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WOMEN'S CIVIL SOCIETY AND COUNTRIES' SUPPORT OF SUPRANATIONAL POLICY CONCERNING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

A quantitative analysis of countries' ratification of
the Istanbul Convention

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Abstract

Violence against women (VAW) is a societal problem and a violation of human rights. It is crucial that governments act on the oppression that women face for being women. There has been a lack of a coherent legal system across Europe on VAW. The Istanbul Convention was created by the Council of Europe and is first in being a supranational framework setting legally binding standards to prevent VAW. However, by the end of 2018, there were still countries in Europe that had not ratified the Istanbul Convention. The theoretical literature suggests that women's participation in civil society matters for how governments act on VAW. This Master's thesis explores to what extent women's participation in civil society explains countries ratification of the Istanbul Convention. Moreover, it also explores what effect the strength of women's civil society participation has on countries support of supranational VAW policy. The applied method is logistic regression analysis which is suitable when exploring a dichotomous dependent variable; the ratification or non-ratification of the Istanbul Convention. The results show that it is not possible to find a significant effect of women's participation in civil society on the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. Additional findings indicate that a higher level of women's physical security in a country increases the probability for ratification of the Istanbul Convention, indicating that countries that already have implemented and enforced laws on VAW are more likely to ratify the Istanbul Convention.

Keywords: Violence against women, Women's participation in civil society, Istanbul Convention

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List of Abbreviations

CEDAW The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

EU European Parliament

FRA European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

GDP Gross Domestic Product

GII Gender Inequality Index

GOF Goodness Of Fit

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

UN United Nations

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

SDG Sustainable Development Goal

VAW Violence Against Women

VIF Variance Inflation Factor

WINGOS Women's International Non-Governmental Organizations

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1. Introduction

Violence against women (VAW) is a persistent and pervasive problem that affects women all over the world, every day (Weldon 2002, xi). VAW reflects and maintains structural gender inequalities (Hester 2004, 1433). Within Europe, VAW remains a violation of human rights. One third of women in the European Union (EU) have been exposed to physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15, 50 percent of women experience sexual harassment and one in 20 is raped (European Parliament 2018). Stalking, sexual violence, physical and psychological abuse by an intimate partner, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and forced abortion are deeply traumatizing acts of violence that women face. VAW has effects beyond the harm of the immediate victims. Women who have never been victims of violence change their behavior to minimize the risk of violence; women avoid to walk home alone after dark, being in private spaces with men or draw attention to themselves. Hence, VAW prevents women from taking advantage of their rights as citizens in society (Weldon 2002, 10).

The clear majority of VAW is carried out by men, it is structural violence that is used to sustain male power and control. Considering the scattered attempts by public authorities such as police, courts and social services to help women who have been victims of violence, the societal and structural character of men's violence becomes even more evident (Council of Europe 2018). In the United Nations' (UN) Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (UN 1993) it is stated that "violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women" (Weldon 2002, 13). VAW has been on the agenda within the women's movement since the mid 1970s, and on the intergovernmental agenda since the 1990s when governments first started to take measures to combat VAW (Weldon 2006b, 59). Still, VAW continues to be an urgent issue (FRA 2014).

Moreover, limited governmental and economic resources are dedicated to the issue of VAW in comparison to the magnitude of the problem. Gender equality cannot be achieved if public authorities overlook the large-scale gender-based violence that women are victims of (Council of Europe 2018). Gender equality is one of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), where it is acknowledged that gender inequality continues to hold women back as well as deprives women of basic rights and opportunities. In empowering women, progressive legal

frameworks are necessary, as well as addressing structural problems such as unfair social norms (UN 2018). Hence, it is crucial that governments act on the oppression of women and the violation of human rights that VAW constitutes. National and supranational governance continue to be of significance for the development of policies and practices regarding VAW (Hester 2004, 1432). However, there is great variation in how governments respond to the issue of VAW. Even governments in Scandinavian “woman-friendly” welfare states seem to do little to address VAW. Policies on VAW in developed countries appear not to follow the expected pattern when comparing it to other social policy areas (Weldon 2002, xi).

Regarding practices that aim at combating VAW, the Istanbul Convention is the most comprehensive international treaty to date that addresses this problem (European Parliament 2018). The Istanbul Convention was created by the Council of Europe¹, who identified gaps in existing legislation in Europe, and a broad set of obligations were included in the Istanbul Convention, ranging from legal measures on criminalizing violence to awareness raising and data collection (European Parliament 2017, 1). The Istanbul Convention is the first supranational framework to set legally binding standards to prevent gender-based violence, protect victims and prosecute perpetrators (Simonovic 2014, 602). The Istanbul Convention is open for ratification for all countries that are members of the Council of Europe and open for accession by other non-member states. However, there is variation in which member states of the Council of Europe have ratified the Istanbul Convention. By the end of 2018, there were still 14 member states of the Council of Europe that had not ratified the convention². Eight of these countries are members of the EU. Most of the members of the European Parliament have expressed their regrets that these countries have failed to consider the Istanbul Convention as the best available legal instrument in combating VAW.

1.1 Aim and research questions

Previous research in policy adoption has mainly focused on variables regarding political parties, state institutions, the number of women in the labor force and political institutions on the national level (Htun and Weldon 2012, 548). Little scholarly attention has been given to

¹ The Council of Europe is a leading human rights organization that all countries in Europe, except for Belarus and Kosovo, are members of.

² Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Slovak Republic, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom.

the cross-national variation in government responses to VAW, where some countries have adopted a range of measures to address the issue, while others have done next to nothing (Weldon 2002, 3). VAW constitutes a limitation for achieving the goals of a democratic government, such as public health, pay equity, economic development and reproduction. VAW is an understudied area of public policy; only a handful of studies have sought the explanation to variation in government's response to VAW (Busch 1992; Elman 1996; Heise, Raikes, Wats and Zwi 1994; Htun and Weldon 2012; Weldon 2002).

Previous research has shown that women's civil society participation matters for government responsiveness to VAW. So far only domestic policy responsiveness regarding VAW has been researched. The aim of this Master's thesis is to explore to what extent women's participation in civil society matters for countries ratification of policies concerning VAW on the supranational level. This thesis will add to previous research by researching if women's civil society participation matters in the ratification of VAW policy on the supranational level. With the increasing globalization and existence of transnational actors and NGOs, it is interesting to evaluate if participation in civil society can have effects on the supranational level. The Istanbul Convention is the first convention to set legally binding measures that solely focus on combating VAW. Previous conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) have been criticized for omitting VAW. Hence, the Istanbul Convention provides a unique opportunity to assess the effect of women's civil society participation on supranational VAW policies.

In a bigger perspective, this study will contribute to the research on what makes states ratify conventions that concern women's human rights. Regarding VAW, it continues to be a very relevant policy area and has been described as a global problem and violation of human rights (FRA 2014). Europe is known as a progressive region, also when it comes to gender equality, which is why Europe is an interesting region to investigate. It is puzzling to find that a wide range of different countries in Europe have failed to protect women's human rights by not ratifying the Istanbul Convention. Hence, the research questions of this Master's thesis are:

1. *What effect does the strength of women's civil society have on countries' support of supranational VAW policy?*
2. *To what extent does the strength of women's civil society participation explain countries' ratification of the Istanbul Convention?*

1.2 Disposition

The following section starts with a thorough description of the Istanbul Convention and the Council of Europe. The thesis then reviews the literature on civil society, women's participation in civil society and the development of VAW as a political issue. It will also feature a literature review of other important concepts that are contributing factors for the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, such as women's political leadership, liberal democracy, and gender equality. At the end of this section, the theoretical framework and hypothesis are presented. In the third part, the methodology is introduced, including a discussion of operationalization, data, method, and diagnostics. The following section features the results where the regression analyses are presented, and a discussion follows. Lastly, the conclusion answers the research questions and provides suggestions for future research.

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1 The Istanbul Convention

The Istanbul Convention was created by the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe is one of the leading human rights organizations in Europe. All countries in Europe, except for Belarus and Kosovo, are members of the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe has undertaken initiatives to protect women from violence, and has, among other things, run a Europe-wide campaign to combat VAW, including domestic violence. This campaign revealed the extent of the variation in national responses to VAW and domestic violence within Europe. National reports, surveys as well as studies have shown the magnitude of VAW in Europe. It became evident that there was a need for harmonized legal standards to be able to protect victims, no matter where in Europe gender-based violence took place. An expert group was put together to draft a convention in this field (Council of Europe 2018).

The Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, hereafter referred to as the Istanbul Convention, was adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on 7 April 2011. In May 2011, it was opened for signature on the 121st Session of the Committee of Ministers in Istanbul. The Istanbul Convention entered into force on 1 August 2014. States that ratify the Istanbul Convention are legally bound to the provisions when the convention enters into force (Council of Europe 2018). The Istanbul Convention is open for ratification for all member states of the Council of Europe, and open for accession for other states. However, no states outside the Council of Europe have ratified it (Council of Europe 2019).

The Istanbul Convention emerged from the work of the Council of Europe to monitor violence against girls and women. Gaps in existing legislation were identified, and a broad set of obligations were included in the convention, ranging from legal measures on criminalizing violence to awareness raising and data collection (European Parliament 2017, 1). VAW is explicitly understood as a violation of human rights in the Istanbul Convention. Gender-based violence is defined as “violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately” (Simonovic 2014, 602, Council of Europe 2018). It is an obligation for the state to address and prevent VAW, protect victims and prosecute perpetrators, and failure of doing so is the responsibility of the state (Council of Europe

2018). The Istanbul Convention is its first in being an instrument to set legally binding standards regarding preventing gender-based violence, protecting victims and prosecuting perpetrators. Prior to 2014, there was no supranational comprehensive European framework that formulated standards in prevention, protection, prosecution, and services for victims of violence. The Istanbul Convention provides such a framework (Simonovic 2014, 602), which is a major development for VAW that was welcomed by international human rights law (Peroni 2016, 50).

2.2 Literature review

2.2.1 Civil society

Civil society is a form of activity, rather than an institution or location. It is a type of social organization, operating through the coordination of activity and discussion, and it stands in contrast to large-scale systems of other forms of social organization such as bureaucratic institutions or markets that are driven by profit (Weldon 2006a, 2-3). The definition of civil society has been contested, showing the complexity in classifying it (Torsello 2012, 178). Civil society can be defined in different ways, and it has been debated which types of organizations that should be included in the term civil society, where not all civil society organizations are concerned with influencing political decisions (Howard 2002; Howard 2011). However, within civil society, people can influence politics and raise awareness for different issues. In comparison to economic institutions, companies or global communication networks, which do not have as their main aim to influence states' policies, civil society institutions are much more relevant as political actors. In broad terms, civil society can be defined as "society minus the state" (Shaw 1994, 647). Civil society should be seen as a way for groups in society to represent themselves, both in relation to society and the state (ibid). This is a view that comes from Gramsci's notion that "between the economic structure and the state with its legislation and its coercion stands civil society" (Gramsci 1995, 167). Moreover, studies show that the definition of civil society organization is rather equal across Europe (Howard 2002; Torsello 2012). The increasing agency of civil society to be able to influence political decisions on the same right as states and international organizations has led to a "democratization of international law" (Anderson 2000, 92).

2.2.2 Women's participation in civil society

Women have been organizing to combat the systematic inequalities they face as women since the beginning of the 1800s. Women's activism to challenge structural inequalities has led to enormous changes in societies all over the world. The women's movement is one of the most successful and enduring social movements in the modern era (Ferree & Mueller 2004, 576). Women's participation in civil society has been and still is important in influencing political decisions to combat gender inequality. Feminist civil society refers to "those voluntary associational activities aimed at undermining male domination and promoting the empowerment or status of women (or some sub-group of women)" (Weldon 2006a, 3). The number of women's international nongovernmental organizations (WINGOS) has grown exponentially since the 1970s (Paxton, Hughes and Green 2006, 900). Substantial research has been done on how civil society and international NGOs invoke new norms to pressure governments to translate them into policy and law (for example see Dona 2018, Htun and Weldon 2012, Shawki 2011). This has resulted in expanded knowledge of how civil society and activism affect national and global policy processes, also concerning issues that women's movements push for (Shawki 2011, 176).

Laurel Weldon (2006a) proposes that women organizing with the purpose of furthering their own empowerment is a counter-public, where women develop counter discourses regarding their oppression, which can affect the male-dominated, as well as, raced and classed, public sphere in which it is embedded. The development of a feminist civil society opens up for the possibility to make policy processes more inclusive of women's voices. It becomes more inclusive by constituting a forum for the development of women's voices and perspectives, and by introducing them to a broader public sphere. This development of a feminist civil society also enriches politics, both feminist and democratic, and should advance state responsiveness to women's concerns (Weldon 2006a, 2).

2.2.3 The development of VAW as a political issue

From the mid to late 1970s, there has been an increasing focus on women's rights as human rights within women's movements (Shawki 2011, 175). One of the areas that have been in focus for the international community within women human rights has been VAW, and the prevention of it (Shawki 2011, 176). VAW was on the agenda of the women's movement in the mid 1970s, and in the 1990s it also appeared on the intergovernmental agenda and governments started to take measures to address VAW (Weldon 2006b, 59). Feminists

welcomed this development which visualized the harm that women have experienced throughout history, and its roots in female subordination (Goldscheid 2014, 628-629). By the end of the 1990s, VAW was made a priority area by many human rights groups. By then, over 170 governments had signed a declaration against VAW, making it possible for women in over 20 countries to seek redress for violation of human rights in the international community through the Optional Protocol to CEDAW. In addition to legal and formal rights, considerable resources from governmental and intergovernmental institutions had been dedicated to combating VAW in both developed as well as in developing countries (Weldon 2006b, 64). In the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, the term violence against women was defined as any act of gendered violence that resulted in harm to women and occurred within the family, the community or that was perpetrated by the state (UN 1993; Hester 2004, 1433). The National Committee on Violence Against Women defined VAW as “behavior adopted by the man to control his victim which results in physical, sexual and/or physiological damage, forced social isolation, or economic deprivation, or behavior which leaves a woman living in fear” (Easteal 1994, 86). Moreover, state intervention in the issue of VAW has the potential to change direct expressions of structural gender inequality (Elman 1996, 3). The state has patriarchal aspects, meaning that masculine attributes and abilities are the basis of the state; however, the state also holds the potential to protect women from violence, which is why feminist movements seek redress through the state (Pateman 1998, 134; Elman 1996, 14).

Activists have successfully and dramatically increased the awareness of VAW globally, and the resources devoted to prevent it (Weldon 2006b, 55). The international community has ratified international treaties that aim at the human rights of women, and laws to prevent VAW have been developed as well as international institutions that focus on promoting women’s human rights (Shawki 2011, 175). VAW has also become an important subject in public policy making, globally. With the increased focus on VAW, new international norms have taken shape since the beginning of the 1990s, where VAW is defined and understood as a violation against human rights. It has become necessary for governments to act on VAW as these new more progressive norms have taken shape, which recognize that half of the populations’ human rights are violated on a daily basis (Shawki 2011, 176). The strong movement on gendered violence had an extensive impact on bringing about these changes (Weldon 2006b, 64).

2.2.4 Women's movements effect on policy and government responsiveness

Government responsiveness to VAW is to a large extent determined by the existence of a strong and autonomous women's movement which pressure and reinforce state institutions to promote women's status. The mobilization of women has been identified as a key catalyst to policy change regarding VAW (Weldon 2002, 5-4). When examining the development of social policy, it seems like governments' responses to VAW are different than to other social policy areas, which are more progressive. Hence, social structures of gender inequality can also affect policy processes (Weldon 2002, xi-xii). Women's movements are necessary to articulate VAW as a public problem, not a private affair (Weldon 2002, 61-62). In the following section, two examples of what women's movements have achieved will be reviewed.

There are several examples of governmental changes that have been made due to pressure from civil society. For example, in Italy, activists took to the streets in the mid 1990s because of frustration with the government for not acting on the issue of VAW. Activists created a nationwide petition to demand action from the government (Weldon 2002, 1-2).

One example from a relatively recent time is the #metoo movement, which has resulted in an increased debate regarding sexual violence against women and where men have been prosecuted for their actions (Adam and Booth 2018). Social movements have responded with outrage to how the state treats women who have been victims of violence. Change has been demanded, and it has been demanded in similar ways across most countries when it comes to VAW. Governments starting to take measures to combat VAW is an example of how social movements can demand action on issues that have previously been unrecognized (Weldon 2002, 2-3).

One of the most comprehensive studies on government response to VAW is Weldon's (2002) comparative study of VAW policy in 36 democratic countries. Weldon argues that the variation in responsiveness on the issue of VAW is explained by the level of interaction between women's movements and political institutions. An independent and strong women's movement that has connections in the government that aim to pursue the same goal creates insider-outsider partnerships. Such partnerships are catalysts for the development of VAW policy. Policy initiatives only result in a comprehensive governmental response when there is an effective machinery for women's policy. Where there is both an autonomous women's movement, as well as effective political institutions, governments' responses to VAW are

stronger (Weldon 2002, 156). In another study by Weldon (2006a), “Democratic policymaking on violence against women in the fifty US states”, Weldon finds that political and civic organizations and large social movement organizations are crucial for the improvement of democratic policy responsiveness. Those kinds of organizations expressly seek to promote women’s issues in the mainstream public sphere, by grassroots campaigns, lobbying or protest. By doing so, they diffuse feminist perspectives to the public, which, in extension, results in the improvement of policy responsiveness on VAW (Weldon 2006a, 156). Feminist mobilization in civil society has also been shown to matter for policy development regarding VAW in another study by Mala Htun and Weldon (Htun and Weldon 2012).

2.3 Review of alternative explanations

2.3.1 Women’s political leadership

A possible determinant for governments’ response to VAW is the number of women in political office (Heise, Pitanguy and Germain 1994, 45). Women’s political leadership constitutes a possibility for women to make changes (Kabeer 2005, 14). Women’s presence in power is correlated to some changes in policies regarding women’s rights, for example when it comes to preventing and punishing VAW (Htun and Piscopo 2010, 2). Women’s political leadership is increasing. However, it does not automatically lead to a substantive activity of representation. There is a distinction between substantive and descriptive representation; substantive representation refers to the effect that women’s presence in parliament has on women’s interests, and descriptive representation refers to the number of women in parliament (Wängnerud 2009, 52). The main interest in research on substantive representation is to which extent the number of women in parliament affects women’s interest in, for example, policies (Wängnerud 2009, 59), which stands in contrast to descriptive representation and the recent worldwide trend on quotas (Wängnerud 2009, 54). To make changes in policies in favor of women, it takes lobbying, consciousness-raising, administrative decisions as well as other political tasks. Even if women perform these tasks, female politicians may be unable to get their proposals approved since women face numerous obstacles in achieving changes in policies (Htun and Piscopo 2010, 8). However, there is evidence that implies that women ministers have performed some policy changes to support women’s rights. Some areas are more likely than others to change, and one area that is more prone to progressive policy changes is VAW (Htun and Piscopo 2010, 9). Where there has

been an increased level of women in parliaments, there has been a different prioritization of issues and gender sensitivity in all areas of governing, and changes have been made in existing laws as well as the introduction of new legislation (UN Chronicle 2010).

2.3.2 Liberal democracy

The protection of civil liberties also protects the possibility to engage in civil society, which should also affect women's participation in civil society throughout Europe. The liberal aspect of democracy is important for the possibility to engage in civil society. In a liberal democracy, individuals should have the right to participate in civil society no matter what opinions they choose to express – provided there is no violence. Civil society is an integral element in a free and just society. To require people to conform their opinions and actions to fit those of the state is a warning sign of a state that enforces an approved uniformity on civil society which undermines a healthy democracy (Mulherin and Kennedy 2019, 44). Member states of the Council of Europe have different backgrounds, and their level of liberal democracy varies. Since this can affect women's participation in civil society, it is of interest to explore if this in extension can affect the ratification of the Istanbul Convention.

2.3.3 Post-communist countries

Countries in Central and Eastern Europe have undergone a profound change from a form of totalitarianism to another type of political, economic and social system. Women's movements were at most minimally active during this transition, due to how gender was perceived in the old system. Communist governments were committed to gender equality, where women were believed to achieve emancipation under socialism and by being incorporated into the labor market (Waylen 1994). However, even when women constituted 50 percent of the labor force in Central and Eastern Europe by 1980, women were concentrated in gender segregated, low paid and low status jobs. Hence, women gained double oppression by still performing most domestic work at home while also performing paid work. Women's emancipation was a process decided from above, which together with the control of political space, hindered the development of an autonomous women's movement. Women's movements did not have a significant role in the deconstruction of the old, communist order, nor did they have much impact when new political systems and policies emerged. This is because of the nature of previous regimes, where rights had been granted top-down, and women did not have a tradition of activism and participating in civil society. They had not struggled to achieve or defend their rights. The old and discredited, communist order was associated with feminism and

women's emancipation, making these values feel alien in the new order (Waylen 1994). Hence, the association of feminism with the former order and the government's control over civil society resulting in the elimination of political space has limited the growth of women's movements organizing around women's interests. The democratization of countries in Central and Eastern Europe has not led to increased political representation of women, nor in an increase of women's social and economic rights (Waylen 1994). Since gender equality has been associated with the old system in Central and Eastern European countries, it can also affect why these countries would not ratify the Istanbul Convention, since it could be interpreted as a way for the government to achieve gender equality from above.

2.3.4 Gender equality

VAW is driven by gender inequality and imbalance of power (Michau et al 2015, 1681), and the general level of gender equality in a country matters for how governments act on VAW. Social norms and attitudes regarding women vary across countries. Certain cultural attitudes towards women, such as masochistic attitudes, are associated with higher levels of VAW. Such attitudes can also be connected to resistance to policies that refer to VAW (Weldon 2002, 34). Cultural ideas and values that are deeply embedded in historical events specific for each state are potential determinants for policy outcomes (Weldon 2002, 34). Countries, where attitudes regarding gender are progressive, are more likely to adopt policies on VAW (Htun and Weldon 2012, 549). The general position of women in society could be a possible predictor for governments' response to VAW (Weldon 2002, 47). Therefore, it is important to control for the general level of gender equality within a country when investigating the ratification of the Istanbul Convention.

2.3.5 Physical security of women

Another important aspect of gender equality is women's physical security. Legal systems and public policies are key in protecting victims and punishing perpetrators, and together they lay the foundation for combating VAW. Most countries have laws and policies against VAW in place. However, enforcement and implementation are often insufficient (UN Women b). The extent to which a country is implementing its laws on VAW could also affect whether a country ratifies the Istanbul Convention or not, since the effort of implementing the convention will vary. Therefore, it is plausible to believe that a country that already has an extensive legal framework on VAW, which is enforced, is more likely to have ratified the Istanbul Convention.

2.3.6 EU Member

There is a long tradition of cooperation between the Council of Europe, which initiated the Istanbul Convention, and the EU. They share values such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The EU is the Council of Europe's number one institutional partner, both on the political and technical level. In the words of Jean-Claude Juncker: "the Council of Europe and the EU were products of the same idea, the same spirit and the same ambition. They mobilized the energy and commitment of the same founding fathers of Europe" (Council of Europe 2018). The promotion of respect for human rights and the rule of law have been made together by these two institutions (ibid). Since there is strong cooperation between the Council of Europe and the EU, it is likely that countries that are members of the EU are more prone to have ratified the Istanbul Convention.

2.3.7 GDP per capita

The overall level of gender equality within a country and the socio-economic per capita level usually go hand in hand (Dollar and Gatti 1999, 2). There is a strong empirical correlation between measures of gender equality and per capita income (Dollar and Gatti 1999, 4). Societies can move to post-materialistic values only when they have secured materialistic values such as food and shelter (Inglehart and Norris 2003). Therefore, I argue that countries with a higher GDP per capita are more likely to have ratified the Istanbul Convention.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

VAW is a violation of human rights and it is a significant problem. When reviewing the literature, it is found that the development of VAW has made substantial progress since it was on the women's movement's agenda in the 1970s (Weldon 2006b, 59). However, the issue of VAW persists which is why it is important to investigate what factors matter in governments' responses to VAW. The effect of women's participation in civil society is closely related to the interest of this Master's thesis; to explore if women's participation in civil society affects governments' responses to VAW. The aim of this Master's thesis is to explore to what extent women's participation in civil society matters for countries ratification of supranational policy concerning VAW. Based on the literature review I theorize that countries' levels of women participating in civil society will be a key factor in explaining the variation in the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. The main independent variable of interest is women's civil society participation. There is a lack of research on to what extent women's civil society

participation matters for VAW on the supranational level. There are good reasons to expect that women's civil society participation should have an effect that can travel from the national to the supranational level as well. As previous research has shown, women's participation in civil society has been crucial for the development of VAW as a political issue and for how governments act on VAW on the national level. Therefore, it is likely to presume that countries that have a high level of women participating in civil society are more likely to have ratified the Istanbul Convention. In this Master's thesis, I will test the assumption that higher levels of women in civil society affect how governments act on VAW on the supranational level.

2.5 Hypothesis

Since women's participation in civil society has been important for the development of governments responsiveness to VAW, the research questions that this Master's thesis aims to answer are;

1. *What effect does the strength of women's civil society have on countries' support of supranational VAW policy?*
2. *To what extent does the strength of women's civil society participation explain countries' ratification of the Istanbul Convention?*

In doing so, the following hypothesis is tested;

H1: Countries with a high level of women participating in civil society are more likely to have ratified the Istanbul Convention.

3. Methodological framework and data

The statistical method of logistic regression analysis is the applied method for this Master's thesis. Firstly, the section presents the operationalization of variables. Thereafter, the data and method of logistic regression are described, as well as limitations of the chosen method and statistical diagnostics.

3.1 Operationalization

3.1.1 Dependent variable – Ratification or non-ratification of Istanbul Convention

The ratification or non-ratification of the Istanbul Convention is the dependent variable which is a binary variable coded as 1 if the country had ratified the Istanbul Convention at the end of 2018, and 0 if it had not. The end of the year 2018 is the chosen year of analysis since it is the most recent year. The time of ratification of the Istanbul Convention varies across countries. Turkey was the first country to ratify the Istanbul Convention in 2012. By the end of 2018, countries will have had six years to ratify the convention since the opening of the treaty (Council of Europe 2018). If a country had not ratified the Istanbul Convention by the end of 2018, it says something regarding the national priorities of the country (Walby 2004, 6). This variable was created for the purpose of this Master's thesis since no previous research has been found that has analyzed the Istanbul Convention in this way.

Moreover, validity is a central concept in the social sciences (Menold, Bluemke and Hubley 2018, 143). Validity refers to the extent to which a measure reflects the true meaning of the concept it concerns (Perron and Gillespie 2015, 35). The foundation for scientific inquiry is validity, which makes it possible to interpret and use a measure to test the accuracy of theories (Perron and Gillespie 2015, 36). Since the dependent variable in this Master's thesis will be coded as 0 or 1 depending on if the country has ratified the Istanbul Convention or not, this variable reflects the true concept that it measures³.

³ There are different levels to which extent a country has implemented the convention, where some countries have made reservations to certain articles and some have ratified it entirely (Council of Europe 2018). The reservations made are for different reasons, where some countries have made reservations due to resistance to combat VAW. That said, even Sweden has made a reservation. The length of prison for rape is prescribed to be punished with a longer sentence in the Istanbul Convention than the legal code in Sweden would permit. Hence, some reservations reflect differences in legal systems across countries in Europe, which are not relevant for the interest of this Master's thesis. This is also why it would be irrelevant to do a statistical regression on which countries that have ratified the Istanbul Convention entirely, or with reservations, since the reservations also reflect differences in political systems. Analyzing such variation would require another type of method with a qualitative aspect. In this thesis, I am simply interested in whether a country has ratified the Istanbul Convention, or not.

3.1.2 Main explanatory variable – Women’s civil society participation

This variable is operationalized by the women civil society participation index from the Varieties of Democracy Dataset (henceforth: V-dem). This variable answers the question “Do women have the ability to express themselves and to form and participate in groups?” (Coppedge et al 2018, 233). Three main areas are included in this variable; if open discussion of political issues is included in women’s civil society participation, participation in civil society organizations and “representation in the ranks of journalism” (Coppedge et al 2018, 233). It ranges from low to high (0-1) on an interval scale. In 2011, Turkey had the lowest score, 0.45 and France had the highest score, 0.97. Regarding validity, the variable covers several important areas of women’s participation in civil society and should, therefore, be a good estimate for it. However, a high level of women participating in civil society does not necessarily mean that women’s issues are fought for. Even if women have the ability to express themselves and form and participate in groups, they can participate for any reason, not specifically organize to combat the oppression they face as women. Yet, a high level of women participating in civil society should increase the likeliness that women organize to combat issues that affect women, such as VAW. A high level of women participating in civil society should also reflect the power they have and to what extent they can influence governments’ support of supranational measures.

3.1.3 Women’s political leadership

Women’s political leadership is operationalized by the women political participation index from V-dem. The question this variable answers is “Are women descriptively represented in formal political positions?” (Coppedge et al 2018, 234). It includes women’s descriptive representation in the legislative assembly as well as equal distribution of power. The index is created by the average of lower chamber female legislator’s indicators and gendered power distribution (ibid). The lower chamber of female legislators measures what percentage of the lower chamber of the legislature that is female (Coppedge et al 2018, 138). Power distributed by gender measures to what extent political power is distributed according to gender. The responses range from 0-4, where 0 is “men have a near monopoly on political power” and 4 is “men and women have roughly equal political power” (Coppedge et al 2018, 187). The variable women’s political participation is on an interval scale that ranges from low to high (0-1). The country with the lowest score in 2011 is Turkey with 0.52. The country with the highest score in women’s political participation is Sweden, with the score 0.9999962.

Women's political leadership does not ensure women's substantive representation beyond women's descriptive representation. However, as described in the literature review regarding women's political leadership, there is evidence that women ministers perform some policy changes to support women's rights (Htun and Piscopo 2010, 9). Since the index includes both descriptive representation and power distribution, it should be a good measure of women's political leadership since it takes both those areas into consideration, and should therefore also measure what it is intended to measure.

Moreover, changes made due to pressure from civil society means that changes were made from below (Anderson 2000, 91). Women's political leadership constitutes of a top-down perspective and counters the bottom-up structure of the main independent variable of interest; women's civil society participation.

3.1.4 Liberal democracy

The liberal democracy variable is operationalized by the V-dem liberal component index. It answers the question "To what extent is the liberal principle of democracy achieved?". It stresses the importance of protection of individual and minority rights against the tyranny of the state and majority. The liberal perspective sees the quality of democracy by limitation of the government, which is achieved by civil liberties that are constitutionally protected, an independent judiciary, robust rule of law and limitations in executive power (Coppedge et al 2018, 45). This variable is on an interval scale that ranges from low to high (0-1) (ibid). Azerbaijan had the lowest score in 2011 with 0.20, whereas Denmark had the highest score with 0.98. The liberal component index is more narrow than other measures of liberal democracy (Coppedge et al 2018), and since it includes important main aspects of liberal democracy, it should be in accordance to what extent a country is a liberal democracy. This variable is mainly thought to affect the focal relationship, controlling for a spurious relationship. A spurious relationship means that the focal relationship is affected, or explained, by a third variable (Mehmetoglu and Jakobsen 2017, 236).

3.1.5 Post-communist countries

The variable post-communist countries was created by investigating which countries in the Council of Europe are post-communist. The variable was coded as 0 if the country wasn't a former communist state, and 1 if it was (Wikipedia 2019). Despite that every post-communist country in Europe has its own unique history, there are certain aspects that are characteristic

of post-communist states. Some of these characteristics are a single-party rule, centrally planned economy and policies guided by one ideology (Ekiert 2012). As previously discussed in the theoretical part, post-communist countries are also characterized by resistance toward gender equality implemented from above (Waylen 1994), hence, this variable could both affect the strength of women's civil society as well as ratification of the Istanbul Convention.

3.1.6 Gender equality

Gender equality refers to many different aspects in both women's and men's lives, and a measure of it should, therefore, include different areas such as social life, health, labor, and power. Gender equality is operationalized by the Gender Inequality Index (GII) from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Health, empowerment and labor market are the three main dimensions in the GII (UNDP). This variable is also on an interval scale that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 means high gender equality whereas 1 is low gender equality. The country with the highest score in 2011, meaning low gender equality was Georgia with the score 0.42. Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden all had the lowest score of 0.047, meaning high gender equality.

There has been criticism that the GII is a non-intuitive functional form and overly complicated, including measures that are not compatible (Permanyer 2013, 23). One limitation with the GII is that it does not include VAW. Since VAW largely impacts women's lives, it is a weakness that it is not included. However, accurate data on VAW that truly reflects reality is difficult to find. The number of unrecorded cases of VAW is usually high, even in the EU, where many women do not report the crime they have been a victim of to the authorities, making most VAW actions hidden (FRA 2014, 3). This measure of gender inequality does not include an immediate measure of attitudes regarding gender equality either. However, those attitudes regarding gender should be channeled to some extent through the measures that are included in the index. Thus, this variable captures how countries treat gender equality more generally, reflecting legal, social and cultural norms (see for example Alexander and Welzel 2011), which is what is of interest when controlling for gender equality.

3.1.7 Physical security of women

The level of gender equality regarding women's physical security in a country needs to be controlled for. The physical security situation of women in a given country matters for other

legislative measures taken to combat VAW. The physical security of women data from WomanStats is used to operationalize this variable. It measures different aspects of women's physical security; law, practice, and data. The original variable from WomanStats goes from 0-4, where 0 indicates a high level of physical security of women and 4 refers to low levels of physical security of women. To enable a more intuitive interpretation of this variable, I have reversed it. Hence, in this Master's thesis, this variable also ranges from 0-4, however, 4 means a high level of physical security of women, meaning that there are laws against domestic violence, rape and marital rape which are enforced and there are no norms against reporting such crimes. There are no honor killings or femicides, which is a sex-based hate crime defined as the killing of women because they are women, in the country. 0 indicates a low level of physical security of women, meaning that there are no, or weak, laws against domestic violence and rape, which are sporadically enforced. There are honor killings and /or femicides that are either ignored or generally accepted. Moreover, the most recent years that had data for this variable were 2014 and 2009 (WomanStats). Since 2009 is the year closest to 2011, it was chosen as the year of analysis for this variable.

The physical security of women is an ambitious variable that includes most aspects of women's physical security, including both laws, and most importantly the implementation of laws and norms regarding crimes. Therefore, this variable measures what it is intended to measure, and captures the physical security of women which is one type of gender equality that other variables, such as the GII, does not capture.

3.1.8 EU member

The EU member variable is measured by which countries that were members of the EU by the end of 2011 and which countries were not. It is a binary variable coded as 0 or 1 depending on if the country were a member of the EU by the end of 2011, or not. 26 of the 42 countries in the sample were members of the EU by the end of 2011. Regarding validity, there are differences in how engaged member countries are in the EU, which could be an explaining factor in why some countries have ratified the Istanbul Convention or not. However, measuring to what extent a country is engaged in the EU is difficult, since engagement can have very different aspects. If a country wants to become a member of the EU could also be an explaining factor, since the EU and the Council of Europe have such a close relationship, ratifying the Istanbul Convention becomes a way for a non-EU country to show that it agrees

with EU values. Thus, I also consider an alternative specification creating a variable for countries that were members of the EU in 2011 or were aspiring members.

3.1.9 GDP per capita

GDP per capita is a common control variable in regression analysis, and it also appears in research on policy adoption in governments' responses to VAW (Htun and Weldon 2012, 561). This variable is measured by GDP per capita from V-dem, and it answers the question "What is the GDP per capita" (Coppedge et al 2018, 327). GDP per capita refers to the gross domestic production on a per capita basis (ibid). The general definition of GDP is the aggregated value of goods and services divided by the population in a country. It measures how much an economy is developed. Higher GDP per capita implies that the standard of living is higher. The country with the lowest GDP per capita in 2011 was Moldova (4829), and the country with the highest GDP per capita was Norway, 80623.

3.2 Data

All the data used in this Master's thesis is collected from Varieties of Democracies (V-dem), UNDP, WomanStats or created. The variables collected from the dataset V-dem Country-Year: V-dem Extended are women civil society participation index, women political participation, liberal component index and GDP per capita. Data for the GII was found at UNDP (UNDP). The data for the physical security of women was collected from WomanStats (WomanStats). The last control variables EU member and post-communist countries were created as binary variables. The dependent variable was also created as a binary variable. All these variables have been put into a new dataset that only included countries that are members of the Council of Europe. The opening of the Istanbul Convention was in 2011, and the first country to ratify the convention was Turkey in 2012. Since I am interested in the process leading up to ratification, the explaining variables need to be before 2012. Hence, the year of analysis is 2011. The only variable which did not have data for 2011 is physical security of women, which is measured the year 2009 as written in section 3.1.7.

3.2.1 Sample

The data used for the regression analysis in this Master's thesis has been created solely for that purpose. A list of the countries that are included in the analysis can be found in appendix I. The countries in the sample are the ones who are members of the Council of Europe, which

are 47 countries (Council of Europe 2018). Five countries were removed from the sample since V-dem did not have data for some of those countries⁴. Since the sample is already quite small, the inclusion of these countries could have been of value to eventually be able to see more of a pattern. However, the countries that were removed are mostly micro-states, and therefore their absence should not constitute a substantial issue.

It is of interest to discuss why Europe is an interesting region to study, and whether it is possible to generalize results to other contexts. Regarding Europe, it is difficult to assess the variation of VAW in this region, as the nationwide surveys use different measures that are incomparable due to lack of one coherent system of assessing VAW (Kury, Obergfell-Fuchs and Woessner 2004). The EU, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Council of Europe are some of the actors that have repeatedly been calling for comprehensive and comparable data on VAW in Europe. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has made an EU-wide survey on VAW which is the first survey of its kind on VAW in the EU (FRA 2014, 167). The study shows that the rate of women, who since the age of 15 have experienced violence, varies. The countries with the highest rate in the EU are Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands and the countries with the lowest scores are Poland, Austria and Hungary, which implies that it is difficult to measure VAW due to unrecorded cases and norms of not talking about violence (FRA 2014, 27-33). What is known about VAW is that it occurs regardless of class, race or culture. As stated before, it is a structural issue. Even in countries like Sweden, known as one of the most gender equal countries in the world, the Swedish public agency for crime prevention, Brottsförebyggande rådet, estimates that there are 100 rapes happening daily in Sweden (UN Women a). Regarding generalizability, Europe is a rather diverse region in terms of countries' wealth, level of democracy, culture, norms and civilizational history. Hence, the possibilities to generalize results to other contexts are promising.

3.2.2 Research ethics

In research, ethics is a very important aspect. When using data that has been collected on an individual level, ethics need to be considered as individual information is sensitive. However, country-level data is used for this Master's thesis, and such information is usually not considered sensitive and issues concerning ethics should therefore not constitute a problem.

⁴ These countries are Andorra, Liechtenstein, Malta, Monaco, San Marino, and Vatican City.

3.3 Statistical Method

3.3.1 Logistic regression

Since the dependent variable in this Master's thesis is dichotomous, logistic regression is the method of choice. With logistic regression, the model gives the calculated probability of the dependent variable having the value 1, or 0, given the values on the independent variables. Hence, the model is estimated by maximum likelihood in logistic regression, rather than by least squares (Mehmetoglu and Jakobsen 2017, 162). If linear regression would be applied when investigating a dichotomous dependent variable, it is likely to have problems with heteroscedasticity. Linear regression could also give a value outside 0 and 1. Moreover, it is not possible to predict a linear association between X and Y when the dependent variable is binary. The natural logarithm of the odds for $Y = 1$ needs to be used in order to get a linear function. A unit change in X in linear regression represents how much the dependent variable changes. However, the changes in logistic regression are estimated by changes in the natural logarithm of the odds for $Y = 1$ for a one unit change in X (Mehmetoglu and Jakobsen 2017, 163). Stata will be used to perform the analysis.

3.3.2 Strengths and weaknesses

Interpreting a logistic regression output is not as straightforward as interpreting a regular OLS regression output (Mehmetoglu and Jakobsen 2017, 189). The coefficient is interpreted as how much a unit increases, or decreases, on the variable Y for each one unit change in variable X, in OLS regression. However, in logistic regression odds ratios are used to interpret the results. Odds ratios are interpreted as 1.000 being equivalent to a coefficient of 0. If an odds ratio is greater than 1.000, it means that the effect is positive, and an odds ratio less than 1.000 indicates a negative effect (Mehmetoglu and Jakobsen 2017, 173).

3.4 Diagnostics

A correctly specified model is mainly a theoretical question. However, there is a way to test for model specification in Stata, called the link test. The link test gives us two variables, where the variable `_hat` should be significant and the variable `_hatsq` should not be significant if the model is specified correctly (Mehmetoglu and Jakobsen 2017). Even if the model is correctly specified, there is a possibility that there could be another significant explanatory

variable that predicts the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, which is not tested for with link test. Therefore, the goodness of fit (GOF) test is used. The GOF test controls for whether 0/1 values for the dependent variable match expected 0/1 values, either for a set number of groups or the number of covariate patterns in the data (Mehmetoglu and Jakobsen 2017, 178). If there is a significant value, it means that the model must be rejected, while an insignificant value means the model fits reasonably well. This is a sign that good predictors are chosen for the model. In addition, theoretical explanations should also be used (Mehmetoglu and Jakobsen 2017, 179).

Endogeneity in econometrics refers to the situation when an explanatory variable is correlated with the error term. Endogeneity is often related to the problem when an unobserved variable is affecting the focal relationship, which can give spurious correlations, making it look like there is a significant focal relationship when in fact, there is another variable that is affecting the focal relationship. If there is omitted variable bias, meaning a variable that affects the focal dependent or independent variable, the problem of a spurious relationship occurs. To control for endogeneity by including the control variables, the risk of spurious results decreases (Schultz, Tan and Walsh 2010, 145).

Moreover, multicollinearity problems can occur if the independent variables are linear functions of other X-variables (Mehmetoglu and Jakobsen 2017, 167). When controlling for multicollinearity in Stata, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value should not exceed 5, since a higher value means that there might be multicollinearity problems. In order to overcome problems with multicollinearity, one should understand what the causes are, and try to solve it. Variables that have multicollinearity can be removed or collapsed into an index (Mehmetoglu and Jakobsen 2017, 146). Lastly, Pregibon's (1981) influence statistic $dbeta$ is used in order to test for influential cases (Mehmetoglu and Jakobsen 2017, 179). The results for the diagnostics will be presented in the result section and are in appendix IV.

4. Results

Firstly, the process of choosing a model is discussed. Thereafter, the regression analyses and interpretations are presented. The result from the diagnostics follows.

Before interpreting the results, the process for deciding on a model is explained. Sample size strongly affects statistical power. Since there are only 42 cases in the regression analysis, there is a risk that the analysis will not be able to detect significant change of women's participation in civil society on the ratification of the Istanbul Convention if the effect is small (Miles and Shevlin 2001). Thus, the number of independent variables included in the model must be limited to decrease the limits on statistical power when using a small sample. Ten cases per independent variable is a minimum guideline to prevent these computational issues (Tabachnik and Fidell 2009). Therefore, I tested for which independent variables were the strongest correlates with the dependent variable on the bivariate level. At first, I used the level $p < 0.05$ as a threshold for which variables to include in the model. Then, I used the level $p < 0.1$. Since women's participation in civil society is my main variable of interest, it will be included in the models even if it is not significant on the bivariate level. This method shows that the variables that are significant $p < 0.05$ on the bivariate stage are liberal democracy, post-communist countries, physical security of women and GII. Since using both physical security of women and GII creates a multicollinearity problem, the variable physical security of women will be used since it is more significant than GII. Women's political leadership and GDP per capita are significant on the level $p < 0.1$. Therefore, there are six different regression models, where the first four models include variables that are significant on the $p < 0.05$ level at the bivariate stage, and the fifth and sixth model also include the two variables that are significant on the level $p < 0.1$ at the bivariate stage. Regarding controlling for statistical issues in these regressions, the diagnostics are performed on both the model including the four variables that were significant on the bivariate stage $p < 0.05$ and the full model including six variables.

Moreover, the variable EU member was not significant on the bivariate level. However, it is likely to believe that countries that are aspiring members of the EU are more likely to ratify the Istanbul Convention in order to show agreement with EU values. Therefore, a variable for countries that were members of the EU in 2011 or were aspiring members was created, but did not give significant results either and is therefore not included in the model.

Governments response to the issues that women's movements push for can take time (Caul 1999, 94). There is an expected time lag between new subjects put on the political agenda by feminist mobilization and the response by the political system (Inglehart and Norris 2000, 446). In this analysis, there is a lag for most countries, since the women's civil society participation variable is measured in 2011 and countries ratified after that. Hence, the lag differs for each country. It would have been possible to measure the women's civil society participation variable one year before each country ratified the convention. However, it soon becomes messy, difficult and arbitrary to interpret the results if different years have been used for every country. I therefore acknowledge this timing dilemma as a limitation of this study.

There are two regression analyses, where the first one includes the full sample, and the second one excludes two observations, Azerbaijan and North Macedonia, which exerted most influence on the results. Hence, there are two regression analyses to evaluate the influence of these two observations. Moreover, the regression analyses show odds ratios. Odds ratios enable a more substantive interpretation, whereas interpretation of logistic coefficients can only tell us about the direction of the effect. If interested, the regression analyses with logistic coefficients can be found in Appendix II. Moving on, the results are presented below.

4.1 Regression analysis

Table 1. Logistic regression with odds ratios, using the full sample

Model	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Istanbul Convention	Istanbul Convention	Istanbul Convention	Istanbul Convention	Istanbul Convention	Istanbul Convention
Women Civil Society Participation	0.680	.000036	.0005432	.0001772	.0000153	.0000114
	(2.357)	(.0002624)	(.0039751)	(0.0013094)	(.0001153)	(.0000886)
Liberal Democracy		1914.878**	233.757	200.4938	21.19593	25.11507
		(5845.086)	(785.350)	(701.667)	(79.13987)	(98.2292)
Post-communist countries			0.318	0.6793251	0.6032029	.3241571
			(0.321)	(0.8544179)	(0.7765123)	(.498936)
Physical Security of Women				2.243914	1.971378	2.201538
				(1.747516)	(1.532297)	(1.784099)
Womens Political Leadership					25692.53	108047.3
					(245729)	(1074367)
GDP per capita						.100
						(0000396)
Intercept	3.128	37.107	41.301	20.01272	.1023425	858.931
	(9.573)	(187.772)	(201.916)	(97.90801)	(.5828322)	(10322.29)
Observations	42	42	42	41	41	41

Standard errors in parentheses
 * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

As seen in the regression tables, it can be difficult to get significant results when using a small sample. The only variable that is significant is the liberal democracy variable in the second model. This variable has a positive effect, implying that countries that score high on the question “to what extent is the liberal principle of democracy achieved?” are more likely to ratify the Istanbul Convention. The odds ratio is interpreted as how many percent the odds for ratification of the Istanbul Convention increase for a one unit increase in a variable (Mehmetoglu and Jakobsen 2017, 173). By interpreting model two (by taking the odds ratio $1914.878 - 1$), it means that the odds for ratification of the Istanbul Convention increases by 191387 percent if the liberal democracy variable increases one unit. The reason why this effect is that great depends on the scale; the liberal democracy variable is on a scale that goes from 0 to 1, meaning that a one unit increase goes from the minimum value 0 to the maximum value 1. Hence, this shows the effect of going from no liberal democracy to full liberal democracy. Moreover, in the following model number three, the liberal democracy variable is approaching significance on the level $p < 0.1$, where it has a p-value of 0.104. The only variable that is approaching significance in model four is the liberal democracy variable which has a p-value of 0.130. When adding the last two variables in regression five and six

none of the independent variables are significant. Moreover, the reason why the number of observations changes in the models is because that Montenegro was not included in WomanStats physical security of women data, and therefore when introducing this variable one observation drops.

Table 2. Logistic regression with odds ratios, excluding Azerbaijan and North Macedonia

Model	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Istanbul Convention	Istanbul Convention	Istanbul Convention	Istanbul Convention	Istanbul Convention	Istanbul Convention
Women Civil Society Participation	0.005	1.58e-08	3.17e-07	1.95e-09	2.78e-09	1.08e-09
	(.029)	(1.79e-07)	(3.48e-06)	(2.45e-08)	(3.41e-08)	(1.43e-08)
Liberal Democracy		4699.613**	436.627	640.493	55.326	99.599
		(16937.09)	(1672.112)	(2824.092)	(325.758)	(618.184)
Post-communist countries			0.297	1.361	1.234	.793
			(.301)	(1.795)	(1.643)	(1.225)
Physical Security of Women				5.532*	4.880*	5.359*
				(5.127)	(4.633)	(5.288)
Womens Political Leadership					954.385	1249.907
					(11290.89)	(14967.4)
GDP per capita						.100
						(.0000414)
Intercept	266.108	17727.61	20024.69	31431.41	350.5486	858.931
	(1432.186)	(153681.7)	(165541.8)	(282325.3)	(3917.989)	(10322.29)
Observations	40	40	40	39	39	39

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

When removing Azerbaijan and North Macedonia from the sample, some interesting results occur. The variable liberal democracy is still significant and has a positive effect in the second model, just as in table 1. When adding the post-communist variable in model three, the liberal democracy variable has a p-value of 0.112. When the variable physical security of women is added in the fourth model, it is significant with a p-value of 0.065, and the liberal democracy has a p-value of 0.143. In the fifth model, the physical security of women variable is still significant on the level $p < 0.1$ with a p-value of 0.095. In the last model six, the physical security of women variable has a p-value of 0.089. The direction of the effect for this variable in all models is positive, implying that countries with a high score on physical security of women are more likely to ratify the Istanbul Convention. The odds ratio is interpreted as how many percent the odds for ratification of the Istanbul Convention increase for a one unit increase in a variable (Mehmetoglu and Jakobsen 2017, 173). Interpreting model six (by taking the odds ratio 5.359 – 1.000), it means that the odds for ratification of the Istanbul

Convention increases by 435.9 percent if the physical security of women variable increases one unit. The scale for this variable 0 to 4. This implies that a country that has a high score in the physical security of women variable, meaning that there is laws against domestic violence, rape and marital rape which are enforced, no norms against reporting such crimes and no honor killings or femicides (WomanStats), are more likely to ratify the Istanbul Convention. The physical security of women variable stays significant throughout the models, implying the strength of it.

4.2 Diagnostics

The link test has been performed to test for model specification and the value was insignificant, meaning that good predictors have been chosen for the model. The GOF test has also been performed to ensure that no other significant explanatory variable predicts the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. The test gave an insignificant value, which indicates that the model fits reasonably well. Hence, the predictors are good for this model. Moreover, multicollinearity has also been tested for using the VIF test. The result shows that no variable had a value above 5, indicating that multicollinearity could not be found. The results for the tests can be found in appendix IV.

When using Pregibon's (1981) statistical command dbeta, Azerbaijan and North Macedonia were identified as the observations that exerted the most influence on the regression model, which can be found in appendix IV, graph 1. Azerbaijan scores very low in comparison to other observations on many variables and has not ratified the Istanbul Convention. North Macedonia has ratified the Istanbul Convention, but also score low on many of the variables. Because of these influential cases, there are two regression analyses in the result section.

5. Discussion

In this section the results will be discussed in relation to the research questions;

1. *What effect does the strength of women's civil society have on countries' support of supranational VAW policy?*

2. *To what extent does the strength of women's civil society participation explain countries' ratification of the Istanbul Convention?*

Firstly, with regard to the research questions, the results show that it was not possible to find a significant effect between the strength of women's civil society and the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. Hence, the strength of women's civil society has an insignificant effect on the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. This indicates that the strength of women's civil society is not affecting VAW policy on the supranational level. The literature review for this Master's thesis suggests that women's participation in civil society has an effect on governments decision on VAW policy on the national level. Since there has been an increase in international movements, for example through WINGOS, and globalization, the theoretical framework suggested that women's participation in civil society should also matter for ratification of VAW policy on the supranational level. However, as seen in the results, this was not the case in this particular setting regarding the Istanbul Convention. Hence, women's movements and organizations are not taking advantage of all pressure points that lie beyond the national level, and are not able to make use of policies on the supranational level in this case. It is plausible that given the increasingly transnational nature of NGOs, the national conditions of civil society might be less relevant for government responsiveness to VAW. The national setting may lose some of its importance considering that organizations are transnational. This is a plausible explanation to why there was an insignificant result for women's participation in civil society on the national level. However, these transnational actors must be situated somewhere, and hence should also to some extent be channeled through domestic contexts. Moreover, it is also possible that the insignificant result is a product of governments acting in their own interests on the supranational level, which women's organizations in domestic civil society is not able to reach.

Secondly, the findings also showed that physical security of women has a positive effect on countries' ratification of the Istanbul Convention, which was according to theoretical expectations. It is significant in all the models it is included in, indicating the strength of it. If a country already has good laws in place for women and these are well implemented and enforced, the country is more likely to ratify the Istanbul Convention. It becomes less of an effort to implement the Istanbul Convention if the prerequisites already are in place. Possibly, such a country is likely to already promote women's human rights and have national policies for VAW in place, since a high score on the physical security of women variable indicates that there are no norms against reporting crimes and that the laws on domestic violence and rape are enforced. This means that women living in countries where there are no or weak laws against domestic violence and rape, and where honor killings and/or femicides are ignored or generally accepted, are also less likely to gain justice through the Istanbul Convention. For women in these countries, it could be that the most effective way to promote women's human rights is by starting at the national level, gaining national laws on VAW, and making sure they are enforced. Such a procedure does not happen overnight, rather, it is a process of development. Women's rights are fragile, and cannot be taken for granted, which is why living in a society with high physical security of women, needs to be fought for every day too.

Thirdly, the variable liberal democracy was also significant in the second model in both table one and two and had a big impact on the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. However, when including other variables, it lost its significance. Pondering this result, it could indicate that liberal democracy stresses the importance of protection of civil rights, including women's rights, which could be an explanation to why this variable was significant in model two, and why it had a positive effect on ratification of the Istanbul Convention. However, since this variable becomes insignificant when including other variables one should not put too much weight on this result. Rather, it seems like some other variable is explaining the ratification of the Istanbul Convention rather than liberal democracy.

Fourthly, by using data for 42 countries, the empirical findings reveal that it is difficult to get significant results when using a small sample. The number of countries decreases to 41 in the last three models in table one because of missing value for Montenegro in the physical security of women variable. In the second table, which excludes both Azerbaijan and North Macedonia, it even decreases to 39 in the last three models. It is possible that there was too little variation in the data to be able to see a pattern and get significant results. If it had been

possible to include more observations in the regression analysis, there could have been more variation and thus a possibility to see other relationships and maybe even more significance. However, since there are no countries outside the sample that have ratified the Istanbul Convention to this date, it was not a possibility to perform such analysis. When extracting data for the main explanatory variable of interest, it was sometimes surprising that certain countries scored quite high in the women's civil society participation variable. Part of the problem is a lack of data on women's movements. In order to find more variation, I also looked for other measures of women's participation in civil society. Most importantly the data from Htun and Weldon (2012) measuring the strength of women's movements, which is more specific than the women's participation in civil society data from V-dem, and thus could have given more variation. However, the coverage of countries across Europe was not enough, only about half of the sample was represented, which was too few observations to perform the regression analyses with regard to the limitation on statistical power.

Fifthly, VAW continues to be an urgent issue, which is part of why it is a relevant policy area (FRA 2014). Since the women's civil society participation, which has driven women's concerns historically, fails to affect countries' ratification of the Istanbul Convention, and in doing so also fails to take advantage of supranational VAW policy, it becomes increasingly important for governments to act on VAW. National and supranational governance is of importance for the practices and policies concerning VAW. The countries that already have low physical security of women are less likely to ratify the Istanbul Convention. By not ratifying the Istanbul Convention, women in countries with low physical security are left behind. Failing to protect women's human rights is the responsibility of those states.

Lastly, concerning generalization to other contexts, Europe is a region with vast variation between countries in many ways. It could be that the results in this Master's thesis could be applied to other contexts as well. However, the relevance of women's civil society participation on supranational VAW policy is of interest to explore in other contexts too. If the same results occur, it seems like the general trend is that the national context of civil society loses importance on the supranational level. Conceivably, women's civil society has gone beyond the national borders and hence, it could be more relevant to measure and evaluate the effect of a transnational women's civil society, or the presence of international women's organizations in a country. Moreover, this result could affect policy implications for the Council of Europe. By connecting the convention to women's organizations, making them

aware of the Istanbul Convention, the Council of Europe could create pressure points from below on governments to ratify the convention.

6. Conclusion

The main findings in this Master's thesis show that it was not possible to detect a significant effect of women's participation in civil society on the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. However, the results show that the odds for ratification of the Istanbul Convention increase by 435.9 percent when the physical security of women variable increases one unit. This variable was still significant when all independent variables were included in model six, indicating the strength of it. Moreover, regression analyses also show that it is difficult to get significant results. This can be a cause of having a small sample of only 42 observations, where it can be difficult to detect a significant change if the effect is small.

This conclusion aims to answer the research question. Hence, in answering the first research question, it was not possible to find a significant effect of the strength of women's civil society on countries' support of supranational VAW policy in this particular setting. Regarding the second question, it was not possible to find a significant relationship between women's participation in civil society and the ratification of the Istanbul Convention either. Consequently, in this analysis, women's civil society participation does not explain countries' ratification of the Istanbul Convention. Rather, the strength of the physical security of women increases the odds for countries' ratification of the Istanbul Convention.

This study has contributed to the lack of research on the effect of women's civil society participation on VAW on the supranational level. The assumption that the strength of women's civil society affects how government act on VAW on the supranational level could not be verified in this setting. With regards to the hypothesis, I cannot confirm that countries with a high level of women participating in civil society are more likely to ratify the Istanbul Convention. The result shows that in this specific case, the effect of women's civil society participation could not travel from the national to the supranational level. In the general case, it is possible that one could see these trends of the domestic situation of civil society losing importance on the supranational level. It is also possible that an explanation to the insignificant effect is the increasingly transnational nature of organizations, where the domestic context is less relevant.

As seen in the results, it can be difficult to find significant results when using a small sample in regression analysis. Therefore, regarding future research, qualitative studies on member states of the Council of Europe differences in ratification of the Istanbul Convention are of interest. When performing a qualitative study, it would also be possible to analyze the reservations that countries have made to the Istanbul Convention in a way that is much more relevant than analyzing such ratifications using a quantitative method. Moreover, there is a possibility to find support for interactions in the theoretical literature between women's participation in civil society and women's political leadership. Including interaction variables require more statistical power, which was already limited due to the small sample size in this thesis. Since it was beyond the scope of this Master's thesis to research interaction effects due to not having enough statistical power, it could be a field for future research to dig into. Finally, it is of interest to further explore the effect of women's civil society participation on supranational VAW policy in other contexts too. In doing so, I suggest to further investigate the effect of transnational women's organizations on governments' response to supranational VAW policy in relation to the relevance of women's domestic civil society participation.

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Appendices

Appendix I. List of countries

Albania
Armenia
Austria
Azerbaijan
Belgium
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Montenegro
Netherlands
North Macedonia
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Republic of Moldova
Romania
Russian Federation
Serbia
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland

Turkey
 Ukraine
 United Kingdom

Appendix II. Logistic regression

This is the logistic regression with coefficients, not odds ratios. The only interpretation that can be done from these coefficients is the direction of the effect. With odds ratio, a more substantive interpretation is possible.

Table 3. Logistic regression with full sample

Model	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Istanbul Convention 2019	Istanbul Convention 2019	Istanbul Convention 2019	Istanbul Convention 2019	Istanbul Convention 2019	Istanbul Convention 2019
Women Civil Society Participation	-0.386	-10.23	-7.518	-8.638	-11.09	-11.38
	(3.466)	(7.287)	(7.318)	(7.390)	(7.542)	(7.770)
Liberal Democracy		7.557**	5.454	5.301	3.054	3.223
		(3.052)	(3.360)	(3.500)	(3.734)	(3.911)
Post-communist countries			-1.146	-0.387	-0.506	-1.127
			(1.009)	(1.258)	(1.287)	(1.539)
Physical Security of Women				0.808	0.679	0.789
				(0.779)	(0.777)	(0.810)
Womens Political Leadership					10.15	11.59
					(9.564)	(9.943)
GDP per capita						-0.0000332
						(0.0000396)
intercept	1.141	3.614	3.721	2.996	-2.279	-2.405
	(3.060)	(5.060)	(4.889)	(4.892)	(5.695)	(6.061)
Observations	42	42	42	41	41	41
R²						
Adjusted R²						

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$, ****

Table 4. Logistic regression excluding Azerbaijan and North Macedonia

Model	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Istanbul Convention 2019	Istanbul Convention 2019	Istanbul Convention 2019	Istanbul Convention 2019	Istanbul Convention 2019	Istanbul Convention 2019
Women Civil Society Participation	-5.314	-17.97	-14.97	-20.05	-19.70	-20.65
	(5.974)	(11.36)	(10.98)	(12.55)	(12.26)	(13.28)
Liberal Democracy		8.455**	6.079	6.462	4.013	4.601
		(3.604)	(3.830)	(4.409)	(5.888)	(6.207)
Post-communist countries			-1.213	0.308	0.210	-0.232
			(1.014)	(1.319)	(1.331)	(1.545)
Physical Security of Women				1.711*	1.585*	1.679*
				(0.927)	(0.949)	(0.987)
Womens Political Leadership					6.861	7.131
					(11.83)	(11.97)
GDP per capita						-0.0000241
						(0.0000414)
intercept	5.584	9.783	9.905	10.36	5.859	6.756
	(5.382)	(8.669)	(8.267)	(8.982)	(11.18)	(12.02)
Observations	40	40	40	39	39	39
R²						
Adjusted R²						

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$, ****

Appendix III. Descriptive statistics

First, an explanation of the names of the variables used in Stata and what they refer to;

Istcon19 = Ratification of Istanbul Convention

Wcivsoc11 = Women's civil society participation

Libdemcom11 = Liberal democracy

Postcom = Post-communist countries

Psec2 = Physical security of women

Wpolpa11 = Women's political leadership

Gdppc11 = GDP per capita

Gii11 = Gender inequality index

Eum11 = EU member

Eumb = EU member or aspiring EU member

Descriptive statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
-----+-----					
istcon19	42	.6904762	.4679011	0	1
wcivsoc11	42	.876176	.0995169	.4529654	.9728296
libdemcom11	42	.8341054	.1757482	.1967138	.9831276
postcom	42	.5595238	.4963572	0	1
psec2	41	1.731707	.8373885	0	3
-----+-----					
wpolpa11	42	.9379295	.0932803	.6255167	.9999988
gdppc11	42	27719.24	15884.29	4892	80623
gii11	42	.1768095	.1018761	.047	.419
eum11	42	.6190476	.4915074	0	1
eumb	42	.7619048	.4310805	0	1

Appendix IV. Diagnostics

Multicollinearity test

Multicollinearity test for model including women's civil society participation, liberal democracy, post-communist countries and physical security of women.

Variable	VIF	1/VIF
-----+-----		
postcom	2.58	0.387571
psec2	2.32	0.430645
libdemcom11	2.14	0.467352
wcivsoc11	1.73	0.578027
-----+-----		
Mean VIF	2.19	

Multicollinearity test for model including women’s civil society participation, liberal democracy, post-communist countries and physical security of women, women’s political leadership and GDP per capita.

Variable	VIF	1/VIF
-----+-----		
postcom	3.28	0.304663
libdemcom11	3.10	0.322125
wpolpa11	3.06	0.326314
psec2	2.54	0.393363
gdppc11	2.51	0.398082
wcivsoc11	1.93	0.516894
-----+-----		
Mean VIF	2.74	

Goodness of fit test

Goodness of fit test for model including women’s civil society participation, liberal democracy, post-communist countries and physical security of women.

number of observations =	41
number of covariate patterns =	41
Pearson chi2(36) =	36.04
Prob > chi2 =	0.4669

Goodness of fit test for model including women’s civil society participation, liberal democracy, post-communist countries and physical security of women, womens political participation and GDP per capita.

number of observations =	41
number of covariate patterns =	41
Pearson chi2(34) =	35.23
Prob > chi2 =	0.4096

Link test

Link test for model including women's civil society participation, liberal democracy, post-communist countries and physical security of women.

```

Logistic regression           Number of obs   =    41
                             LR chi2(2)           =   13.31
                             Prob > chi2          =   0.0013
Log likelihood = -18.954594   Pseudo R2       =   0.2599
  
```

```

-----+-----
istcon19 |   Coef.  Std. Err.   z  P>|z|   [95% Conf. Interval]
-----+-----
   _hat | .7792671 .3861309   2.02 0.044   .0224644   1.53607
  _hatsq | .2723278 .2611902   1.04 0.297  -0.2395956   .7842511
   _cons | -0.2863506 .5113339  -0.56 0.575  -1.288547   .7158455
  
```

Link test for model including women's civil society participation, liberal democracy, post-communist countries and physical security of women, womens political participation and GDP per capita.

```

Logistic regression           Number of obs   =    41
                             LR chi2(2)           =   14.92
                             Prob > chi2          =   0.0006
Log likelihood = -18.151191   Pseudo R2       =   0.2913
  
```

```

-----+-----
istcon19 |   Coef.  Std. Err.   z  P>|z|   [95% Conf. Interval]
-----+-----
   _hat | .9429998 .3317704   2.84 0.004   .2927417   1.593258
  _hatsq | .1388374 .1385111   1.00 0.316  -0.1326394   .4103142
   _cons | -0.1996443 .5014549  -0.40 0.691  -1.182478   .7831892
  
```

Graph 1. Plot of influential cases using Pregibon's dbeta

