphasise that as we cannot be impartial, we should choose our side, principally the underdog's, while others argue that we should reject political partisanship and instead aim for establishing facts through testing of competing hypotheses and theories (Silverman 2014, 402). My position follows the argumentation of Silverman (2014), according to whom a purely partisan social research may become self-conforming, and that the research should provide

understanding on the perspectives of all actors in an oppressing system. (Ibid. 403-404). I agree with the argumentation of Miller and Glassner (2004) on the statement that

> "[T]he researcher's role is not to sit in judgement but to represent as dispassionately as possible the contribution of each participant to the production of the setting that is being studied. The resulting analysis may be a source of moral outrage, but it should not be a vehicle for this: effective reform demands an understanding of how morally outrageous things come to happen, which is rarely the result of deliberate wickedness at all levels."
>
> Miller & Glassner (2004, 338).

A researcher's subjective position to a research is inevitable, yet this does not mean that a study is just a mere reflection of a researcher's worldview. This thesis aims for producing knowledge by following methodological and ethical standards in social sciences. The normative agenda does not need to jeopardise the research: while a researcher's position leads her to focus on particular issues, it can be done in a balanced, methodologically rigorous way (Silverman 2014, 404).

3.8. Qualitative Content Analysis

The data from both the qualitative survey and the expert interviews will be analysed utilising qualitative content analysis. It is a method used in order to systematically describe the meaning of qualitative data, which is done by assigning successive parts of the material to the categories of a coding frame (Schreier 2014, 170). Qualitative content analysis is the most suitable method for this study because the research aim is related to the qualitative content and meanings of the empirical data, such as statements on victim blaming and its effects, which could not be properly addressed by focusing on narratives or discourses. Based on the initial research aim and focus on diverse perspectives and their meanings in relation to victim blaming, the analysis of this study does not entail counting of words, which has been often defined as a central part of analysis process by those scholars referring to content analysis as a quantitative method (Silverman 2014, 116). Here, I refer to the argumentation on qualitative analysis expressed by Alasuutari (1995):

> "[A]ny single hint or clue could apply to several things, but the more hints there are to the riddle, the smaller the number of possible solutions. Yet each hint or piece of information is of its own kind and equally important; in unriddling – or qualitative analysis – one does not count odds. Every hint is supposed to fit in with the picture offered as the solution."
>
> Alasuutari (1995, 7).

Counting words would not serve the initial research aim of this study. The frequency of certain words is irrelevant when generalisation is not the purpose of the data in the first place. Each individual statement can be potentially meaningful in exploring the different functions of the BJW and victim

blaming. For the purposes of my research aim and questions, this study follows the principles of qualitative analysis method described by i.e. Schreier (2014), Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2018), and Miles & Huberman (1994).

Furthermore, qualitative content analysis has three crucial advantages, which are that it helps in reducing data, it is systematic, and it is flexible (Schreier 2014, 170.) The reason why this method helps in reducing data is that it requires a researcher to focus on selected aspects relevant to the overall research questions. The meaning of an individual passage will be taken into a higher level of abstraction, resulting in categories that apply to a number of concrete and slightly different passages. (Ibid.). Qualitative content analysis is systematic, because it requires the examination of all relevant parts of the material. It requires also a certain sequence of steps and coding. Qualitative content analysis is flexible, because it typically combines varying portions of concept-driven and data-driven categories within any one coding frame. A part of categories should always be data-driven, as the coding frame should always be matched to the material. (Ibid. 170-171.)

Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2018, 122-133) have categorised three different types of a qualitative content analysis: one type of analysis is data-driven, another is theory-driven, and the third type -which is used in this thesis - is theory-guided. In theory-guided analysis, the categorisation of data is not defined according to the previously set theoretical framework like in theory-driven analysis (Ibid. 127), nor are the theoretical concepts derived from the data like in data-driven analysis. In theory-guided qualitative content analysis, the theoretical concepts are brought to the analysis ’as previously known’, and the theoretical framework is applied as a model to the data collection process (Ibid. 133, 135). In the research process of this thesis, the just-world hypothesis and the concept of cultural violence defined by Galtung have been guiding the questions of both qualitative survey and the expert interviews and they will be applied in the categorisation and interpretation of data. Still, the categorisations have also been made according to the content of the data.

The data has been analysed according to the steps of data-driven analysis introduced by Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2018, 123), with some alterations made in order to follow the theory-guided approach. These steps can be divided into three phases of qualitative analysis defined by Miles & Huberman (1994, 10-12), which are data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the written form of data by determining which data is relevant to the study and which is not. Data reduction is not something separate from the analysis, but a significant part of the analysis: the

researcher's decisions on data reduction are all analytic choices. Miles & Huberman (Ibid. 10-11) emphasise also the importance of not stripping the data at hand from the context in which they occur.

Data display is the second major part of analysis, which refers to an organised, compressed assembly of information that enables conclusion drawing and action (Ibid). In data display, the data is clustered: the coded parts of data are carefully processed, similarities and differences are gathered and combined into groups that form the subcategories. By combining subcategories, the parent categories are created, and combining parent categories result in umbrella categories. In the end, the final synthesis is defined which should be connected to the research aim. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, 124-125). The purpose of data display is to fabricate organised information into an immediately accessible, compact form so the analyst is able to either draw justified conclusions or move on to the next step of analysis the display suggests may be useful. (Miles & Huberman 1994, 11).

The third phase of qualitative analysis defined by Miles & Huberman (1994, 11) is conclusion drawing and verification. This analysis activity entails exploration of meanings, by noting regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows, and propositions (Ibid). In this third phase, the researcher proceeds from linguistical expressions of original data to theoretical concepts and conclusions. The categorisations are combined as far as it is feasible from the point of view of the content of the data. The content analysis is based on interpretation and reasoning which proceeds from empirical data to a conceptualised framing of the phenomenon under research. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, 125-127). The conclusions should also be verified (Miles & Huberman 1994, 11).

The following table illustrates the application of the three phases (by Miles & Huberman 1994) and the steps (by Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018) along with some alterations made in order to follow the research aim and the theory-guided approach in the analysis process of this study.

Table 2. Phases and steps of the analysis.

Phases of analysis	Steps of analysis
1. Data Reduction	a. Listening the recorded interviews and transcribing them b. Reading of data from qualitative surveys c. Search of reduced expressions and highlighting them d. Listing of reduced expressions
2. Data Display	e. Search of similarities and differences from reduced expressions f. Categorisations of reduced expressions and creation of subcategories g. Connecting subcategories and creating parent categories based on the theoretical framework
3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification	h. Combining parent categories into umbrella categories and establishment of a final synthesis i. Interpretation, reasoning and verification of results

It is crucial to note here that while table 2 provides a clear set of phases and specific steps, the reality of a research process is not a clear-cut nor linear process. Many phases overlap. Miles & Huberman (1994, 11) remind that data reduction occurs continuously throughout the research process from defining the research questions and topic to completion of the final version of the study. Data displays may be designed and redesigned along the process. The phases of conclusion drawing and verification are also present throughout the research process, since final conclusions have been often prefigured from the beginning of data collection, whether or not it has been the intention of the researcher.

The final analysis of this study is a result of a cyclical, interactive research process, where the different phases of data collection, data reduction, data display and drawing and verifying conclusions collide and overlap. In the next chapter, the outcome of the processes of data collection and data analysis will be presented.

4. Components of "The Belief in a Just Finland"

In this chapter, I will present the findings and analysis of the current study as the end result of the research process exploring victim-blaming attitudes and their effects on the identification and assistance of victims of human trafficking in Finland. Based on my experiences of surveying 61 people from different cities of Southern Finland, interviewing four experts of the Assistance System, and researching literature on victim blaming, I have come into conclusion that a belief system exists that I would call the 'Belief in a Just Finland'. As the BJW theory is claimed to be both cross-culturally generalizable and specific to a cultural context, my argument is that there exists a version of the BJW specific to the Finnish context. Different elements of this belief system and their effects on the identification and assistance of trafficking victims will be elaborated in the subsequent chapters.

After describing the gathered data, I will move on to the actual body of analysis, which is divided into three parts: The world of us, the world of victims, and a way out: signs of cultural peace. The division of the two first chapters is based on Lerner's metaphor on "our" just world and the world of victims. In the subchapter under "the world of us", I will discuss the perceptions that there is no human trafficking in Finland and that it does not concern Finnish nationals, the beliefs that men are not vulnerable and that women can avoid falling victims of violence by taking adequate precautions, and the relations of agency, individualistic ideals, and blame. In the subchapters under the "world of victims", I will discuss the perception of human trafficking as an extreme form of violence, the lack of knowledge and resources and the resulting feelings of guilt and helplessness which motivate to disbelieve and blame the victims, the innocent victim paradigm, and the blaming and derogation of foreigners, sex workers and drug users. Finally, I will elaborate the promising ways of thinking detected from the data, which challenge the BJW-related attitudes. The awareness, empathy and positive examples will be discussed as avenues towards cultural peace.

4.1. Overview of the Data

The aim of this subchapter is to describe the basis of the analysis: the data that the expert interviews in general and the qualitative survey in particular have produced. When discussing possible attitudes towards victims, it is important to investigate first how human trafficking is generally defined and imagined. I will first describe what kinds of responses the qualitative survey elicited in terms of human trafficking awareness, reaction to victims and just world beliefs. Then I will provide a brief

summary of the main themes derived from the expert interviews. The survey questionnaire form can be found in annex 1, page 109.

Despite the diversity of ages, municipalities, educational levels and occupational backgrounds represented among the participants of the survey research, some themes appear repeatedly in the data. The most commonly mentioned definition of human trafficking (made by 21 out of 61 study subjects) referred to “selling” and “buying” or “trade” of humans. “Exploitation” was referred to by 18 participants, activity done “against one’s will” or “free will” by 15, “slavery” by eight, “captivity” or “kidnapping” by seven, “abusing another person’s vulnerable position” by five, and “illegal/criminal activity” by four participants. Some definitions seemed to confuse people smuggling and human trafficking:

> “Persons are being transported for a fee to so called better countries. They pay the travel themselves.”
>
> 64, female

Popular portrayals of human trafficking shown in the media are visible in the definitions:

> “Prostitutes are brought in a cargo to another country against their will.”
>
> 32, male

When it comes to different forms of human trafficking, “prostitution” was most common to be mentioned: 26 participants named prostitution, eight study subjects named sex work or sex workers, and only two mentioned forced prostitution. Three participants referred to “sex slaves”, and three mentioned sexual exploitation. Forced labour was the second most commonly mentioned form (referred to by 17), but it was often referred to as “low-paid” or “unpaid” work. “Slavery” or “slave trade” was referred to by 16. Other forms mentioned were child trafficking (6), child marriage (5), child soldiers (3), child labour (2), forced begging (5), organ trade (3) and domestic servitude (2). Migration was quite often referred in the question of forms of human trafficking: there were referrals to “people smuggling”, “refugees”, “transport to other country to be a so-called refugee”, “border-crossings in exchange for favours, human trades caused by refugees”, “exploitation of refugees” and “immigration”.

In the question of factors that make a person vulnerable to human trafficking, poverty was mentioned by 34 participants. Nationality, ethnicity and migration were prevalent themes (31/61) in these answers as well: ”foreigners”, ”being an undocumented migrant, internally displaced person or refugee”, ”ethnic background”, ”living in poor countries”, ”culture, environment, country”, ”having born to a certain country”, having born to a developing country, ”cultural background, home country”,

”lack of language skills”. Some participants referred to personal attributes, such as “educational background -> lack of knowledge. Upbringing and values of one’s own family”, “lack of understanding”, “lack of knowledge, naivety”, “stupidity/getting deceived”, “naivety”, “lack of self-respect or self-worth”, “willingness to please”, “not knowing about things nor one’s own rights”. A person’s actions were also in scrutiny: “Aiming for a better life through wrong means”, “trying to cross a border illegally”, “being outside alone late at night, or taking a ride from a stranger”. Other aspects mentioned were a weak position in the society (7), lack of education (7), substance abuse (7), lack of family or social network (6), childhood trauma and/or problems with mental health (4), gender (4), bad luck/coincidence (3), wars (3), homelessness (2), debts (2), hope/dream for a better future (2), age (1), inequality (1) and natural disasters (1). The question on root causes to human trafficking reflected similar themes. Some participants referred to poverty, inequality, vulnerability of people, capitalism and individualism, others mentioned personal attributes of a victim, such as lack of self-esteem, skills or knowledge. Various participants referred to fundamental greediness, ignorance and sexual lust of human beings.

Nine participants answered that there is no human trafficking in Finland, or that they believe or hope so: “I would trust that no. I will research this.”, “I have not heard that there would be [human trafficking] in Finland.”, “I do not know, and I do not think so. I hope not.”, “I do not think so”, “I can say no because I have never seen it”, “I guess not”, “Not that I am aware of, I hope not”. Eight participants responded that they do not know whether there is human trafficking in Finland. The rest 43 participants answered that there is or that most likely there is human trafficking in Finland. Four of them highlighted that the scope of the problem is small or smaller in Finland: “It would be lovely to say that no [there is no human trafficking in Finland], but I know that it occurs in every country, nothing can be done about that. I believe that Finland is safer than many other countries.”, “There is [human trafficking] in Finland too, but in minor quantity, maybe related to forced labour”, “Likely a little”, “In very small quantity, mostly prostitution. In Helsinki, there are some African women that someone is selling.” Eight participants referred to transport and exploitation of foreigners in Finland and three mentioned the vulnerability of undocumented migrants. The forms mentioned were mostly “prostitution” and forced labour, but also begging was addressed. One participant mentioned forced marriage: “one can see child beggars sometimes, and forced marriage against one’s will”.

Twelve participants responded that it is not possible to encounter a victim of trafficking in their daily lives in Finland, four were uncertain, and 28 participants responded the encounter to be possible: ”It is possible, in my work as a doctor I meet a lot of people”, ”Yes, for example while dining in a restaurant”, ”Yes, absolutely, I work with child protection and there I encounter more and more for

example immigrants. Why not Finnish, as well", "It is possible, because superficially they probably live a life that seems normal", "Yes, there are a lot of cheap labour in construction sites", "In the streets one can encounter beggars, workers in a restaurant as well." The question on whether the participants themselves could become a victim revealed that some saw their personal attributes and skills to protect them, while others saw being a male, Finnish national, living in Finland or in a small municipality as protective factors. Participants reflected also their privileges but also experiences of vulnerability in their answers. Many referred to the hypothetical situation of being kidnapped in a foreign country.

The question on how to identify a victim was often commented as being a difficult one to respond. Eleven participants responded to not knowing any means to identify a victim. Another eleven participants responded that one cannot identify a victim based on a person's looks or other superficial signs, as "it could be anyone". Other participants described possible circumstances where to identify a victim: "Maybe the easiest way to identify is a child in an abnormal environment", "It can be at work, and maybe in service you get from the hotel, in fact it can be identified anywhere", for example if someone would buy some sort of sexual services, and gave the money to someone else than the sex worker, or when a person is very young", "when someone works without shifts", "when a third party is responsible for all the communication, so that it is difficult to communicate with the victim". Some described victims as "scared", "sad, anxious", "submissive character, scared, difficult to get a contact or trust", "human dignity crushed, no own will", "alienation, sadness", "insecure, restless, quiet, reserved", "exhausted, depressed", "insecure", "lacks own will", "absent-minded", and "unhappy." Perception of human trafficking portrayed often in the popular culture seemed to affect some answers: "I have never thought of [how to identify a victim], I thought they would be somewhere hidden, not walking in a street", "They are kept as a "prisoner" at a work place or in a family", "She has a short miniskirt." Foreign background was also referred to: "they are undocumented", "foreign sex workers", "foreign, begging", "if one cannot communicate with a person with a common language it is impossible to identify". The question of "who can be a victim" (annex 1, page 110), the vast majority had marked all the given alternatives, indicating that anyone can be a victim, while thirteen participants had indicated certain profiles that could not be victims. The profiles excluded from victimhood were "a customer" (according to eight participants), "Finnish" (7), "thief" (7), "a neighbour" (6), "transgender" (5), "a senior" (5), "a drug addict" (3), "a pupil" (3), "an employee" (3), "a man" (2), "a lesbian/gay/bi" (2), "a beggar" (2), "a child" (1), "a disabled" (1), "asylum seeker" (1) and "a sex worker" (1). When it comes to human trafficking survivors, all participants responded that survival and recovery are possible, many referring to the need of help from authorities and the

challenges the process would entail. Some hypothesised that the victims would seek help from authorities and organisations. Some responded that the recovery depends on the traumas, situations and the help offered, whereas some referred to personal attributes: “a human being can survive from anything if they want to”, “Depends on a person’s mental stamina”. Hopes were expressed on behalf of victims: “I hope they live a life of human dignity”, “I find concrete help important, such as protection, food and clothing.”

The question on a situation where one suspected someone being a victim of human trafficking elicited some interesting results. Twentynine participants responded that they would contact the police, and thirteen responded to report to a “public authority.” Social workers, the Finnish immigration service, “experts” and the Finnish Red Cross were also mentioned. Ten participants reported that they would ask directly from the victim about their situation. Willingness to help was expressed in many of the answers, but various participants mentioned their lack of knowledge on the organisations and public authorities that one should contact in case of suspecting a crime related to human trafficking. Considering that one could feel social obligation to respond to help in a hypothetical situation, it was rather interesting to find that quite a few male participants admitted they would likely take no action:

> “It is difficult to say, it depends on whether the victim would mean anything to me, would the situation concern me in any way.”
>
> 25, male

> “I would probably do nothing, unless it would be crystal-clear. Then I could contact public authorities”
>
> 56, male

> “It depends how old the victim would be. If they are a child or a youth, I would report to child protection police. In terms of adults I would not intervene, unless they would ask for help or would look very violently abused.”
>
> 29, male

> “I would probably not interfere.”
>
> 62, male

> “I would probably do nothing, maybe report to the police.”
>
> 32, male

In addition, some participants responded that they would interfere only if the victim was familiar to them, if they had enough proof or if the situation was “extreme” enough:

> “I would contact the public authorities if I “knew” the victim”

28, male

> "If a victim was close to me or someone I knew, I would interfere. I do not know how, depends on the case."
>
> 46, male

> "I would consider very carefully if this was the case. I would report to the police my suspicion with strong evidence."
>
> 68, female

> "I would try to find out if the suspicion was justified. If it was, I would ask for advice, maybe from the police."
>
> 46, female

> "It depends from the situation. If the situation was the kind that it would not be possible to help, or if the help would cause more harm than benefit for myself or generally."
>
> 31, male

> "If there was an immediate danger, I would call the police."
>
> 43, male.

The last page of the survey considered beliefs related to the BJW. The responses were quite diverse, shedding light to the mindsets of participants. Most of the study subjects were rather sceptical about the ideas of good things happening to good people and one getting what one deserves, while few study subjects reported to agree to some extent, or "wanting to believe" in these statements. Study subjects reflected themes such as the importance of positive attitude, the chaotic world we live in, the significance of privilege, and coincidence or pure luck in life. Thoughts on deservingness and the justness of events in one's own life seemed to have some correlations in terms of just-world beliefs:

> "We ourselves can affect very little to what happens to us, usually not at all. […] Nothing is just. Things that have happened to me happened, and I have survived from them."
>
> 17, male

> "If you are too good or too open, very naive, wanting to help everyone, you cannot see that other person is using you for their own good. […] I have had a happy life, everything I have wanted and worked for have happened, I have achieved my goals, I have family and friends.
>
> 19, female

> "I agree. What goes around comes around. […] I do believe [events in my own life are just], because people become what they believe."
>
> 30, male

Consisting of answers of 61 individual participants, the survey data showcases various different levels of awareness, mindsets and approaches to human trafficking and just world beliefs. One could see some of the answers as reflections of the way how human trafficking is often portrayed in the media and the popular culture according to the critics of the modern slavery discourse. The findings are in line with the experts' views on public human trafficking awareness in Finland. Experts stressed that despite the positive development in recent years, human trafficking still remains quite unknown, both as a definition and a phenomenon.

> "[Human trafficking as a phenomenon is] surprisingly little known. Better than long time ago – meaning ten years ago. And better and better, but still one encounters already in these cooperation networks people to whom this is a completely new, or at least partially new thing. Or if someone has heard about it, it is in the form of the cliché, like slave trade or prostitutes shut down in a basement in the US."
>
> Expert No. 3

> "I think that the greatest challenge [in the identification of victims] is that there is not enough knowledge and skills, but there is also attitudes which are intertwined to the knowledge, or to lack of it."
>
> Expert No. 1

According to the experts, common misperceptions are for example, that human trafficking entails only extreme forms of coercion, abduction and violence or slavery (which constitute as aggravated human trafficking), that human trafficking would require the perpetrator to profit economically, that there is no human trafficking in Finland or that it does not concern Finnish nationals. Other forms of human trafficking than sexual exploitation and exploitation for labour are not well known. Other common themes prevalent in the expert interviews were the gender stereotypes and resulting invisibility and blaming of male victims, negative attitudes towards foreigners, sex workers and people addicted to substances, paradoxical expectations for a victim, lack of both resources and knowledge, and the need for understanding of the vulnerabilities of human beings and the ways how human traffickers work. These themes will be further discussed in the following subchapters, which constitute the main body of analysis.

The two types of data will be presented simultaneously, yet they serve for two different purposes: the qualitative survey offers descriptions of the awareness and attitudes of "members of a culture" (described by Alastalo & Åkerman 2010, 374), whereas expert interviews provide insights and

context from a professional field in terms of prevalent attitudes and their effects on the identification and assistance of trafficking victims. The contexts of "laymen" and professionals are not completely separable. The same belief systems and victim-blaming attitudes tend to occur ubiquitously in a society, and so do the possibilities to identify and assist victims of trafficking.

4.2. "OUR" JUST WORLD

In this chapter, I will explore those beliefs that depict the perceptions of "our just world", the separate and opposite to the "world of victims" of Lerner's just world metaphor. In the just meta-world, people have control, and thus responsibility, to affect their fate by demonstrating adequate character or behaviour. Thus, in "our" just, safe, controllable world, people ultimately get what they deserve (Lerner 1980, 22-23). Because this belief is most threatened by the victimisation of a member of one's in-group, people with high BJW score and strong identification with their in-group have been found especially motivated to derogate an in-group victim (Aguiar et al. 2008, 65; Correia et al. 2012, 751). I will focus on this chapter on who is included in perceptions of "our" just world, what kinds of expectations they create, how do they potentially contribute to disbelief, derogation and blame, and what is their effect on the identification and assistance of victims of human trafficking. I will discuss the beliefs surrounding "safe, just Finland" in the subchapter 4.2.1., perceptions of "safe world of men" in 4.2.2. and "careful, yet strong and independent women" in 4.2.3., and finally, the relations between individual ideals, agency and blame in 4.3.4.

4.2.1. "There Is No Human Trafficking in Finland"

> "I do not know [if there is human trafficking in Finland], and I do not believe so. I hope not."
>
> 27, male

> "I do not believe [there is human trafficking in Finland.] Mostly a transit country."
>
> 24, male

> "I believe Finland is safer than many other countries."
>
> 19, female

> "If I tell people what I do for work, I am asked very often "Is there a lot of human trafficking in Finland" or "is there human trafficking in Finland", and then they are very surprised when I say that well yes, quite a lot, then often the reaction is "What, how can it be."

Expert No. 2

"Somehow it is thought that… even though it is known as a word [it is thought that] it does not concern us, and it does not happen in Finland and it is something that a normal person in their daily life does not see nor encounter."

Expert No. 4

"When talking about human trafficking with people who do not work within this field, you hear some people saying that sex workers gain more money here than somewhere else and that here the situation is certainly better for doing that kind of work than somewhere else: "is it not good to be a victim of trafficking in Finland?"

Expert No. 2

Based on the data from both the qualitative survey and the expert interviews, one common belief is the perception of Finland as a safe and just country where human trafficking does not occur, or if it does, it is more rare and less grave than in other countries, the victims are foreigners, and Finland is mainly a transit country for the phenomenon coming from the 'outside'. The belief reflects the Finnish public discourse described by Niemi-Kiesiläinen (2001, 302),[7] and also the common portrayals of human trafficking critiqued as modern slavery discourse. Considering living in Finland and being a Finnish national as protective factors certainly provides a sense of safety and comfort, and for many, holds true in one's personal experience. On the contrary, the idea of human trafficking is threatening to this belief. Denying or belittling its existence in Finland can be seen as defence mechanisms. Following the Lerner's metaphor, the belief in a just, safe Finland is intertwined to the portrayal of human trafficking as an extreme (discussed in chapter 4.3.1.): Finland is imagined as a just and violence-free "world of us", where human trafficking, "the extreme form of violence and slavery" taking place in "developing countries", does not belong.

It is crucial to ask who is included and excluded from the "us" in "safe, just Finland" beliefs. In the data, there are various referrals to "the Finnish" or "Finnish nationals", but this may not necessarily always refer only to the nationality:

"I do not believe [I could be a victim of trafficking], because I am a native and educated Finn."

24, female

"[Factors making a person vulnerable to human trafficking are] low social status, poverty, drugs, ethnic background."

[7] "Like other Nordic countries, Finland has been proud of its human rights record. […] In the Finnish discourse, human rights are easily understood as something 'out there', the concern of foreign policy or refugee admission." Niemi-Kiesiläinen 2001, 302.

41, male

> "[Factors making a person vulnerable to human trafficking are] being a refugee, modest starting point in life, poverty, cultural background, home country."

33, male

> "[Factors making a person vulnerable to human trafficking are] minority status, societal problems, being outside of a strong safety net."

29, male

> "I think that those attitudes are not as negative with native Finns as with persons of an immigrant background."

Expert No. 4

The referrals such as "native Finn", "ethnic background", "cultural background" and "minority status" reveal that "Finnish" is sometimes understood simultaneously as "white" in "safe, just Finland" beliefs. This implies that identification and treatment of Finnish nationals may differ according to the processes of racialisation and othering. In case of racialised Finns, the challenges may be similar to those described in chapter 4.3.4., which shows how representation of "safe, just Finland" excludes the foreigners, sex workers and drug users to the "world of victims".

The beliefs related to presumed safety of Finland and Finnish nationals constitute a challenge in identification and assistance of victims of trafficking. First, laymen and professionals alike may not be prepared to encounter a victim of trafficking. This contributes to the invisibility of human trafficking and to the likelihood of victims encountering reactions of disbelief. It may also contribute to the high threshold for interfering:

> "I would probably do nothing, unless it would be crystal clear. Then I could contact public authorities"

56, male

> "I would consider very carefully if this was the case. I would report to the police my suspicion with strong evidence."

68, female

> "There can be a fear that human trafficking is somehow… It sounds very bad. And it is bad, but if there is this thought that there is no human trafficking in Finland, and somewhere you possibly encounter the first victim of trafficking that many people never do, there can be a certain kind of fear and shame that one is overreacting, exaggerating or interfering."

Expert No. 4

Second, Finnish nationals are not seen as potential victims. This, too, contributes to the invisibility and the culture of disbelief described by Pearce et al. (2009). Furthermore, lack of understanding of factors that can make a Finnish person vulnerable to exploitation may cause one to expect more agency, and thus to attribute more blame to the victim. Perception of human trafficking as a phenomenon concerning solely foreigners can also affect the policies of targeting training on identification of victims, resulting in lower levels of awareness and preparedness in municipal services where clients are mainly Finnish nationals:

> "It [the level of knowledge and skills to identify a victim of trafficking] depends on where a person works, I think it is quite good among the social workers in the reception centres, or actually very good compared to others. We get a lot of referrals from them, and the reception centre staff has been trained to identify [victims], and there is more awareness that there can be a lot of potential victims among people with an immigrant background. Whereas when it comes to social workers in municipalities, for example, there the preparedness is poorer, because the persons who are clients there are often Finnish nationals or people who have lived in the country for a longer period of time, who one may not come to think of that this person could have been fallen into a victim of human trafficking. Of course, there are fewer potential victims among them but… They may not have so much awareness of it, one might not try to find out what should be done in case of a situation like this. […] It may be not taken into account that a Finnish client could be a victim of trafficking."
>
> Expert No. 2

The perception of 'our just world', described by Lerner (1980, 24) also as a 'just meta-world', may be attached to a more regional context. The lower preparedness for anti-trafficking action in municipalities may also be partly due to a belief that small municipalities and the country side are safer:

> [I could not become a victim of human trafficking], I live in the countryside in a small municipality, where almost everyone knows each other.
>
> 63, female

> "It is not generally known that there can be [human trafficking] in small municipalities or somewhere one would not imagine it to take place."
>
> Expert No. 4

Third, emphasis on the safety and justness of Finland may help to maintain the status quo. A perception that human trafficking is a non-existent or marginal phenomenon in Finland – or that the situation is better here than somewhere else – would probably not appeal policy makers to increase funding and resources to anti-trafficking work. The narrative also enables the structural violence practiced by the state to go unnoticed. Trusting Finland to be a just country might turn the attention

away from, for instance, how Nigerian victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation and their children have been treated in the asylum and residence permit process.[8]

4.2.2. 'The Safe World of Men'

> "Women and children are kidnapped for sexual exploitation, men are not."
>
> 19, female
>
> "Most of human trafficking focus on women/girls."
>
> 30, male
>
> "Mainly women, children are exploited."
>
> 62, male

"Our just world" could be described not only as "white", but also "male". A common theme in the findings of this study is in line with the literature on invisibility of male victims and vulnerability of men. Belief in "our just world" entails beliefs of the "safe world of men", according to which men cannot be victims of human trafficking, they are more able to defend themselves and they are not vulnerable. As a consequence, men may not be seen as potential victims, their vulnerability is not acknowledged, and they are more easily blamed for their victimisation. Most of the identified victims of human trafficking for labour exploitation are male, so disbelief and blame for "not defending oneself" or "leaving the situation" and ignorance of a victim's vulnerability appear to be particularly relevant in the context of this form, as well as in the case of forced criminal activity. Studies by Walker et al. (2005) and Strömwall et al. (2013) indicate that expectations of men being more "safe" and "capable of defending themselves" contribute to the invisibility and blaming of male victims in the context of sexual exploitation as well.

In the data from the survey, "women and children" were often mentioned as vulnerable to human trafficking. In the question six (annex 1, page 110), no one had questioned the potential victimhood of women, but according to two study subjects, man could not be a victim. Women referred to their vulnerability based on their gender, whereas men expressed their sense of safety or capability against falling a victim:

> "[I could fall a victim of trafficking] in a small chance yet, by a coincidence, but it is very unlikely. Fight for my own freedom will be fought until death."
>
> 25, male

[8] "In this area at least, Finland strikes as being negligent of its binding human rights obligations under international law as regards victims of trafficking." (Non-Discrimination Ombudsman 2016, 18).

> "In theory in abroad, but the risk is small. Finland, gender and age decreases the risk to non-existent."
>
> 28, male

These beliefs are in line with notions made by experts on challenges to identification and assistance of male victims.

> "There might be visible the kind of attitude that men cannot be victims of human trafficking, and that men should be strong and somehow able to stand up for one's rights and fight back."
>
> Expert No. 4

Beliefs supporting a view that men cannot be victims hinders the identification of male victims, leading to further invisibility, disbelief and inaction. Resulting from expectations of men to demonstrate more agency, their victimhood may be under scrutiny and they are more readily blamed for their situation.

> "If we think of men, maybe there is this that it is not seen that this person could be any kind of a victim if he is basically healthy, working age man… […] so then there is more this kind of thinking that "well, you should have just have left the situation" or something like this."
>
> Expert No. 1

The vulnerability of male victims, both prior to the victimisation and the vulnerability caused by it, is not as readily recognised. For example, the effects of labour exploitation to mental health are not always addressed nor taken seriously.

> "It could be especially related to labour exploitation where there are more men. […] It is not seen as so serious."
>
> Expert No. 4

> "It is more easily understood what sexual exploitation causes, and on average it does cause more serious consequences, and labour exploitation is sometimes quite poorly understood that it too has surely often serious consequences to human psyche."
>
> Expert No. 1

> "It can be thought of in case there is this foreign seemingly healthy working age man, so it is not seen that an exploitation has… Or for example that he has been scared or exhausted for enormous amount of work or so, that it would not affect him in any way, for instance to mental health."
>
> Expert No. 1

Beliefs of men to be strong, able and non-vulnerable together contribute to disbelief, blame and derogation of male victims, which can bear consequences to the way they are treated in, for instance, residence permit policies.

> "Men are expected more capability to resist things than women. Woman is stereotypically "the one to be protected", and often it is looked that when a man has fallen a victim of human trafficking in his home country, he is never in a particularly vulnerable position, so to men, there is not really – I wonder if there has ever been a man who has been allowed a residence permit for a victim of human trafficking according to the second paragraph of the article 52 a [of the Aliens Act] so without criminal process for the grounds of a particular vulnerability. So, look, men just are not vulnerable. So, then it implies that they have more agency in falling a victim, which is not true. We humans are terribly fragile, but capable to adapt also in a bad way, meaning that our psyche adjusts to quite terrible conditions by different means. And then it is of course difficult for anyone to show that is caused by, for instance, psychological brain washing, manipulation, pressure and intimidation and that the person has been broken down."
>
> Expert No. 3

Beliefs related to "safe world of men" bear several consequences. First of all, belief that men are not victims contributes to incapability of both laymen and professionals to identify male victims of trafficking. Expected agency of men and the denial of their vulnerability arouse reactions of disbelief and blame, which may affect the way how male victims are treated in services of social and health sector, and in the processes of criminal procedures. The need of victims of labour exploitation for mental health services or other kinds of support may be overlooked. Beliefs on male agency and non-vulnerability may play a role even in court decisions and residence permit policies. Expectations of men being able, strong and non-vulnerable will certainly not lower the threshold for male victims to seek help, nor support other people to treat them with sympathy and care. Although the data does not reveal the scope nor scale of this problem in Finland, the study by Walker et al. (2005), for instance, addresses these beliefs and describes similar consequences and experiences within social and health sector, criminal investigation and court hearings in the context of male victims of rape. The Swedish study on blame attribution based on a person's age and gender indicates that male victims of sex trafficking were more readily blamed due to expectations of their higher agency (Strömwall et al. 2013).

4.2.3. 'The Controllable World of Women'

The data from the survey and the expert interviews indicate that potential victimhood and vulnerability of women and girls appear rather uncontested. However, simultaneously, there were expressions of beliefs that even though women are more threatened, they can avoid falling a victim

of trafficking by taking adequate precautions. Furthermore, in some responses of the survey, the concept of human trafficking seemed to be attached to all sexual violence targeted against women and girls. Therefore, beliefs surrounding human trafficking are sometimes overlapping with the common attitudes towards female victims of sexual violence. The crucial idea to inspect here is the belief that "in our just world", women can – and should – avoid falling victims of human trafficking by demonstrating adequate character or behaviour. In 'the Belief in a Just Finland', women are strong, independent, careful and equal who can affect their fate, in contrast to "naive" and "helpless" women of the "world of victims." In this section, three central aspects to inspect are the popular imagery of human trafficking as concerning mainly sexual exploitation of women, the interconnection of the BJW, the rape myth acceptance and attitudes toward women and the framing of Finnish women as 'able selves.'

The popular imagery of human trafficking and attitudes to gender and sexuality was referred to by an expert in the following manner:

> "There is this stereotypical image [of human trafficking] and people may attach it to grave forced prostitution or trafficking of women. […] Of course, there are [attitudes] related to gender. If it is thought that women often fall into victims of sexual exploitation and human trafficking related to it, there are certain attitudes and beliefs."
>
> Expert No. 1

The beliefs referred to by this expert were detected from the data of the survey, in which the vulnerability of women was addressed:

> "Women are deceived to go abroad."
>
> 70, female

> "[Factors that make a person vulnerable to human trafficking] being a woman."
>
> 17, female

The perception of human trafficking meaning mainly sexual exploitation, as well as images of human trafficking as extreme forms of abduction and sexual slavery were reflected in the results.

> "[The definition of human trafficking] A person is kidnapped and "sold as a sex slave."
>
> 16, female

> "[I could fall a victim of human trafficking] Yes, if I get kidnapped."
>
> 17, female

> "You can never know if someone kidnaps you."
>
> 18, female

These results seem to reflect the effect of the misleading imagery of human trafficking, which may serve for the purpose of a certain political agenda. The popular depiction of trafficking victims as ’sex slaves’ has been criticised by critical scholars and activists for reinforcing “extremely conservative moral agendas on prostitution, gender and sexuality” and for supporting “more restrictive immigration policies” (Davidson 2010, 244).

While no male study subject presented a list of things a person should do in order to avoid falling a victim, quite a few female study subjects described the kind of behaviour to avoid. These descriptions often resemble typical “advice” women are given when discussing a possible threat of any kind of sexual violence:

> “[Factors making a person vulnerable to human trafficking.] Staying outside alone late. Not listening which countries and places are dangerous, going to clubs, being in unreliable company, not taking care of oneself.”
>
> 19, female.

> “[Factors making a person vulnerable to human trafficking] If you are alone outside late at night, or for example if you take a lift from a stranger.”
>
> 16, female

> “I could not [fall a victim of human trafficking]. I believe in Jesus, I do not engage in casual relationships. I feel I am very safe, I do not drink alcohol. Women can be drugged at restaurants and become victims of human trafficking without them knowing.”
>
> 70, female

The belief that women can avoid falling a victim by being careful is in line with the BJW hypothesis. It is also a reflection of the prevalence of the rape myth acceptance; the cultural beliefs that support a view on a woman’s ability and responsibility to avoid falling a victim of sexual violence by taking adequate precautions (defined i.e. by Cunningham and Cromer 2014, 229). While the culturally sustained belief that women can avoid falling a victim of trafficking (or any forms of sexual violence) by avoiding alcohol, casual relationships, being alone or in unreliable company, restaurants and clubs may feel reassuring, it ultimately leads to blaming the victims instead of perpetrators.

In some responses, the characteristics of a strong, independent, educated Finnish woman were emphasised as protective factors against exploitation:

> “I could not [fall a victim of human trafficking], small and feisty. I can and I have had to stand up for myself.”
>
> 50, female.

> "I do not believe [I could fall a victim of trafficking], because I am a native and educated Finn."
>
> 24, female

> "I could not [fall a victim of trafficking]. A Finnish woman does not get into this position thanks to our social security."
>
> 68, female

These descriptions seem to indicate that Finnish women – at least those befitting the emancipated ideal – are not vulnerable to human trafficking. Distinction is made between Finnish women possessing full agency and the general views expressed in the survey on the character of a trafficking victim as "naive", "willing to please", "lacking education and understanding" and "lacking own will". These attributes might be attached to specifically to a female victim, as one of the experts commented:

> "I would not say it is about any kind of naivety or being easily deceived […] The image that comes to mind from those descriptions is some kind of a fragile woman. […] It can be just as well a beefy man who ends up in the situation by deception or other means."
>
> Expert No. 2

The findings are supported by Roth (2012) and Niemi-Kiesiläinen (2001), who have described the difficulty to recognise violence against women as a social problem in Finland, and Finnish women's reluctance to see themselves as victims. Perception of Finnish women as strong, equal "responsible selves" may play a role in holding the victims responsible for the violence they have experienced.

The expectations related to the rape myth acceptance and the framing of Finnish women as 'able selves' are typical to the belief in 'our just world': in the safe meta-world, individuals' fate depends solely on their behaviour or character. The prevalence of these beliefs places the focus on the behaviour and character of a victim, increasing the likelihood of female victims to be encountered with blaming reactions. This conclusion is supported by studies which have indicated a correlation between high BJW scores and gender-role traditionalism and both hostile and benevolent sexism (Sakallı-Uğurlu et al. 2007, 893; Thomas & Mucherah 2016, 250). The studies by Brems and Wagner (1994, 70) found attitudes towards women, the type of crime and the ambiguity of the crime situation to be significant predictors of blame attribution. The consideration of the effects of these intertwined beliefs to the identification and assistance of trafficking victims brings us back to understanding of blame as a form of cultural violence. An imagery of the 'trafficked sex slave', the scrutiny over a woman's 'adequate' character or behaviour and the framing of Finnish women as 'able selves' all play a role in hiding and justifying direct and structural violence against women.

4.2.4. Agency, Individualistic Ideals and Blame

Victim-blaming attitudes visible in the data were related to assumed agency of a trafficked person. It seems quite commonly known that human traffickers may deceive their victims, and that human trafficking is a crime violating individual freedom. However, there appears to be a lack of understanding of human trafficking as a long process, the vulnerabilities of a victim and of the means that are more subtle than "kidnapping" or other kind of physical restraint. When these ideas are connected to just world beliefs and ideals of a rational individual, victims of human trafficking are blamed for having been deceived or "reaching for a better future by wrong means", and for not seeking help. According to expert interviews, a perception that a victim bears responsibility for their situation may hinder the processes of criminal procedures. Such victim-blaming attitudes affect the threshold to seek help and share one's experiences. The experts also described the self-blame and shame that victims may feel.

In the survey data, some study subjects indicated "naivety", "stupidity/getting deceived" and "lack of understanding/knowledge/education" as reasons for a person to fall a victim of trafficking. People who are "too open" or "too nice" were referred to as vulnerable to exploitation. There were also quite a few mentions of primary intentions of a person that would lead to victimisation:

> "[Factors making a person vulnerable to human trafficking] Aiming for a better life through wrong means."
>
> 24, female

> "There are people with lack of attention, bad conditions, too spoiled, too bored, they want something new."
>
> 19, female

> "It can be that some people want to gain money for luxury (youth in Finland?)"
>
> 36, female

Hence, trafficking victims are blamed for getting into the exploitative situation by their character, abilities or intentions. In some of the answers submission to exploitation was presented as a choice.

> "It is impossible [for me to fall a victim of trafficking.] I have the kind of mindset that I do not work for others. I never get into that kind of situations."
>
> 29, male

> "I do nothing by force or without my own will."
>
> 46, male

> "No, I could not [fall a victim of trafficking.] I do what I want."
>
> 62, male

The belief that victims would immediately seek help whenever possible (also mentioned in the human trafficking myth scale by Cunningham & Cromer 2016, 240) was detected from the data. This may result in disbelief and blame for not doing so.

> "Yes, they contact the authorities and by that they can move on."
>
> 56, male

> "I have never thought how to identify a victim, I thought that they would be somewhere hidden, not walking in the street. […] It would be strange if some trafficking victim could walk in the streets and they would not seek help."
>
> 19, female

The interviewed experts reported to have encountered victim-blaming attitudes in their work.

> "One significant [challenging attitude in terms of identification and assistance of trafficking victims] probably is, if it is now called victim blaming, so it is probably one central, in different ways or forms but, the thought that the responsibility would be of the victim, very much, even though, and when it factually is so that a person had been led into this kind of a situation, so then of course the responsibility is of the offender and it cannot be thought anymore that… Somehow it is still thought that the person would have a great responsibility to explain the situation, leave and seek help and so on."
>
> Expert No. 1

The lack of knowledge and understanding of human trafficking was indicated as one root cause for the victim-blaming attitudes.

> "For one to blame the victim for not seeking help or for not being able to or, or for not having left the situation, it basically means that one does not understand human trafficking."
>
> Expert No. 3

> "It can be about wanting a better future but in my view, it is a basic human… Something that human beings aim anyway, looking for a better future, but it does not mean that one would be naive or easily deceived in any way […], it depends completely on something else."
>
> Expert No. 2

> "It is often thought 'what I would have done in that situation', and it is not understood that the circumstances and the exploitation has driven the person into a situation where they really could not have, from their own circumstances, acted differently, or dared to act differently."

Expert No. 1

Tendency to expect responsibility and agency from a victim was seen as a hindrance in the processes of identification and assistance, including different stages of the criminal procedure.

> "If I think cases related to labour exploitation where there is an ongoing investigation, I think victims have to prove quite a lot why they are in the situation… Well of course if you then have a possibility to leave from the situation, but there is this preliminary expectation that one has always voluntarily agreed to it and it is scrutinised why a person has agreed to and so on, so maybe that kind of… Where those kinds of attitudes are visible."

Expert No. 4

> "It [victim-blaming attitudes encountered in the expert's work] can be seen in these processes, no one says it with those words, but it is visible in how everything proceeds, how things are started to investigate, how it is prosecuted, how it is judged. Human trafficking is a crime targeted against freedom, so it depends a lot on how the victim's own agency and possibility to act differently are perceived. It can be a decisive factor there. And, if it is thought that the victim has somehow by their own actions caused this, the process just does not go so smoothly."

Expert No. 3

The scrutiny on the victim's agency and possibility to leave the situation and seek help was described to affect the many levels of the criminal procedure:

> "It begins with the identification, if there is a thought that this cannot be human trafficking if one inspects the situation from the outside… I am not saying that one could not question that, and one should raise a question especially in the processes of criminal procedure where it is handled and shown that a person did not have a real possibility [to exit the situation], but if it is categorically expected that when a person could have been outside and has not been in chains nor locked somewhere a person could just leave and seek help, so that certainly affects the way that a person is not identified, because it is thought that this cannot be human trafficking. And, of course, from there onwards, it shows in the process of criminal procedure, we have a need for training and information for judicial authorities in pretrial investigation, on what the prerequisites for the crime of human trafficking entails and does not entail. […] But the problem and the challenge is that a person is not identified, and if that threshold is crossed so that it is identified that there may be a victim of human trafficking and then the criminal procedure, so then the judicial authority determines on which classification of the offence the crime is investigated, so there is another threshold, if it is seen that this is not human trafficking because the person has been seemingly free to leave or to seek help. So, it becomes a problem in many stages."

Expert No. 1

One expert raised a concern over the need to understand the skilful tactics human traffickers use with victims who are often the most vulnerable, and the way how even children and young people who have fallen victims may be expected to demonstrate agency against the offenders:

> "I would say that it is unreasonable, especially if… When they [offenders] target people who are easily exploited, like very young or even minors, and it is interesting that if a person is a minor, it is still somehow expected from them that they would have somehow known how to act and say "no."
>
> Expert No. 1

Furthermore, the experts described how victims may feel self-blame and shame that may be reinforced by blaming attitudes.

> "The victims themselves often feel that they have been naive and blame themselves a lot, and ask and think of how they could have got into this kind of situation even though they have been educated and smart and else, and that tells somehow of how subtly and slowly one is driven into the situation, so it does not mean that one would be stupid and naive and trust everyone, but the victimisation has really been a long-term process."
>
> Expert No. 4

> "It is related to a terrible shame. That one does not want to speak about those things or… Well that shame is what many have. And specifically, because of that, one thinks having been a fool for getting into the situation, it has to do with the self-blame. And of course, there are cases where there has been threats to a family or a relatives or even violence and some from the inner circle has been killed and so, that of course increases the feeling of shame, if a family feels that these issues related to honour, that one has ruined the reputation of the family or else…"
>
> Expert No. 4

> "I have often in my own meetings tried to confirm the [victim's] own innocence, and the self-blame has been a very heavy burden for all, because probably there are not so many who confirm that nothing of what has happened has been their fault."
>
> Expert No. 3

Psychologically and culturally supported blaming attitudes may contribute to self-blame, which is detrimental to victim's recovery (Walker et al. 2005, 70). According to Lerner (1980, 123), self-blame is also a psychological coping mechanism. Becoming a victim is perhaps the greatest threat to the BJW, and once experienced unjustness in one's own life, one often finds blame in their attributes or actions in order to gain an "illusion of safety": if victimisation was one's fault, future unjustness could be avoided by not making the same "mistakes" again (Ibid. 123). People with high BJW scores have also been found to restore justice by reinterpreting their own unjust fate as positive or deserved (Bulman & Wortman 1977, 351; Hafer & Olson 1998, 82).

Whether the victim is blamed by the self or others, it has detrimental consequences to identification and assistance of victims of human trafficking:

> "Of course, it always requires that a victim dares to speak of their situation to someone, that is what furthers the identification, and if the starting point is that the victim is being blamed then they are not probably that willing to talk. There is always, or with most cases there are in the background… It principally is already difficult to trust anyone, and there can be very traumatic experiences there in the background, and if the approach is that again someone is blaming for something or so, then it certainly does not make the identification easier."
>
> Expert No. 4

> "Of course, [victim blaming affects the identification and guidance to assistance], it affects a lot. A situation where a victim does not identify oneself but feels that one is guilty for this action, it causes shame and a feeling that one is not entitled to help. I feel that it may be a big issue for many, in a way one can be afraid that their "stupidities" are revealed, even though it has nothing to do with stupidity or anything, there has been people with PhD degrees among our clients […] So it is not related to educational background, we all have vulnerabilities."
>
> Expert No. 3

In all the interviews, experts emphasised that a view of individuals being able to affect their fate by demonstrating adequate character or behaviour does not fit with the reality of human trafficking. It is paradoxical to expect an extensive agency from a victim when considering human trafficking and its relation to the long-term processes, the skilful tactics of the offenders, the dependent position and the vulnerabilities of a victim. The tendency to scrutinise a trafficking victim's actions prior, during and after the exploitative situation seem to reflect Lerner's (1980) notion on the expectations for an individual in the "our just world": "what they actually get out of life, what they make of themselves, is almost entirely up to them – their talent, character, willingness to work – modified in an acceptable way by "connections" and "the breaks" (Ibid. 25). This expectation and its inaccuracy in the context of human trafficking is referred to by one of the experts:

> "This is just my own thought – it is probably somewhere else too, that it is somehow related to certain Western, individualistic, in a way we have this ideal, that a person has responsibility, in good and bad, of one's own life and oneself. Then we might have difficulties to understand that when a person is in that kind of a situation, and often when a person falls a victim of human trafficking, whether they are Finnish or foreigner, there are already some factors contributing to a person's vulnerability prior to exploitation. So then we somehow expect a lot of responsibility from a person who is in a vulnerable state, an ability to make sure that one does not get into that situation out of "silliness" or "stupidity", so there are these kinds of attitudes that "well was not that silly to not research beforehand what kind of a job there would be." Probably that thought that what would I have done in that situation, "well I would have researched who the person really is and where I am going to."

Expert No. 1

In addition, one expert elaborated the contradiction between the general perception of human beings as rational actors and the very reality of being a human being:

> "If one works with the social or health sector, it is quite crucial, or I think it would be very difficult for me to do the kind of work – or this, too – if I had not the kind of concept of human being that does not always act rationally in all situations. If you have a concept of human being that a person basically always acts rationally in all circumstances, it is very difficult to do the kind of work where people are assisted, people who have gotten into a difficult situation or a dead end for some reason, because it becomes heavy to do that kind of a work, so in a way in this too, maybe… If the basic concept of human being is the kind where a person does not always act rationally, it has to do either with one's life history or background, or to situations that life brings, so a person makes sometimes stupid and wrong decisions, destructive and even reprehensible decisions and so on, and this is just the way how it is."

Expert No. 1

The beliefs related to an individual's agency which were detected from the data scrutinise the role of a person's character or behaviour in falling a victim of human trafficking, staying in the situation and not seeking help. The scrutiny over a victim's "innocence" appear as crucial in the formal processes of identification and assistance. This kind of thinking represents the very fundamental BJW researched by Lerner (1980) and their colleagues. The consequences are visible in the different stages of the criminal procedure: if a person is held responsible for their situation, the crime may not be identified, prosecuted or judged as human trafficking. Blaming attitudes related to an individual's agency contribute to the detrimental consequences to legal position and the recovery of victims and to the elevated threshold to seek help and share one's experiences. The responsibility of a victim ultimately manifests a culture of disbelief and blame, which contributes to the silence and invisibility attached to human trafficking.

4.3. THE WORLD OF "VICTIMS"

In this chapter, I will discuss the aspects and people excluded from the "Our just world". In the separate world of victims, people are unable to affect their fate and are thus destined to live in chronic state of suffering and deprivation. As separating "our" just world and a world of victims is a strategy to restore the BJW, the suffering of the out-group members - those perceived to belong to the world of victims - is seen as natural and inevitable, thus not threatening to the BJW (Lerner 1980, 22-23; Aguiar et al. 2008, 65). In the following subchapters, I will elaborate the causes and consequences of portrayal of human trafficking as an extreme form of slavery and suffering (4.3.1.), feelings of guilt,

inability and helplessness (4.3.2.), the innocent victim paradigm (4.3.3.) and the blame and derogation targeted against sex workers, foreigners and drug users (4.3.4.).

4.3.1. Extreme Human Trafficking

Beliefs withholding human trafficking as an extreme form of violence and slavery represent the perceived "world of victims", opposed to the "our just world" elaborated in the sub-chapter "Belief in a just Finland" (4.2.1.). In the survey data, human trafficking was often defined as "slavery", "sexual slavery" and "trade of humans" targeted against foreigners:

> "For example, people are sold as slaves in some developing countries."
>
> 16, female

> "Modern slavery, coercing people to work without pay usually in a foreign country."
>
> 38, male

> "Against one's own will a person is sold as a "slave" often to another country."
>
> 55, male

> "People are sold as slaves."
>
> 33, male

> "Parents give their "children" in exchange for money to work, but they get into a whole different world. Poverty, a high number of children in families (developing countries)."
>
> 64, female

These descriptions are in line with the experts' notions on general perceptions of human trafficking:

> "I think people in general have a very strong image of sexual exploitation and maybe the very extreme kind, or of something that it [human trafficking] quite rarely is in reality."
>
> Expert No. 2

The experts referred to the extreme portrayals of human trafficking as misleading, yet generally adopted:

> "To generalise a little, among both public authorities and in general in our society, somehow it is perceived to require terribly grave acts to be considered as human trafficking. There may be this thought that it would require that a victim was physically restricted from freedom, and a victim was coerced to some action and to exploitation, so that is one, and to some extent it is thought that human trafficking requires that a person, the victim would be violently abused, and by that I mean specifically physical violence. There is a lot of psychological violence, but it is not understood that the crime is already aggravated human trafficking if it entails physical violence."
>
> Expert No. 1

> “In the Criminal Code of Finland, slavery is punishable as aggravated human trafficking, and it is an extreme form, slavery, and it causes those wrong images. Human trafficking [Ihmiskauppa in Finnish, directly translates as “human trade”] is quite a misleading concept as well, because a person does not need to be sold nor bought in human trafficking.”
>
> Expert No. 3

Perception of human trafficking as an extreme form of violence, slavery and suffering bears several consequences to the identification and assistance of victims. First, the belief may elicit reactions of denial or withdrawal: existence of human trafficking “in our just world” may be denied, while the acknowledged suffering of victims “abroad” may be somehow seen as normal, natural or inevitable. Second, misleading images hinder the identification of victims. When the focus lies solely in the very extreme forms, most of the exploitation locating in other parts of the continuum may remain unidentified, thus invisible, as stated already by Pia Marttila (Turtola 14.8.2018). The focus on extreme forms may also make other forms of exploitation seem less severe or even natural. The requirement for extreme acts of violence for a crime to be considered human trafficking may make the threshold to act on behalf of the victim extremely high, which may explain the responses by those survey participants who told they would contact the police only in “flagrant cases” or if the victim was “very violently abused.”

Third, extreme portrayals of human trafficking with simultaneous beliefs of “safe, just Finland” may cause reactions of disbelief, uncertainty and shame for “overreacting” and subsequent inaction. Beliefs concerning human trafficking as an extreme form may also contribute to the feelings of inability, guilt and helplessness and subsequent denial and blame elaborated in the next subchapter.

4.3.2. Feelings of Inability, Guilt and Helplessness

Already in the early experiments of Lerner and Simmons (1966), it was discovered that feelings of guilt and inability to help increased the victim blaming reactions among study subjects (Lerner 1980, 47-48). Even though there were no questions in the expert interviews concerning the lack of resources and resulting feelings of inability and helplessness, it appeared as a prevalent theme in the data specifically in relation to inaction instead of helping a victim. The experts elaborated how human trafficking is often perceived as a foreign concept and a difficult crime to investigate. Lack of resources within the police, the municipal sector and other public authorities were raised as an issue that experts saw as causes to negative attitudes.

Unfamiliarity of human trafficking as a concept and a classification of a crime, as well as challenges in investigating it, were referred to as possible reasons for reluctance of public authorities to take action. It also appears that in these cases the severity of the crime may be overlooked.

> "For example, if one thinks how the police operates in some cases, so from there comes sometimes that we have a strong suspect that for example the Assistance System has sent a notification to the police about a person who has possibly fallen victim of trafficking in Finland and this kind of crime may have taken place, and then nothing happens. It can take several months, even years, that the police have the information but nothing is still… That finally there appears to be no investigation after all. That tells something about how it is intervened. […] Human trafficking is a serious crime, so if this kind of a case is known it raises a question why it is not investigated. One reason is probably that it is certainly difficult to get evidence, difficult to investigate, it is quite a new classification of offence, so it can be in itself quite "what is this, what one is supposed to do" for many ordinary police officers. And then it is preferred to investigate as some easier classification of crime, such as battery or pandering or as something where it is easier to get evidence."
>
> Expert No. 2

The perception of human trafficking as a difficult crime to investigate and the disinterest of the police was mentioned by one participant of the survey who admitted that he would not act on behalf of the victim in case he suspected someone being exploited.

> "I would unfortunately probably do nothing, because it is difficult to prove, and I do not believe that the Finnish police would be really interested."
>
> 26, male

The description above indicates possible consequences of an image of the difficulties and disinterest of the police, as it may decrease the likelihood of private citizens to report a crime to the police. One expert elaborated in a more general level how there has been some occasions where public authorities have not taken action for a long time despite the awareness of the possibility of human trafficking taking place. The expert described the reasons in a manner which is in line with Lerner's notions of denial/withdrawal as coping mechanisms.

> "There is this feeling of powerlessness, when you encounter an issue that is unfamiliar to you, but you know something so you have the idea, but it feels somehow… Human trafficking, it fortunately does not often occur in anyone's daily life, not even the one of a public authority, so when it is an unfamiliar issue, it becomes such a big bogeyman that then "I ignore and do not act", so perhaps something like this may happen sometimes. And there might be that too that even though there has occurred this thought that this may be human trafficking, for some reason it is not perceived how serious issue it is, and on the other hand how severe consequences this kind of serious exploitation causes to the victim, so it not as well perceived. So because of that too it may not be known how to measure one's actions."

Expert No. 1

The lack of acknowledgement of the severity of human trafficking and its consequences to victims can be caused by multiple factors, such as lack of information, but it could also be explained as an attempt to restore one's BJW by belittling or denying an injustice in situations where intervention is perceived as too costly or demanding. In terms of public authorities, this view appears to be reinforced by the working circumstances. The experts describe the contradiction between the required efforts and the lack of resources, which were especially mentioned in relation to the police.

> "I have noticed the lack of resources with them [the police], or one's own reaction to it, own feeling of the urgency and that there is no time, no ability… So this appeared when there were field officers in the same training, they were interested and so on, but then they dissed the issue, saying that do you think we have resources for this, because apparently their work is the kind of extinguishing fires, going from one emergency to another, that there is no time to start identifying and so. They clearly had, maybe through a feeling of guilt, that we should identify, and then that feeling of insufficiency that we do not have the resources, so that appeared among them, they clearly wanted to push the issue away."

Expert No. 3

The expert mentioned the lack of resources potentially affecting the reluctance of authorities in the public sector to cooperate in the assistance of trafficking victims:

> "Maybe in the social sector there have been occasions that in a municipality it has been difficult to understand the case, certainly I understand it again for the lack of resources too, that they may have some own case of emergency accommodation, and then they receive a phone call from us saying that now you should accommodate our client."

Expert No. 3

An expert described the increasing amount of work, the decreasing amount of time and resources and their effect on a public authority's reluctance to support the processes of identification. While the expert emphasised that this is just one's interpretation, they described the possible reasons behind a public authorities' attitudes:

> "The lack of one's own resources and the awareness of the fact that you cannot improve this problem, but you feel the sting of conscience, and simultaneously you cannot affect it, so you kind of get angry to the issue, you have the need to explain it somehow."

Expert No. 3

The notions of experts on the causalities of the lack of resources, perception of human trafficking as an unfamiliar and challenging concept, the resulting feelings of guilt and helplessness and reactions of avoiding, ignoring and belittling are in line with the BJW theory. It appears that the working

circumstances of many public authorities reinforce the occurrence of victim-blaming attitudes, including reactions of denial/withdrawal. The experts' descriptions are similar to the findings of the study by Khera et al. (2014) on BJW occurrence among refugee workers. Khera et al. (Ibid. 440), underscore that even human rights-oriented individuals, working with vulnerable groups, might devalue innocent victims. The authors state that this might be due to the risks of the kind of working circumstances: for example, refugee workers can suffer with stress-related syndromes such as "compassion fatigue" and "burn out". According to BJW research, defence mechanisms of denial/withdrawal and victim blame are activated especially in cases where a person's misfortune seems particularly unjust or where an undeserved pain cannot be fully alleviated (Ibid. 433), both prevalent issues among public authorities working with cases related to human trafficking. Furthermore, when people's self-regulatory resources are exhausted and BJW threatened, they react more negatively to victims (van den Bos 2012, 1).

The victim-blaming attitudes occurring in this context could be explained by Lerner's (1998, 247) conceptualisation of two types of BJW expressed by adults: conscious BJW entails conventional rules, morality and social judgements, whereas preconscious BJW includes primitive rules of blaming and automatic emotional consequences. Lerner (1980, 121) emphasises that certain educational background or profession does not prevent a person from condemning the victim, as "people who should know better", like himself, end up blaming themselves and others for their misfortune. Lerner states that the reason for this is that victim blaming is so ingrained in our own thinking and in our culture. Blaming reactions are automatically elicited habitual expressions which can take place even when one is aware of them being inappropriate (Ibid.). Adequate information alone does not necessarily suffice to decrease victim-blaming attitudes. This was found in the Lerner and Simmons (1966) experiment where observers were informed that the victim had not known that there would be used electric shocks, and that the shocks would be very strong and painful. Despite the information the observers were given, they chose to irrationally deny the experience of the victim or alter the information in the way which leads to victim blaming. (Lerner 1980, 53).

The lack of resources in the public sector and especially in the processes of criminal procedures and the subsequent feelings of inability, guilt and helplessness seem to bear severe consequences to the identification and assistance of trafficking victims. Public authorities may be reluctant to identify and assist victims. The potential disinterest of the police to investigate and prosecute crimes by human trafficking as the classification of offence pose an obstacle to the legal protection of trafficking victims. An image of disinterest poses a risk of lay people's willingness to report a crime related to human trafficking to the police. The severity of human trafficking and its consequences to victims

may be overlooked or belittled. The lack of resources in the work of public authorities may affect not only structural efficiency related to identification and assistance, but also the likelihood of occurrence of blaming reactions against victims. The lack of resources could be approached as a form of structural violence, which this time renders blaming reactions, thus cultural violence.

4.3.3. "The Innocent:" Search for an "Ideal Victim"

According to Lerner (1980, 96) the general principle is that people are motivated to help only those who they perceive as innocent. Research on BJW has also shown that people are prone to help only a victim who is perceived both likeable and not responsible (Haynes & Olson 2006, 664). The 'innocent victim paradigm' theorised by the BJW research corresponds with the concept of an 'ideal victim', often addressed in criminology to describe the expectations lay people and professionals alike tend to have with regards to a victim of a violent crime: "one who is powerless, blameless and sympathetic." (O'Brien 2016, 208; Victim Support Finland 2018, 15). The concept appears to be central to the context of this study, as popular portrayals of human trafficking have been criticised for reinforcing images of 'pure', 'absolute' or 'ideal victims' (O'Brien 2016, 208; Mende 2019, 236). The 'innocent victim paradigm' was indeed a prevalent theme in the data. Depictions of these beliefs were detected in the survey, while their consequences were discussed in the expert interviews. This segment on the beliefs surrounding the 'innocent victim paradigm' is connected to the agency, individualistic ideals and blame discussed on subchapter (4.2.3.). In the 'our just world', an individual has full agency in one's fate, which then depends solely on one's character and behaviour, whereas in the 'world of victims', there appears to be no agency at all nor control over one's fate.

In the survey data, the depictions of victims as "naive", "willing to please", "scared", "insecure" and lacking "understanding", "knowledge", or even "own will" seem to refer to the described ideal, innocent victimhood. The same could be concluded from many mentions regarding women, children and people from developing countries as primary victims. The exclusion of certain profiles from being potential victims (annex 1, page 110) seem also to reflect the requirement of innocence. Seven study subjects responded that a "thief" could not be a victim of trafficking, three excluded drug addicts. Asylum seekers and sex workers were excluded too. Transgender people were excluded from victimhood by five study subjects and sexual minorities and men by two, which is in line with the studies on exclusion of men (Dennis 2008) and LGBTQ+ people (Boukli & Rentz 2019) from victimhood. The occurrence of these kinds of beliefs indicate that persons not befitting the role of an ideal victim are more likely to remain unidentified, but also disbelieved and blamed. Furthermore, 'innocent victim paradigm' may lead to situations where a victim does not identify oneself nor feel

entitled to help (O'Brien 2016, 206). An expert mentioned that exploitation may be more often noticed and connected to human trafficking when a person befits the victim stereotype.

One expert elaborated the relation between perceived ideal victimhood and identification:

> ”There are these attitudes that we would want that the victim would be a certain kind, that ”if you are not a poor thing and cry and accept gratefully help exactly the way it is offered to you and when it is offered to you, so then you probably are not really a victim of any kind.”
>
> Expert No. 1

The expert elaborated that the victim stereotype may affect the arrangements and decisions made in court hearings:

> "We have it still in the tribunals that first we want the victim to testify on the spot, instead of using interrogation videos or the like, and then it may be that the victim is wanted to testify there so it could be stated by eye that this is a victim because one is so miserable poor thing."
>
> Expert No. 1

The expert described the realities victims of human trafficking come from and the resulting various types of behaviour that may not correlate with the "ideal victimhood." The victim stereotype can be misleading and create false expectations for the behaviour of a trafficking victim:

> "Principally a person fallen a victim may be in some way, the background has been the kind of a broken life, which has caused some kind of, for instance psychiatric disorders. Like in many other clienteles, we may have people with personality disorders, people suffering from severe mental illnesses, and there in addition the mental burden and traumatisation caused by the exploitation and so on, so it is about difficult psychological consequences, and these people can behave in many different ways. A person is not always necessarily the kind that is easy to help, and does not necessarily demonstrate the kind of extensively willing humility and gratitude, but they may have demands, and that too might not be understood."
>
> Expert No. 1

In addition to lack of understanding on the special effects of a victim's personal background on their behaviour, the expert described how it is not always understood either that victims of human trafficking are willing to calculate and make decisions on their own fate just like everyone else:

> "It is somehow thought that these victims – I think that a human being is basically always the kind that calculates, it is a survival strategy, that a human being always does the calculation that if I choose this does it benefit me or not. Everyone does it in their daily life in smaller and bigger scopes, but then it is somehow thought that these victims of human trafficking would be for example the kind that they would not be allowed to

> do so, to make one's own choices in one's own life, or to calculate that if I do this or think about one's own good."
>
> Expert No. 1

The description above shows how perceiving a person as the 'innocent victim' can lead to denial of a person's agency. This correlates with the critique made by Davidson (2010, 257), which addresses the tendency to disqualify those few who manage to reach the threshold of 'ideal victimhood' as political subjects, and the implication that others need to act on their behalf, as a result of the depiction of victims in the modern slavery discourse. Furthermore, the expert indicated the contradiction between expectations for the victims prior to and after the formal identification in terms of active agency:

> "In a way we have a lot of contradicting expectations, on one hand in order to us to think that there really is a victim of trafficking, we want the person to be a poor thing, crying and in a bad condition, preferably both physically and psychologically. Then we can state that this is a victim of human trafficking. Well right away after we have managed to say that out loud, we expect that a person would get to stand up on one's own feet very quickly, and they would become an employee in some nice, basic nine-to-five job. That is quite a contradiction. In one hand we want the person to be in a very bad condition, but then on the other hand we want them to get empowered as soon as possible, would need just short-term help and receive willingly everything that is given from above and would then move on to continue life as usual."
>
> Expert No. 1

It seems that in order to a person to be recognised as a victim of human trafficking, they may be expected to demonstrate innocent, blameless victimhood stripped from personal agency, but once a person is identified, the individualistic ideals are again applied. This can also be detected from some responses to the survey study, where survivors were expected to return back to normal life. Some referred to the personal attributes of survivors to play a role in the recovery: "a human being can survive from anything if they want to". These kinds of expressions may indicate that survivors' vulnerability caused by exploitation may be overlooked, and they are expected to demonstrate full agency following the individualistic ideals, which in turn may lead to blaming reactions in likely situations where healing is not as straightforward as expected.

According to the expert interviews, the 'innocent victim paradigm' seem to play a role in the official processes of identification and assistance. First of all, when a person's character or behaviour does not befit to the role of an ideal victim, they can be disbelieved or blamed for their situation. Thus, many victims may be excluded from victimhood and remain unidentified. Similar notions are indicated by a Swedish study, according to which the surveyed police officers and prosecutors tended

to expect certain type of behaviour from victims of rape and domestic violence, which produces a risk of misjudgement of the accountability of the victim (Ask 2009, 1144-1145). Second, the belief that victims can be identified based on their character or behaviour may lead to the kinds of arrangements in, for instance, tribunals, which unnecessarily increase the mental burden of a victim. Third, the belief restores the lack of understanding on the simultaneous agency and vulnerability of a victim, which may pose a challenge to the quality of assistance. However, those few that manage to reach the threshold of 'ideal victimhood' may be more readily identified and helped. Yet it does not prevent them from being blamed, as referrals to "naivety" and "ability" indicate. Already in the early studies of Lerner and Simmons (1966), the innocence of the victim was clearly constructed in a laboratory setting, and yet the study subjects found ways to derogate and blame her. One could expect that the blaming reactions are targeted especially towards persons who do not fit the traditional role of an "innocent victim". Thus, the next subchapter elaborates the tendency to and the effects of the exclusion of foreigners, sex workers and drug users from victimhood.

4.3.4. "The Guilty:" Victim Blaming of Sex workers, Foreigners and Drug Users

There are several similar factors in the victim-blaming attitudes targeted against the sex workers, foreigners and drug users. Among all these three groups, there are people vulnerable to exploitation. There also prevails social stigma. According to the expert interviews, sex workers, foreigners and drug users are more often blamed for having made a "choice" that is perceived to have caused their victimisation, a thought pattern that is related to the subchapter on agency, individualistic ideals and blame (4.2.3.). However, the reason for placing this topic under the 'world of victims' is the various notions made by experts on the perception that violence and suffering "in their world" would be somehow natural, inevitable and less severe. The consequences to identification and assistance bear similarities, too. A belief that sex workers, foreigners and drug users "have chosen their path" and belong to "their world of violence and suffering" causes reactions of denial/withdrawal, derogation and blame. As a consequence, victims perceived to belong in these groups are less likely to be identified and assisted, the threshold to seek and receive help is higher, their treatment in official processes may be hindered, and their legal protection is weaker. Naturally, there are also factors specific to each group, which is why I will next discuss the attitudes and their effects related to sex workers, foreigners and drug users separately.

In the survey data, the common understanding of human trafficking concerning only prostitution and migration was often reflected. It also appeared that the distinction between human trafficking and prostitution was unclear for many survey participants: "There are two different [forms of human

trafficking], voluntary and forced." Several experts described the social stigma related to prostitution, and the subsequent victim blaming of those who have originally consented to sex work. In these cases, the exploitation and the suffering caused by it is more often seen as "natural":

> "If one thinks of forced prostitution, there is this attitude towards that work, that if you work as a prostitute it seems to be often thought that then you should also accept that the working circumstances are of certain kind."
>
> Expert No. 2

> "If there is a child or a minor who would be forced to sex work so there comes quite naturally the empathy and shock, but those cases where there is an adult and has left to Finland aware of – seemingly knowing that they will migrate to sell sex, but then the circumstances have been the kind that one could not affect how one is working and falls a victim of human trafficking, so maybe there is still victim blaming, that "it was you who left to sell sex and then this is what happened."
>
> Expert No. 1

The above-mentioned perception of the exploitation of persons who have originally consented to sex work as "natural" might explain the reason for the response of one survey study subject:

> "It depends how old the victim would be. If they are a child or a youth, I would report to child protection police. In terms of adults I would not intervene, unless they would ask for help or would look very violently abused."
>
> 29, male

Similar attitudes are addressed by Roth (2012, 283) in relation to the response of the Finnish legal system to prostitution-related trafficking: coercive means are seen as "natural", for foreign women are understood to have agreed to the rules set by traffickers. This contributes to public authorities' reluctance to identify and assist victims of forced prostitution. Roth (Ibid.) has already detected this attitude to affect the decisions of tribunals. The lack of awareness of the difference between prostitution and human trafficking, the severity of its consequences and victim blaming of those who have consented to sex work, may also affect a private citizen's ability and/or willingness to report a crime. One expert also mentioned that the people who buy sex could be an important target group for information regarding identification of victims, but stressed that the social stigma and the fear of having committed a crime oneself probably further decreases the motivation for one to report a suspicious situation to the police.

All experts indicated the overall attitudes towards foreigners and immigration to affect the processes of identification and assistance of trafficking victims.

> "I have been thinking many times how different the approach would be if the victim was Finnish in a similar situation. I do not think that those attitudes are necessarily related to someone being a victim of human trafficking, but those I have encountered are related to cases where it is about a foreigner. Even though one is a victim of a serious crime, it is somehow overshadowed by the attitudes towards foreigners."
>
> Expert No. 4

In the expert interviews, notions often appeared on the tendency to dehumanise foreign victims of trafficking and to see the trafficking of foreigners as natural.

> "For some reason it may be thought in case of foreign victims, that they would be fundamentally different as human beings, that they could take much more, that they would be somehow used to some type of exploitation, and that it would not cause them the similar consequences like in any of us."
>
> Expert No. 1

This kind of belief system bears many detrimental consequences to, for instance, victims of forced marriage:

> "The most flagrant [negative attitudes related to victims of human trafficking] have related to victims of sexual exploitation. The kinds that it well, it is part of the culture… Or for instance forced marriages or others, that even though they are prohibited by our law and unacceptable, but when one comes from another culture, it is perceived to be more acceptable because they have always done this so it is just okay, and they are used to it and this is the way it has always been there, and this belongs to the country's culture, or that it would be somehow normal and that would make it acceptable."
>
> Expert No. 4

One expert described the similar, racist attitudes to hinder a person's position in the legal system:

> "People coming from different cultures, I feel that their legal status is weaker, because it is thought that they are used to this, that this is for them somehow a less significant crime, or that "there happens something there all the time" or "there are millions of people who have crossed Libya, are they all victims of human trafficking?" Well yes, possibly. I think that too somehow intertwines with a victim's own agency or blame, that one just happens to come from that kind of a culture that one should be used to it, or that it is related to an attribute in a victim, that one is somehow less a victim than perhaps some Finnish who falls a victim by "innocence" or "stupidity.""
>
> Expert No. 3

In several interviews, it was mentioned that foreign victims of trafficking may be blamed for having made the decision to immigrate, taking a risk to travel through a dangerous route, or for being opportunistic. In the survey data, foreigners were most often mentioned as potential victims of human trafficking. There were also mentions of "seeking for a better future through wrong means" and

“crossing the border illegally” as factors that make a person vulnerable to human trafficking. One expert referred to the public scrutiny over a presentation in the seminar on homelessness and paperless immigrants, where the Helsinki Police listed seven “typical customers”: the list included profiles such as “Chinese chef” who is a “spree drinker” working in a restaurant for food and board without a residence permit, a Somali man with three wives, and an Estonian worker ”drawn to heavy drinking” living in a factory hall (Strömberg 10.10.2018).

> “They were portrayed as they would have come [to Finland] just for their own will, selfishly and by their own fault in that kind of situation because they greedily want to gain a lot of money in Finland and a residence permit. I am afraid that in that moment when the police encounter these people, and it does not occur to them that these people can be victims. In those moments too when they do not say it directly or even understand one’s own situation or they cannot say anything, or the police does not listen, they do not have an interpreter… But the worst thing is that if the presumption is that then absolutely nothing is being identified.”
>
> Expert No. 3

Another expert referred to interconnections between stereotypical perceptions of human trafficking, possible attitudes towards foreigners and the lack of resources which may affect the response of the police to crimes related to human trafficking:

> “Human trafficking is stereotypically the kind which is targeted against foreigners, takes place somewhere far away, even when happening in Finland the victim is often foreigner and possibly a person residing in the country without permission, so it is not perhaps… It somehow feels that the interest of the police to investigate it [human trafficking] is not that high, especially when it is about a crime which requires a lot of resources and work from the police in order to conduct an investigation.”
>
> Expert No. 2

The referrals to the police bear resemblance with the findings of a study by Keskinen et al. (2018), which reported the prevalence of ethnic profiling by the police. The interviewed police officers did not evaluate the police to be a racist institution, but some interviewees described how there are individual police officers whose racist attitudes could affect their behaviour. (Ibid. 94-95). The experts’ statements, notions on inadequate resources within the police and the study by Keskinen et al. (Ibid.) raise concerns over the position of foreign victims of human trafficking in the Finnish legal system. Due to processes of racialisation and othering, the legal protection of a victim of foreign origin may be weaker.

People addicted to substances were another group the experts mentioned often as both vulnerable to exploitation and eagerly derogated and blamed due to social stigma. Drug users may be subjected to,

for instance, forced criminal activity, which in itself is one of the least known and understood forms of trafficking, and the kind that arouses most blaming reactions, as one of the experts describes:

> "The most complicated is probably the forced criminal activity, of course it is strongly value-loaded because a victim has committed crimes, so there is this difficulty to see the person as a victim and a target, so there is probably the most victim blaming. It is probably the most challenging and there are the most challenges in terms of attitudes, and probably everyone needs to consider what a person is responsible for themselves and what they have been pressured or coerced to do."
>
> Expert No. 1

One expert mentioned the similarity in the derogating attitudes towards both foreigners and drug addicts:

> "It is still very challenging to get for instance the police to believe that the petty criminal they know, a drug addict, may have been forced to those crimes after all. I have sometimes, with this dark humour, laughed – "laughed", well in a way smirked – that these foreigners and drug addicts are somehow in the same category, that they are both perceived as "people with less worth", that a crime targeted against them is not perhaps seen as serious."
>
> Expert No. 3

A common discourse on people with substance addiction appeared to be one where they are first of all dehumanised as "junkies":

> "If it is about a person with substance addiction for example, there was this one case where it appeared very strongly the kind of "that person is a junkie", that "well, what help should I give them then" and so on, that "the person has allowed oneself to get to this condition". Maybe they do not come to think that a victim of human trafficking still has a right for quite extensive services, so it may be a bit difficult for some actors to understand that too that "why these people would be entitled to something special" and so on, it does not… […] It is probably due to unawareness and prejudices and the way how people imagine a victim of human trafficking to be."
>
> Expert No. 2

The description above brings us back to the 'innocent victim paradigm', from which drug users are clearly excluded. They are blamed for "choosing to use drugs" and entering to "their world", where violence is inevitable and even natural.

> "If a person is a drug user, then there is certainly a lot of victim blaming. It is thought then that one has chosen to use drugs, it is one's own fault and in that world one ends up a target of all these kinds of violence and crimes."
>
> Expert No. 1

Justifying crimes targeted against drug users by blaming them for "choosing" to use drugs and thus entering "their world", bear resemblance to reactions targeted against victims who have originally consented to sex work.

> "For example, drug addicts, "if you have left to that world, then it is justified to do to you whatsoever, since you yourself chose to use drugs", or something like this. And there are those attitudes too, or in my view there is also the lack of knowledge as well, that it is not perceived how serious issue this is and what kinds of consequences this causes to the victims."
>
> Expert No. 1

In these cases, the severity of human trafficking and its consequences to victims are overlooked. The subsequent reaction appears to be indifference and inaction.

> "A drug addict has caused their problems by being a drug addict", and for instance, "in those circles those kinds of things just happen", so this is the attitude, like "nothing can be done about it".
>
> Expert No. 3

One of the challenges in anti-trafficking work appears to be a belief that drug users have "chosen" to enter "the world of victims" where violence is natural, inevitable and less severe. Consequences to identification and assistance are severe: victims with a background of substance abuse are not seen as victims, thus identified, and when they are identified, public authorities may be reluctant to assist them adequately.

A common aspect in terms of attitudes towards sex workers, foreigners and drug users appear to be their exclusion from both 'our just world' and 'innocent victimhood'. This also reflects the interconnection between the division of 'our just world'/ the 'world of victims' and the general tendency to perceive other people to belong either to "Us" or "Them", the in-group and the out-group. The BJW is more threatened by an in-group victim than an out-group victim (Aguiar et al. 2008; Correia et al. 2012). The research has also shown that an out-group victim is always more derogated than an in-group victim, which is explained by in-group favouritism and tendency to dehumanise members of an out-group (Aguiar et al. 2008, 65-66). Therefore, the reactions described in this section may be relevant in the context of all people affected by othering and marginalisation. This is both paradoxical and extremely problematic especially in the context of human trafficking, as the victims' vulnerability is often due to a marginalised position in the society. Here, the mechanisms of cultural violence are clearly illustrated: victim blaming makes the direct and structural violence targeted against i.e. sex workers, foreigners and drug users to seem invisible or justified. As a result, the

likelihood for identification and adequate assistance appear lowest among people most vulnerable to human trafficking.

The 'Belief in a Just Finland' portrays only the collection of victim-blaming attitudes related to BJW. In both the survey and the expert interviews, various alternative approaches occurred as well. In the next chapter, I will elaborate the avenues towards cultural peace discussed in the data.

4.4. A WAY OUT: "OVERSTANDING HUMAN TRAFFICKING" AS A FORM OF CULTURAL PEACE

While subchapters 4.2. and 4.3. delved into the 'belief in a just Finland' and the resulting victim blaming as a form of cultural violence, this final subchapter of the analysis aims to seek avenues for cultural peace. In the context of this thesis, cultural peace would entail aspects that support active identification and adequate assistance of trafficking victims and the withdrawal from victim blaming. In the data of this study, there were participants of the survey who opposed BJW and refrained from victim blaming. While the questions in the expert interviews directed the conversation to problematic attitudes and their consequences, positive examples were discussed as well. The exploration of alternative approaches indicated in the data can provide further understanding on the origins of and solutions to the problems presented in the previous subchapters.

The tendency to disbelieve, blame and derogate victims has been recognised as a societal problem within the BJW research, and multiple studies have outlined aspects that would prevent its occurrence. For example, empathy, identification, similarity of fate, and self-regulation have been stated as most powerful contributing factors (Montada 1998, 217; Silver et al. 2015, 932; Loseman & van den Bos 2012, 1). Lerner (1980, 19) has also outlined alternatives to the "irrational tactics" of denial/withdrawal, derogation and blame. According to Lerner (Ibid. 19-21), the rational tactics to deal with injustices are based on the acceptance of the occurrence and one's reaction to the "reality of injustice." One can then attempt to prevent or reduce the effects of suffering and deprivation, and/or accept one's limitations. When exploring avenues for cultural peace in relation to BJW-related beliefs and human trafficking, it might be useful to consider both conscious and preconscious forms of BJW introduced by Lerner (1998, 247). Thus, preventing victim blaming would require efforts that target both conscious BJW (i.e. by sharing information, education and values) and preconscious BJW (i.e. by developing self-regulation techniques and the working circumstances of public authorities).

In similar vein, the interviewed experts emphasised the diverse aspects that contribute to occurrence of victim blaming towards trafficking victims. The experts highlighted that improving the current situation would require more awareness and training, but the effect of personalities, life experiences and general worldviews were mentioned as well. The survey data also indicated that the level of awareness of human trafficking, victim-blaming attitudes and helping behaviour do not necessarily correlate with each other. In the discussion on ways to prevent victim blaming, one expert stated that it would require not only awareness of human trafficking but also deeper understanding and openness to the realities of human trafficking:

> "I am referring not only to knowledge but also understanding, in English some use the word overstand, so understand, but overstand is really acknowledged. But it would also require a type of person who is ready to process the information that a human being can be dominated psychologically and is still a victim, when it seems to be easier to people to blame the victim and forget the issue."
>
> Expert No. 3

The above-mentioned concept of "overstanding human trafficking" is approached in this section as an umbrella category for aspects that contribute to the withdrawal from victim blaming indicated by the data and the BJW research. In the following subchapters, accepting reality of injustice, empathy and identification, and the power of positive examples are discussed as components of "overstanding human trafficking" which leads towards peace culture.

4.4.1. Accepting the Reality of Injustice

This section is based on Lerner's (1980, 19) view on "accepting the reality of injustice" as the starting point for "rational" alternatives for the blaming reactions. This could be understood as entailing two prerequisites: one should be aware of and accept the reality of injustice. The awareness and acceptance of the "reality of injustice" was demonstrated in the both types of this data, albeit from different approaches. In the survey data, withdrawal from victim-blaming attitudes seemed to correlate with general outlook on societal inequalities, vulnerabilities, privileges and injustices in the world, whereas the interviewed experts emphasised the particular knowledge and understanding of human trafficking as a phenomenon. Both views direct the focus – and the blame – to the offenders and structures instead of victims, which showcases a negation to cultural violence.

There were certain common aspects in the answers of those participants of the survey who withdraw from victim-blaming attitudes. They often knew to define human trafficking as exploitation of a person's vulnerable position which was emphasised by the experts as well.

> "A person oppresses another person economically, psychologically or in other means in order to gain benefit from it, usually economic benefit."
>
> 33, male

> "A person's deprivation of freedom or other exploitation by exploiting a person's weak social position in the society."
>
> 41, male

These participants referred to the role of offenders and societal structures as root causes for human trafficking:

> "Human traffickers do not care about the suffering they cause, only the monetary profit."
>
> 22, female

> "Inequality, others are easy to exploit due to a weak position. Human traffickers also often have difficult situations in life."
>
> 23, female

> "Poverty, lack of safety, inequality and capitalism combined with individualism."
>
> 29, female

Participants who did not demonstrate any signs of disbelief, derogation and blame towards victims often questioned the BJW-related beliefs on deservingness:

> "Good and bad things happen to both good and bad people. People live in the midst of coincidences and chaos."
>
> 29, male

> "Some people have not gained anything good despite hard work. Others have a high standard of living as a birthday present."
>
> 38, male

Acknowledgement of one's own privileges appear to reflect the kind of awareness that prevents victim-blaming attitudes:

> "All kinds of things can happen to all kinds of people. […] I have no complaints. I feel that I have lived quite an ordinary life of a white Finnish man, and I know I am in a damn lucky position because of that."
>
> 23, male

In the expert interviews, human trafficking awareness was indicated as a solution in preventing victim-blaming attitudes and improving identification and assistance of trafficking victims:

> “I believe that if there was more knowledge in the society on all the things human trafficking can be, then certainly the attitudes could change. These people too with whom I have discussed with, they do not necessarily withhold negative attitudes towards foreigners, for example, but when one does not know, the image and all is just strange, and from there can raise this attitude on how one generally approaches the whole issue.
>
> […]
>
> I think that certainly anyone who notices something related to human trafficking, it is always a step forward. For example persons working with cleaning industry, or workers in a restaurant people encounter on a daily basis, so if people would be able to pay attention to the phenomenon that a same person is cleaning my work place and seems to work all the time, or in a restaurant nearby some worker is there day and night an so, if the phenomenon was more acknowledged and it would be known how to act and where to ask advice, if people would know about our help line […] The more there are eyes who acknowledge and see the more victims are identified.”
>
> Expert No. 2

In discussions on understanding human trafficking as a phenomenon, the long processes and the skilful tactics of the offenders were elaborated:

> ”It is certainly complicated, for the crime is long-term by its nature, and in what stage it is, it can be that the circumstances have been just fine and different, and then subtly one is driven into the situation and the exit becomes impossible, and the trust is misused and the dependency to the offender is built then very skilfully, so it is very interesting and difficult to understand that what has been the case.”
>
> Expert No. 4

One expert stated that it would be fruitful to research who are the traffickers in Finland, as few international studies seem to suggest that the proportion of people with psychopathic traits among human traffickers is high in comparison.

> “So, it may not be understood who the offenders are, to what they are capable of. This just came to my mind, from victim blaming, I myself would remind that… I would not dare to say, that if some psychopath would decide to do something to me, manipulate in which they are extremely talented, I would not dare to say with one hundred per cent certainty that they would not manage to do it to me.”
>
> Expert No. 1

The expert elaborated by describing an experience with such an individual from the past in the work within the Criminal Sanctions Agency:

> “When a person like this comes to talk, I will already prepare a plan for myself, a very specific plan, on how I would proceed, what should I achieve, and then I realise after the person has been there for like ten minutes that the person is totally leading me, despite me having been prepared. And of course, when one is in contact with this kind

> of a person, without knowing that they are this kind of a person, or how these kinds of people can manipulate you. In this case, I had basic information on it, and it still happened. In that situation, I could at least interrupt the talks and take a break and try later again, but it just that they are very skilful."
>
> Expert No. 1

The descriptions by the experts represent the kind of "deep knowledge" of the "reality of injustice" of human trafficking that few people have. This viewpoint might be helpful in tackling victim-blaming attitudes. However, the knowledge does not suffice to "overstand human trafficking", as the approach might need ability to empathy and identification with the victim, which will be elaborated in the next subchapter.

4.4.2. Empathy & Identification with the Victim

> "People not doing things perfectly in their life is just a part of being human. And of course, with some, or with all of us, it could be thought afterwards that "if I had chosen that would this have happened" […] But when a person falls a victim of a crime, it is not a fault of anyone else than of the offender."
>
> Expert No. 3

> "No one deserves misery."
>
> 36, female

The notions made by both survey participants and experts indicate that empathy is one central aspect in "overstanding" human trafficking, thus preventing victim-blaming attitudes. The effect of empathy and identification with the victim was examined already by Aderman et al. (1974) in their study "Imagine Self/Watch Her". The authors experimented how victim blaming would occur if the study subjects would be told to imagine how they would feel in the victim's position instead of just watching her like in the study of Lerner and Simmons (1966). The results showed that the observers would evaluate the victim drastically more positively would they be told to imagine themselves in a victim's position (Aderman et al. 1974, 342). Silver et al. (2015, 945) found that interpersonal empathy predicted increased empathy and prosocial behaviour towards sex-trafficking victims, and participants with the highest empathy were also less prone to victim blaming. Sakallı-Uğurlu et al. (2007, 893) found empathy to predict more positive attitudes towards rape victims. Past studies by Hinck and Thomas (1999) and Fonow et al. (1992) indicate that empathy could be increased by awareness workshops and educational films.

Identification with the victim's fate and one's own previous experiences of having been treated unjustly have been found connected to willingness to engage in prosocial behaviour and to the

withdrawal from victim-blaming attitudes (Lerner 1980, 61; 97). The reflection on one's life experience seemed to play a role in empathic concern expressed by the two following survey participants:

> "I could [fall a victim of trafficking] had I continued to use drugs in my youth."
>
> 45, male

> "One cannot classify people as "good" and "bad", and things can happen to anyone. […] [Events in my life] have not been just, we often get into situations that we do not deserve."
>
> 15, female

However, certain precautions should be considered in efforts to raise empathic concern. According to Lerner (1980, 78), empathy is the emotional arousal elicited by another person's suffering, the pain which people often seek to alleviate by condemning the victim. Hence, Lerner makes a division between empathy, the emotional reaction that might in fact increase the victim blaming, and sympathy, which is the compassionate response leading to prosocial behaviour (Ibid.). In order to prevent victim-blaming attitudes, one should seek ways to avoid the emotional reaction to take over. The study by Loseman and van den Bos (2012, 1) suggests that facilitating self-regulation, by means of self-affirmation, enables people to cope with BJW threatening information and thus avoiding the urge to blame victims.

4.4.3. The (Domino) Effect of Positive Examples

Experience from positive examples might also reinforce "overstanding human trafficking". The interviewed experts mentioned the positive development in recent years and described cases of adequate anti-trafficking action. One expert described a case of exemplary work within the police:

> "Luckily there are a lot of different [people] in the police too. For example, I went to [city] to give a training for [the local police department], so there was an experienced criminal investigator who told about a case from years ago, when they started to arrest the offenders, they said that they themselves had inspected the place a year back, and they had used the manager of the work as an interpreter, who was actually the offender, who told about these people that everything is fine, and took their passports from a closet, and showed "here are their passports, everything is fine." And the criminal investigator told that "if I had known then to use an outsider interpreter, to talk to each victim individually, and to ask them how much they are getting paid, this could have been resolved a year before." But because they made these classic mistakes and they is telling about them now, and teaches other police officers through their own mistake,

> and is in peace with it, so that is in my opinion magnificent, I felt like giving them an applaud."
>
> Expert No. 3

The description above indicates that proper action may produce long-term positive developments. This was noted by another expert:

> "If one thinks for example some public authority who could potentially identify victims in their work, when there has been a case, or a colleague has had a case and it has gone well and it has been treated properly, so of course it always lowers the threshold."
>
> Expert No. 4

An experience of successful processes of identification and/or assistance of trafficking victims (whether it is one's own personal experience or an awareness of such case) may indeed contribute to developments towards peace culture where injustice is met with active attempts to alleviate the suffering. The BJW research provides two viewpoints to the effect of positive examples. First, they may affect the reactions elicited by preconscious BJW (Lerner 1998, 247). By supporting the feelings of ability and control, the positive examples may decrease the psychological need for reactions of denial/withdrawal, derogation and blame and increase the motivation to take action on behalf of the victim. Second, the kinds of narratives of human trafficking where victims have been adequately identified and helped, crimes successfully investigated and prosecuted, and the offenders sentenced may support BJW. According to Dalbert (1998, 87-88), BJW can also lead to positive outcomes of i.e. prosocial behaviour and better adaptation of victims. Finally, it may be that BJW should not be completely abandoned after all: researchers have studied that intense 'belief in an unjust world' may lead to apathy and disengagement (Lench & Chang 2007, 134).

5. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to explore how victim blaming functions as a form of cultural violence in the context of human trafficking in Finland. The data from the qualitative survey and the expert interviews have been analysed in order to answer to the research questions "What kinds of BJW-related victim-blaming attitudes are there among people residing in Finland?" and "How do such attitudes affect the identification and assistance of victims of human trafficking?" The summary of the findings will be presented in subchapter 5.1. In order to verify and reflect the findings, cases of human trafficking survivors Marissa Jaakola and Itohan Okundaye will be discussed in subchapter 5.2., along with the development of the visibility of human trafficking in Finland during this research process. The findings will be further discussed in subchapter 5.3. Finally, suggestions for further research and policy will be presented in subchapter 5.4.

5.1. Summary of the Findings

Lerner's just world metaphor provides a theoretical framework which demonstrates that the various beliefs detected from the data are intertwined with a greater entity, a belief system that I would define as the "Belief in a Just Finland", a form of BJW that has developed in the Finnish context. In the Belief in a Just Finland, there is no human trafficking: 'our just world' consists of educated, white Finnish nationals, non-vulnerable men, careful, yet strong and independent women, and able individuals with full agency, control and thus responsibility over their life. The world of victims portrays a reality and people that the Belief in a Just Finland excludes from the perceived 'our just world': the 'extreme violence and slavery' of human trafficking, the feelings of inability, guilt and helplessness related to anti-trafficking action, the 'innocent victims', and the derogated sex workers, foreigners, and drug users. The subsequent reactions of denial/withdrawal, derogation, and blame may lead to the inability or reluctance to act efficiently on behalf of the victims, which bears detrimental consequences to the identification and assistance of victims of human trafficking. The attitudes related to the Belief in a Just Finland may contribute to, for instance, the invisibility of those not fulfilling the role of an 'innocent victim', the threshold to seek help, the efficiency of criminal investigation, the accuracy of court decisions, the criteria for residence permit policies, the arrangement of criminal procedures in a way that adds to the mental burden of a victim, and the accessibility and quality of assistance of the victims. The Belief in a Just Finland is a form of cultural violence: it hides, justifies, and increases the suffering of victims of human trafficking. However, the Belief in a Just Finland refers only to the entity of BJW-related beliefs; alternative approaches were discovered as well. Awareness, empathy, and positive examples appeared as avenues towards cultural peace.

Table 3. Summary of the findings.

Example from the data	Beliefs related to BJW	Consequences
"I do not know [if there is human trafficking in Finland], and I do not believe so. I hope not."	"Our Just World" There is no human trafficking in Finland, and/or Finnish people cannot be victims.	Neither the general public nor the public authorities, especially in municipalities, are prepared to identify and assist victims of human trafficking. Finnish nationals not seen as potential victims. "The culture of disbelief" (Pearce et al. 2009).
"Women and children are kidnapped for sexual exploitation, men are not."	"Our Just World" Men are not vulnerable and are more capable of protecting themselves.	Male victims less easily identified, vulnerability and needs of men more likely to be ignored, which may affect their assistance and even the residence permit policies. More expected agency leads to more blame. Relevant forms mentioned: labour exploitation and forced labour.
"I feel I am very safe, I do not drink alcohol. Women can be drugged at restaurants and become victims of human trafficking without them knowing."	"Our Just World" Women can avoid falling victims of sexual violence by taking precautions, Finnish women are strong, independent and not vulnerable.	Female victims blamed for "not being careful" or for being "naive" or "too nice." Finnish women not as readily seen as victims; the responsibility for their victimisation. Mentioned especially in relation to forms of sexual exploitation.
"It would be strange if some trafficking victim could walk in the streets and they would not seek help."	"Our Just World" Individuals have full agency, control and thus responsibility to avoid misfortune by adequate character or behaviour. Ideal of a rational individual making active choices.	Victims of human trafficking blamed for 1. getting deceived 2. "consenting to exploitation", and 3. not seeking help. Victims ashamed and afraid of seeking help, self-blame. Victim blaming affects i.e. stages of criminal procedures.
"For example, people are sold as slaves in some developing countries."	"The world of victims" Human trafficking as an extreme form of violence and suffering.	Exploitation and victims not as easily identified, fear and shame for "over-reacting", inaction.
"The lack of one's own resources and the awareness of the fact that you cannot improve this problem, but you feel the sting of conscience, and simultaneously you cannot affect it, so you kind of get angry to the issue, you have the need to explain it somehow."	"The World of Victims" Perception of human trafficking as a difficult, foreign concept; lack of resources; feelings of inability, guilt and helplessness; elevated motivation to disbelieve, blame and derogate the victims.	Lack of resources or knowledge creates uncertainty and helplessness: easier to ignore than investigate, motivation to avoid, blame and derogate the victims. Decreased motivation to investigate crimes related to human trafficking; tendency to choose to investigate or prosecute a crime with other classification of offence than human trafficking.
"If you are too good or too open, naive, wanting to help everyone, you cannot see that other person is using you for their own good."	"The World of Victims" 'Innocent victim paradigm': people motivated to come to the aid of only those perceived as innocent, ideal victims: 'blameless' and sympathetic.	People not befitting the role of an ideal victim, i.e. LGTBQ people, less easily identified. Lack of understanding of diverse ways of character and behaviour trafficking victims may have, lack of understanding of a victim's agency.
"It is thought then that one has chosen to use drugs, it is one's own fault and in that world one ends up a target of all these kinds of violence and crimes."	"The World of Victims" Sex workers, foreigners and drug users have "chosen" to enter "their world" where violence and suffering are natural and inevitable.	Crimes not as easily investigated, victims blamed and derogated, victims held responsible for their own state for "choosing" to immigrate, do sex work or do drugs. Elevated threshold to seek help. Resulting dehumanisation may affect, for instance, victims of forced marriage, forced prostitution and forced criminal activity.

By “The Belief in a Just Finland” I do not refer to Finnish culture per se, but to the context of the beliefs related to BJW detected in this study. The current study is qualitative by nature; hence it does not provide means to indicate the scope nor scale of the effect of victim-blaming attitudes in the identification and assistance of victims of human trafficking in Finland. The results indicate that these beliefs exist, and that sometimes they do affect the identification and assistance of trafficking victims. Furthermore, it can be stated that the detected beliefs are not exceptions to the rule, but rather they represent the most common problematic attitudes the experts encounter in their work. The survey data revealed some existing attitudes and beliefs, which were often in line with the notions made by experts. It must be reminded here that human trafficking is a wide concept, which entails many different forms, and the victims come from very diverse backgrounds and realities. Thus, the significance and effect of the beliefs presented in this study varies according to each individual’s background, the specific situation and the form of exploitation. The subchapters of the analysis appear as rigid categories, while in reality, different beliefs affect individuals intersectionally.

Most of the findings are in line with previous studies, which have addressed, for instance, Finland’s tendency to approach human rights violations as something ‘out there’, the reluctance to see Finnish women as victims, perils of victim stereotypes, and the blaming of victims of forced prostitution in the Finnish legal system. The pressing topics that have not been covered at length in previous studies are, for instance, the unidentified vulnerability of male victims in relation to labour exploitation, the effects of the lack of resources in the attitudes of public authorities in Finland, the dehumanisation of victims with foreign backgrounds in cases of i.e. forced marriage, and the invisibility, derogation, and blame that particularly affect victims of forced criminal activity and people addicted to substances.

5.2. Verification: Development of the Visibility of Human Trafficking in Finland

Throughout the research process of this thesis, I have followed the development of the visibility of human trafficking in the Finnish reporting and public discussion. I have had the opportunity to attend a seminar organised by FinnWID on the human trafficking of Nigerian women and interview one of its panelists, Nigerian human trafficking survivor Itohan Okundaye. These activities represent the verification of the results of this thesis, which constitutes a part of the phase of conclusion drawing in the qualitative content analysis (Miles & Huberman 1994, 11).

In October 2018, at the time of interviewing experts, the story of Marissa Jaakola was widely reported in the media. A book and a documentary had recently been published, which revealed how Jaakola was kidnapped by her employer and taken to Tunisia in 2007, where she was imprisoned and

subjected malnourishment, battery, and sexual exploitation. After months of imprisonment, she managed to escape. The public authorities were first reluctant to help, social workers derogated her, and the offender was never prosecuted for the crime of human trafficking in Finland (Jaakola & Väntänen 2018). A news article by Puukka (18.10.2018) describes how human trafficking elicits an image of a young African woman who is deceived to go to Europe for work, but ends up in forced prostitution, not "a Finnish woman with education and language skills, who seeks employment from the website of the Ministry of Labour". In the same article, Jaakola talks about the victim blaming she has experienced: "[I]t is probably some kind of self-defence mechanism. One does not want to think that this happens in Finland. It is not accepted." (Ibid.). Jaakola's experience counters beliefs that there is no human trafficking in Finland or that Finnish, educated women cannot be victims. The beliefs related to the perceived 'Our just world' seem to have played a role in the way in which Jaakola has been treated.

In our interview in May 2019, Itohan Okundaye told that she has not encountered victim-blaming attitudes and described the people that she has met as empathic. Her story might represent the image of human trafficking better known by the audiences: as a 15-year-old, she was deceived to go abroad and forced into prostitution in Italy. When she became pregnant, she fled to Finland. Today, Okundaye is an activist in the anti-trafficking campaign organised by FinnWID. Her insights provided a view on the significance of structural violence in her position, which can be made invisible or justified by the focus on the victim's actions. For example, Okundaye criticised the anti-trafficking action in Benin City for focusing on raising awareness among the local youth on dangers of leaving instead of providing them with means to stay. Okundaye also criticised the Finnish state policy of sending victims of human trafficking and their children back to Italy and Nigeria. Okundaye emphasised the potential of former victims of human trafficking once they are given opportunity to recover: "[I]f they are given an opportunity, they can actually do something with their lives and give back to the society and to the community." At the time of the interview, she had received a final decision by Migri stating that Okundaye and her 5-year-old son would be sent back to Italy. Over 5,000 people signed a petition that objected to Migri's decision. In September 2019, Okundaye and her son were given a one-year residence permit (Kuronen 20.9.2019).

In November and December 2019, human trafficking has been in the headlines of the Finnish media due to the detention of cultural counsellor Veijo Baltzar for suspicion of aggravated human trafficking. An article with interviews of anonymous victims described how Baltzar had recruited young women in vulnerable positions, including minors, to his theatre productions, where manipulation, violence, and sexual exploitation took place. (Teittinen & Kallionpää 24.11.2019). On

8th December 2019, Helsingin Sanomat published an interview with rap artist Linda-Maria Roine who talked about having been a victim of Baltzar. Roine stated that the actions of Baltzar have been circled by a culture of indifference: even when the problems have been known, there has been silence. She had been afraid that she would not be believed, as Baltzar had connections to well-known politicians in Finland. Roine had previously not publicly shared her experiences under her own name for fear of victim blaming. However, the rap artist describes having been surprised that there were not as much victim-blaming reactions as she had expected and that there is a criminal investigation: "The fact that the public authorities actually take action and the offender is caught, it is just the best." Roine elaborates her motivation to talk about her experiences by her own name: "[I]want the victims of Veijo and victims of similar acts to see that they have nothing to be ashamed of." (Kallionpää & Teittinen 8.12.2019).

It can be expected that the awareness of human trafficking and its occurrence in Finland has increased since the data collection of the survey in summer 2018. The visibility in the media and the examples of Jaakola, Okundaye, and Roine reflect both cultural violence and cultural peace. The awareness of human trafficking appears to be increasing, activism occurs on behalf of the survivors, the actions of the offenders are brought to light, and a stance against victim blaming is being taken. However, the examples verify the prevalence and the effects of the 'culture of disbelief' within Finnish society. Furthermore, male victims of human trafficking have remained invisible in news coverage. The labour exploitation in Nepalese restaurants was widely reported in the media in March 2019 (Teittinen 30.3.2019), yet the victims were primarily referred to as workers, concealing the male gender. Thus, the invisibility of the vulnerability of men seems to remain unscrutinised. A need remains for a more comprehensive approach in order to tackle BJW-related beliefs in Finnish public discourse. The increasing visibility of human trafficking in Finland makes the discussion on false beliefs and victim blaming all the more central.

5.3. Discussion

This research process was initiated due to an interest to the mechanisms that make us unable – or unwilling – to identify and/or assist victims of human trafficking in Finland. As a result, this study has made visible those culturally and psychologically held beliefs that lead to disbelief, derogation and blame of trafficking victims, which may bear severe consequences to their identification and assistance. The 'Belief in a Just Finland' justifies and makes invisible the exploitation of those people who are most vulnerable to human trafficking. Simultaneously, those perceived as able selves of 'our just world' may be disbelieved and blamed and their vulnerability overlooked. Hence, the victim blaming attitudes can affect the position of any individual in the processes of identification and

assistance. Victim blaming should be addressed in anti-trafficking action as it can ultimately lead to situations where someone continues to suffer at the hands of the offender. Furthermore, victim blaming may put the trafficking victim's recovery and legal protection at risk.

There is a 'security paradox' in Finland: a country that is rated as the "happiest country of the world" is also rated as the most racist and one of the most violent countries for women in the EU (Helliwell et al. 2019; FRA 2018, 13; FRA 2014, 30). In the Finnish context, there may be a need for a better understanding of the significance of cultural violence to the security. Victim blaming should be approached as a security threat, as it may be the reason why crimes are not reported, identified or investigated. This should be considered especially by the police. The findings of this study indicate that the reactions of disbelief, derogation and blame towards trafficking victims do sometimes occur within the police, and these reactions may be caused by i.e. the insufficiently resourced working environment or by the attitudes towards foreigners, sex workers or drug users. The problem is possibly related to individual police officers, but it is crucial to acknowledge that the police represents the state. Thus, the occurrence of the detected attitudes within police work would represent structural violence towards vulnerable groups practiced by the state. Yet, the police are not the only institution where this applies: victim blaming bears severe consequences and thus should be prevented in, for instance, the judicial system and the social and health care sector.

It is crucial to note that victim blaming is not caused by malevolent individuals. We all may withhold belief in a just world to some degree, as it provides an efficient coping mechanism which responses to our need for a sense of safety and order. The BJW is reinforced in societies through education, culture, media and state policies. Furthermore, the disbelief, blame and derogation specific to context of human trafficking may be a result of the systematic lack of adequate information and popular, misleading representations in the media. Victim-blaming attitudes may also be caused by structural factors, such as inadequate resources and the extensive amount of work which shape the circumstances of public authorities working with cases related to human trafficking. The avenues towards cultural peace discussed in the analysis bear an important reminder that victim blaming can be prevented. Cultural peace can be reinforced by, for instance, awareness, empathy and narratives on positive examples.

5.4. Implications for Further Research and Policy

I find this study to provide three important contributions to the research on human trafficking in Finland. First, the just-world hypothesis provides an explanatory theoretical framework, which helps to understand the psychological and cultural mechanisms behind victim-blaming attitudes. Second, through the just world metaphor, this study provides a general overview of the beliefs that contribute to the invisibility of human trafficking and pose a challenge to identification and assistance of victims. The synthesis of the just world metaphor and the detected beliefs may be applicable to other forms of violence portrayed as an "invisible crime". Third, this study demonstrates how human rights are not applied in a "vacuum" free of social hierarchies, biases and prejudices: sometimes preconsciously adopted belief systems play a significant role in who is seen as a victim and how they are treated in the processes of identification and assistance. Those beliefs may sometimes remain invisible too, as many acknowledge them to be politically incorrect. They exist nevertheless, which is why I find it crucial to vocabularise and discuss them.

In this understudied topic, there is room for further research. Next, a quantitative study could explore how common these victim-blaming attitudes are among Finnish people or within a specific institution in order to estimate the extent of their effects to the identification and assistance of trafficking victims. Also, further studies could focus on specific forms of trafficking, or groups of victims: how do the victim-blaming attitudes affect, for example, minors with substance abuse, racialised Finns, or LGBTQ+ people? Forced criminal activity appeared as one of the most complex forms in terms of blaming reactions, and would certainly require more research. There is a specific need for research on the treatment of victims of forced criminal activity or those addicted to substances in the Finnish legal system. Studies on convictions of human trafficking could provide further understanding of the legal position of a trafficking victim and the profiles of the offenders in Finland. By producing knowledge on various realities of human trafficking in Finland, the researchers can question the dominant human trafficking myths and the subsequent victim blaming. The academia could also contribute to the efforts to prevent victim blaming by developing methods that help to raise human trafficking awareness and empathy towards victims.

The findings of this study indicate a need for several policy changes. Culturally and psychologically sustained BJW should be targeted by both raising human trafficking awareness and improving the working circumstances and capabilities of public authorities. As exploitation, beliefs and blame may occur ubiquitously in people's lives, these anti-trafficking efforts should reach all sectors of the society. The police would benefit from trainings where human trafficking myths and victim-blaming

attitudes and their consequences are discussed. A public stance against victim blaming taken by the police could increase the people's trust and improve the identification of victims. Also, the resources of the police on anti-trafficking action should be increased. The interviewed experts indicated that there is a need for training on requisites of human trafficking among judicial authorities in pretrial investigations. The training of authorities in the judicial system should address expectations for a victim's behaviour related to 'ideal victimhood'. Victim blaming could also be targeted by law. The findings of this study support the suggestion of Roth (2012, 255; 258) on adopting the lack of consent of a victim as a basis of examination of whether the requisites of human trafficking are met.

The need for training on human trafficking and the effects of victim blaming is prevalent within the social and health care sector especially in municipalities. Drawing from one survey participant's report about witnessing exploitative realities of homeless people and the lack of knowledge of one's rights, the information on exploitation and ways to seek help should be made available in the services addressed for vulnerable groups, for instance, in night shelters, social stand-by services, and reform schools. The Finnish education system would be a field where human trafficking awareness could be enhanced most efficiently. This study suggests that the syllabus of the primary education should include courses which enable pupils to identify exploitation similar to human trafficking and to know how to report a crime or to seek help. Finally, this study supports that the journalists in the media have the opportunity to increase the human trafficking awareness and to prevent victim-blaming attitudes by providing stories that question the dominant narratives of evil villains and pure victims. Furthermore, all the awareness raising should aim for mainstreaming a perception that a victim's prior actions or "innocence" are fundamentally irrelevant and do not affect the legal position of a victim or their entitlement to help. The blame should be placed where it belongs: to the acts of direct and structural violence.

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Annexes

ANNEX 1. Survey Questionnaire Form

PRO GRADU -SURVEY: KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN FINLAND

Personal information:

1. Age	
2. Gender	
3. Education	
4. Occupation	
5. City of Residence	

Questionnaire:

1. How would you define human trafficking?

2. What forms of human trafficking do you know?

3. Is there human trafficking in Finland? If so, in which forms?

4. What factors may contribute to becoming a victim of human trafficking?

5. How can you identify a victim of human trafficking?

6. **A victim of human trafficking can be…**

	Yes [x]	No [x]
Child		
Senior		
Disabled		
Female		
Male		
Inter/Transgender/Non-binary		
Gay/Lesbian/Bi		
Finnish		
Asylum seeker		
Irregular migrant		
Refugee		
Employee		
Customer		
Thief		
Prostitute		
Neighbour		
Beggar		
Drug addict		
Pupil at school		

7. What is the root cause for human trafficking?

8. Is it possible that you have encountered, or could counter, a victim of human trafficking in your work or in your daily life? Why?

9. What would you do, if you would suspect that a person is a victim of human trafficking?

10. Can one get away from trafficking and survive? What do the survivors do?

11. Could you become a victim of human trafficking? Why/Why not?

12. What is your opinion on the following sentences?

a) Good things happen to good people.

b) People get what they deserve.

c) Events in my life have been just.

ANNEX 2. Sample Questionnaire Form

PRO GRADU -SURVEY: KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN FINLAND

Personal Information:

1. Age	
2. Gender	
3. Education	
4. Occupation	
5. City of Residence	

Questionnaire:

6. How would you define human trafficking?

7. What forms there are in human trafficking?

8. What factors may contribute to becoming a victim of human trafficking?

9. Is there human trafficking in Finland? If so, in which forms?

10. How can you identify a victim of human trafficking?

11. Who do you contact if you suspect having identified a victim of trafficking?

12. A victim of human trafficking can be…

	Yes [x]	No [x]
Child		
Senior		
Disabled		
Woman		
Man		
Inter/Trans/Non-binary		
Heterosexual		
Gay/Lesbian/Bi		
Finnish		
Asylum seeker		
Undocumented migrant		
Refugee		
Eastern European		
Western European		
African		
Employee		
Client		
Thief		
Worker without a permit		
Prostitute		
Neighbour		

13. What is the root cause for human trafficking?

14. In what kind of a situation you would suspect there was a case of human trafficking?

15. What would you do if you suspected someone being a victim of human trafficking?

16. Could you become a victim of human trafficking? Why/why not?

17. What is your opinion about the following sentences?

d) Good things happen to good people.

e) People get what they deserve.

f) Events in my own life have been just.

g) The world is a just place.

ANNEX 3. Info Document

PRO GRADU -THESIS:

KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN FINLAND

I am collecting data for my thesis which will explore the knowledge and attitudes that people in Finland have about victims of human trafficking.

In my thesis I will follow the ethical principles of research in the humanities and social and behavioural sciences assessed by Finnish National Board On Research Integrity (TENK 2018, http://www.tenk.fi/fi/eettinen-ennakkoarviointi-ihmistieteissa). This means for example that I will treat your answers with respect to privacy and data protection.

In the thesis to be published, your words may be cited, and along with the citation your age and gender will be published, but your city of residence, occupation or level of education will not be revealed. Your answers regarding your education, occupation or city of residence can be used in order to produce statistics, but the results will be shown in a manner in which you cannot be identified from the published data. If you will, you do not need to reveal your level of education or occupation. Participation to the research is voluntary.

More information on human trafficking, identification of victims and anti-trafficking work in Finland can be found for example from the website www. ihmiskauppa.fi.

Thank you for participating in the survey research of my thesis!

Mari Ek

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ANNEX 4. Original Info Document in Finnish

PRO GRADU -TUTKIELMA:

TIEDOT JA ASENTEET IHMISKAUPAN UHREISTA SUOMESSA

Kerään aineistoa Pro Gradu -tutkielmaani, jossa tullaan käsittelemään tietoja ja asenteita, joita ihmisillä Suomessa on ihmiskaupan uhreista.

Tulen noudattamaan tutkielmassani Tutkimuseettisen Neuvottelukunnan (TENK) laatimaa ohjeistusta ihmistieteisiin luettavien tutkimusalojen eettisistä periaatteista (TENK 2018, http://www.tenk.fi/fi/eettinen-ennakkoarviointi-ihmistieteissa). Tämä tarkoittaa esimerkiksi sitä, että käsittelen antamiasi vastauksia yksityisyyden suojan ja tietosuojan periaatteita kunnioittaen.

Julkaistavassa Pro Gradu -työssä voidaan referoida sanomaasi, ja referaatin yhteydessä voidaan tuoda ilmi ikäsi ja sukupuolesi, mutta asuinpaikkaasi, ammattialaasi tai koulutustasoasi ei tulla kertomaan. Vastauksiasi koulutustasoosi, ammattialaasi tai asuinpaikkaasi voidaan käyttää tilaston tekemiseen, mutta tulokset näytetään niin, ettei sinua voida yksilöidä ja siten tunnistaa julkaistavasta tiedosta. Voit myös halutessasi jättää kertomatta koulutustasosi ja ammattialasi. Tutkimukseen osallistuminen on vapaaehtoista.

Lisätietoa ihmiskaupasta, ihmiskaupan uhrien tunnistamisesta ja ihmiskaupan vastaisesta työstä Suomessa saat esimerkiksi osoitteesta www.ihmiskauppa.fi.

Kiitos, että osallistuit Pro Gradu -tutkielmaani liittyvään kyselytutkimukseen!

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ANNEX 5. Research Design of Questions for the Expert Interviews

Method: Exploratory expert interview (semi-structured)

Research questions:

1. What people in Finland know about human trafficking?

2. How Belief in a Just World in reflected in their answers? Can the level of awareness correlate with victim blaming?

3. How awareness and Belief in a Just World affect the identification and assistance of the victims of human trafficking?

Themes:

- AWARENESS ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING
- VICTIM BLAMING
- OTHER ATTITUDES
- THE RELATION OF ATTITUDES AND AWARENESS
- EFFECT ON THE IDENTIFICATION AND ASSISTANCE OF THE VICTIMS?

Potential questions:

1. How well-known phenomenon human trafficking is in Finland in your opinion?

2. How would you evaluate the preparedness of professionals on identification and assistance of the victims? (What is known, what is not, common misperceptions?)

3. What are the reasons why a person is not identified as a victim?

4. In the survey, some people answered that they would probably do nothing, if they doubted that someone is a victim of human trafficking. Have you recognised this kind of reluctance to help though your work? What do you think is the reason behind this kind of thinking?

5. What kind of attitudes related to human trafficking have you encountered in your work? Which ones do find particularly problematic in relation to identification and assistance of the victims?

6. The stereotypes shown in the survey are that a person can fall victim of human trafficking because a person is 1. naive, careless, stupid 2. does not have own will, does not know how to stand up for him/herself. Especially naivety was mentioned for multiple times.

    a. Based on your experiences, how would you compare these views with the reality you see in your work?

b. Have you encountered this kind of presumptions in your work?

c. What do you think is the reason for these assumptions?

7. Have you observed victim blaming targeted at the victims of human trafficking? How? An example?

8. Is the victim blaming targeted differently based on the form of human trafficking?

9. How significant challenge victim blaming is in the identification and assistance of the victims? How does it affect?

10. On the website ihmiskauppa.fi it is stated that "Victims may be treated as illegal immigrants, smuggled migrants, petty criminals, prostitutes, victims of domestic violence or illegal workers, rather than as trafficking victims who have been subjected to exploitation." Is this about lack pf knowledge on human trafficking?

11. Has this kind of treatment continued by the officials even though a person would have been identified as a victim or a suspect would have been risen?

10. Does this kind of a stigma affect the willingness of the officials to investigate a crime?

12. Do you think that victim blaming derives from the lack of knowledge, or values, personality, institutions?

13. Have you discussed about victim blaming with your clients? Do they blame themselves? Has some client told about a situation where they have not got help?

14. What is the significance of public knowledge and attitudes in the identification and assistance of the victims in Finland?

15. Can an individual help in the identification and help of the victims?

16. Should all Finns know about human trafficking and identification of victims, and why?

17. Is there anything else you would like to add?