Supporting the Health and Wellbeing of People Trafficked into Modern Slavery in the UK: A Collaborative Arts-based Approach

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Declaration

This thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted, in full, or in part, for the award of a higher degree at any other educational institution. Sections of this thesis have been presented at conferences or disseminated via media outlets, details are presented below:

Conference Presentations

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Abstract

Background: Despite the continuous increase of trafficking in the UK, there is limited understanding of the experiences and circumstances of trafficked individuals, and how service providers should best support their rehabilitation. Existing studies with this population, tend to reduce trafficked people's multidimensional experiences to health issues such as classifying individuals as a function of symptoms and conditions experienced due to trafficking, which restricts our understanding of the complex realities faced by them. There is therefore a need for a more nuanced understanding of trafficking requires the consideration of individuals' insights, reflections and experiences from their perspectives.

Aim: The aim of this research is to systematically explore trafficked people's lived experiences in the UK.

Methodology: This study builds on Arts-based and narrative methodologies, to incorporate respondents' creativity and active engagement in knowledge construction. By means of facilitating a reflexive process, participants, men and women who have accessed post-trafficking services in the UK, chose their preferred methodology for relaying their experiences through visual and/or narrative methods, and were subsequently invited to discus, interpret and illuminate their findings.

Recruitment and Sampling: Participants (n=57), men and women who have accessed or are accessing post-trafficking services in the UK, were recruited from three support centres within two umbrella organisations, one aligned to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and another independent organisation within the voluntary sector.

Conclusion: Findings from this study convey marginalized discourses which have been largely overlooked in the research literature. Despite dominant perceptions of inherent vulnerability associated with trafficked people, participants in this study demonstrated strengths, resilience and agency, alongside areas of difficulties following trafficking. Findings further establish that the post - trafficking period is characterised by instability, perceptions of being under surveillance, as well as experiencing economic and immigration uncertainties.

Original Contribution to Knowledge: Apart from adopting a holistic approach to affirming the views and experiences of those who are mostly affected by trafficking, recommendations inform best practices aimed at supporting trafficked people's integration in the host community and the development of appropriate support services. Further, this study adds to the body of the literature on arts-based methodologies and highlights the therapeutic potential of the use of research as intervention.

Key words: human trafficking, trafficking representations, trafficking integration, trafficking rehabilitation

1

Introduction and Rationale

Everything passes on and everything remains,
But our lot is to pass on,
To go on making paths,
Paths across the sea.

Traveller, your footprints
Are the path and nothing more;
Traveller, there is no path,
The path is made by walking.

By walking the path is made
And when you look back
You'll see a road
Never to be trodden again.

Antonio Machado

1.1 Introduction

I start this thesis with the idea of walking for two reasons. Firstly, this section is about the path-making that helped initiate the concept of this study. What helped me stand, pace, run and breathe, through the journey of this study have been two of my main fields of inspiration: the Arts and Psychotherapy. I am inspired by the human capacity to grow, reach beyond the boundaries of the self, ascend, descend and transform, creating new meanings and connections. So, beyond the physical movement in space, walking could relate to extending in thoughts or

empathy, sharing journeys, being with another, or a metaphor for life itself. And this is the second reason I have framed this work through the emblem of walking: this is not going to be a study of the sensationalised other, but through attention to more routinised experiences and practices, this study will attempt to diminish the distance between research participants and audiences. In many ways, one of the most important milestones of this journey has been that of walking alongside, empathic engagement and connectedness to others through common human values. The journey connects, and in connecting to all people, it re-humanises and creates conditions for empathic sharing with others, and this is one of the elixirs acquired through the process of path-making that this study is.

1.2 Research Context

Since the collaborative nature of this research emphasises the generation of knowledge that stems from the context of interactions (Fook, 1996), it is appropriate to first examine my own interferences with the research terrain as integral to this process. In articulating this theoretical framework, I will outline some initial conceptual considerations and reasons that underpin the necessity of conducting this study. This will inform understanding of how the research question was formulated through the main points, theoretical assumptions, the need to conduct the study in a relational way and deepen understanding of individual narratives, experiences and specific issues.

Although most of the footprints within this field started from a position of not knowing, another parallel section, although creatively uncertain, was previously well-trodden. My professional background and training in the areas of philology, psychology, social work, counselling and psychotherapy, art therapy, performing and visual arts form a diverse bricolage of beginnings, crossroads, terminated journeys and new transformations. These professional and experiential intersections informed my experiences of working with individuals who have been subjected to forced migration or have been labelled as vulnerable.

A significant part of my professional work was concerned with integrating diverse ways of knowing and co-creating collaborative means of connecting to others through creative, embodied and talking methods. In most recent years prior to initiating this research, my work within a non-government organisation involved addressing inequalities, marginalisation, statelessness and complexities surrounding the UK asylum system within various voluntary and statutory settings. As an interdisciplinary practitioner, therapist and service provider, my

work concerned collaborating with diverse marginalised groups to co-create ways of engagement that were meaningful and acknowledged individuals' inequalities and genuine experiences. This collaboration with culturally diverse groups that included trafficked people, emphasised the importance of the arts and the creative process in supporting individual and community wellbeing and fostering a sense of connectedness and belonging. I had extensively examined the value of applying experiential and art therapy knowledge as a base for facilitating safe spaces inductive to authentic expression and individual agency. I also explored the application of arts-based methods in facilitating transformative outcomes through dissemination and correcting marginalised people's misrepresentations. Methodologically, this work, continuously led by the planning, development, evaluation and adaptation of co-collaborators, included the hybrid application of storytelling and poetry, knitting and textile work, film and visual arts, as well as invisible and forum theatre, as a means of expression and connecting to others. In many ways, these explorations of inclusive, relational approaches that honour diverse knowing and practices, paved the way for the methodological explorations in this study.

1.3 Rationale for This Research

It is important to critically examine the decisions, choices and assumptions that have underpinned this research. On the one hand, this research was embedded in a passionate commitment to employ an empathetic outlook that is based on common human values and facilitates relational and ethical spaces. On the other, an apparent gap in the current understanding and a meaningful engagement with trafficked people's perspectives informed the need for this study. Specifically, an investigation of the existing research context highlighted the need for direct studies with trafficked people that illuminate individuals' holistic representations, carried out through methods that could facilitate eliciting embodied and process-based experiences and narratives.

Upon entering the more specific arena of modern slavery and human trafficking, I became particularly aware of the absence of voice and direct representation of trafficked people within discourses that are supposed to aid their post-trafficking rehabilitation. The physical and psychological impacts of trafficking have been the primary focus of multiple attempts to highlight the health outcomes following trafficking circumstances. However, despite the well-

established understanding of the negative health consequences following trafficking (Zimmerman et al., 2003; Cwikel et al., 2004; Cannon et al., 2016; Cary et al., 2016; Oram et al., 2011; Turner-Moss et al., 2013), there is limited understanding of the experiences and circumstances of trafficked individuals, and how service providers could best support their rehabilitation. Existing studies have tended to maintain a narrow focus on pre-selected symptoms and conditions following trafficking, resulting in primarily need- and vulnerability-focussed understandings, which simplify the complex realities they face. Although the adverse health outcomes following trafficking have been established, an asset-based approach (Goldman and Schmalz, 2005; Quon Huber et al., 2009; Lohmann and Schoelkopf, 2009) requires consideration of individuals' strengths alongside their areas of difficulties to represent a more balanced and comprehensive view of participants' realities and support individual agency. It was, therefore, important to find out, from the perspectives of formerly trafficked people, what life after trafficking felt like: what was helpful and not helpful from their perspectives, to inform the services on how to better support trafficked people on their journeys of transition and becoming. Given that research into the health and wellbeing of trafficked people following initial trafficking intervention services is lacking in high-income countries (Hemmings et al., 2016), and specifically in the UK, it was important to examine trafficked people's lived experiences of integrating into the host community post trafficking identification in a way that includes individual perspectives as well as takes into account the wider socio-political background of participants' narratives.

Alongside the significance of direct studies with trafficked people, the need to illuminate individuals' holistic representations becomes apparent. Within the routinely imposed suppositions of complete denial of agency associated with trafficking discourses, dominant trafficking representations have tended to reduce complex decision-making and circumstances to stereotypical victim accounts (Mai, 2009), which could exhibit tension with individuals' authentic narratives. This hegemonic view of trafficking tends to examine individual circumstances through the lens of colonisation of the body, where the extensive focus on victims, perpetrators and rescuers as main actors tends to overlook other aspects of experiences and phenomenological perspectives (Katsulis, Weinkauf and Frank, 2010). In this way, trafficking representations through the lens of the impact on the body and trauma-based discourses risk that the extensive focus on the physical and psychological impact on the body dominates and overshadows other important aspects of individuals' sense of self and experience. Apart from perpetuating an incomplete picture of trafficked people's experiences,

the effects of such formulaic views could further marginalise and perpetuate misrepresentations of trafficked people. Overall, such stereotypical depictions of the coerced and powerless trafficked victim and the perpetrator of crime exercising their agency (Doezema, 1998; 2000; Chapkis, 2005) inform professionals' understanding and decision-making (O'Connell Davidson, 2006) and have direct implications for trafficked people's identification, support and wellbeing (Kelly, 2002; 2005). At the very least, such focus on sensationalising and othering risks increasing the power distance and inequalities between trafficked people, audiences and state agents.

As with trafficking rehabilitation discourses, visual representations used for conventional anti-trafficking campaigns reinforce dominant trafficking perceptions, tending to reduce trafficking identities to aspects of individual vulnerabilities that evoke feelings of pity and voyeurism (Lainez, 2010). Public awareness campaigns feature victims' immaturity through representations of the fragile captive body. In this way, power imbalances between formerly trafficked people and audiences who might have access to opportunities and disadvantaged individuals are further reinforced. Given that the physicality of trauma has been established as a signifier of trafficked people's experiences (Aradau, 2004), questions remain as to what extent such gendered representations of trafficking, associated with female victimisation and powerlessness, might inhibit recognition of male exploitation and often completely exclude men's narratives from trafficking discourses (Skeldon, 2000). Since men's representations are not typically associated with vulnerability and exploitation, their accounts are almost entirely missing from trafficking discourses. This gap in current understanding could perpetuate stereotypical classifications that tend to position trafficked people within pre-selected categories that could contribute to their further marginalisation.

Adding to such simplified trafficking representations that build on victimhood and deficiencies, prioritising factual information, such as lists of events, dates and times that might be considered beneficial for legal and immigration purposes (Dickson, 2004), could again imply individuals' identification with victimhood narratives and create distance from their more complex experiences. Perhaps, at least partially due to the specific functionality of these narratives, the range and diversity of experiences and circumstances following human trafficking have remained unexamined within contemporary discourses.

Another reason why this silence has persisted is, conceivably, that it reflects the lack of methodological diversity in approaching trafficking issues. This lack of voice and representation has, on the one hand, perpetuated simplistic victimhood representations and, on

the other, contributed further to inequalities by constructing support services based on incomplete representations. Therefore, it was essential that the type of knowledge elicited through this study did not prioritise cognitive facts but instead illuminated the idiosyncratic nature of trafficked people's perceptions, humanity and holistic experiences, in an attempt to rehumanise and reduce the distance between the self and the other, trafficked people and third agents.

Therefore, although the initial focus of the study was on supporting the health and wellbeing of trafficked people in the UK host community alongside exploring risk and protective factors of post-trafficking identification, it was particularly important to provide a blank space wherein individuals could express a sense of who they are without a fixed and specific pre-set agenda. The expectation was that a less structured approach would offer individuals the opportunity to reflect their identities and aspects that they have not had the opportunity to show due to the specific function imposed on the structure and focus of their narratives, which might have been required when fulfilling their immigration requirements.

In this way, it was important that trafficked individuals themselves shared highlights of their lived experiences of post-trafficking identification and contributed to a better understanding of their integration post-trafficking rehabilitation. Given that enquiries including trafficked people's personal experiences in the host country after the receipt of initial post-trafficking support were entirely missing from the research literature, the need to acknowledge individuals' complexities, perceptions, views, experiences and circumstances, to inform post-trafficking support and rehabilitation discourses, was paramount. Including subjective perspectives in the study could lead to vital knowledge being gained that could establish best practices and offer support that aligns with trafficked people's sense of self and well-being. Therefore, reflection within this research involved distinguishing dominant representations and recognising the need to move towards discourses of truth that respect individual agency. Following these considerations, this thesis is aimed to examine the experiences and circumstances of trafficked people by facilitating an open space wherein respondents could relay their meaning-making and identities whilst affording a glimpse at their post-trafficking everyday realities. Methodological issues included considerations of ways of offering a safe dialogical space that would illuminate authentic expression. Questions concerning such explorations included considerations of how art therapy and practice might help connect imagination, storying and creativity in a meaningful way to help reclaim respondents'

narratives and engage with the imaginal whilst encouraging a trusting environment and discourses of truth.

1.4 Reflexivity

An awareness of my own standpoint and positionality actively influence the choices made within the research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011) and inform the reflexive approach of this research. Further to examining my own assumptions, values and politics, reflexivity entails attention to interactions with the participants and acknowledging the importance of contextual factors (Etherington, 2004). Accordingly, my intention has been to engage in this study consciously, with transparency and aim to strive towards truth, whatever this might be, whilst recognising the provisional and timely nature that this notion might have. I have continuously examined relationships between individuals and society (Blodget e al 2013) and ways in which I might be more open and flexible to be able to more fully explore the questions raised. I have reflected on my own pathway that interacted with this research, alongside the main narratives and claims of knowledge in this field

My training as a humanistic therapist has played a key role in influencing some of my understanding of emotion processing and approaches to responding to emotional distress. My values are founded on the humanistic understanding that does not pathologise emotional distress, avoids labels and focuses on potentiality and growth. I align with person-focused approaches to understanding human experiences (Rogers, 1951) with focus on relational depth (Mearns and Cooper, 2018), empathic understanding, genuineness, acceptance, unconditional positive regard and regarding each individual as an expert in their experiences (Rogers, 1959). I am also influenced by Arts therapies' suppositions of the significance of the creative process in enabling deeper understanding, promoting empathy, trusting in the individuals' own process and regarding the creative expressions as extensions of the self (Moon, 2009; Malchiodi, 2011). In agreement with Rogers (1993), I recognise that a creative connection of multiple artistic modalities can support even deeper exploration and awareness of thoughts and feelings.

Further, I draw on concepts of power and agency to illuminate an understanding of inequalities and to encourage critical awareness of oppression (Freire, 1972). This informed my wish to explore methods of engagement with the participants that acknowledge inequalities and aim for co-creation within the research encounter. Following Rogers (1959), I envisioned the

person-centred nature of this space as informed by a collaborative approach, based on humanistic ethics, empathic understanding, and respect for the agency and the organismic valuing process of the individual. In Buber's (2012) terms, this relates to an I-Thou, as opposed to an I-It relationship and approach to wellbeing, which embodies the empathetic and relational base of this research and informs the emphasis on the presence of two people, rather than an agenda - led interaction. The relational aspect of this work focusses on the process of becoming, implying fluidity and transition (Clark, 2018), as opposed to assuming fixed notions of 'truths' or striving to reach a destination. My aim, aligning with humanistic psychology, was to honour respondents' experiences and perspectives and stay within their frame of reference, core meaning and empathic inclination. This stance was maintained throughout the data collection, analysis and dissemination stages of the research.

Building on diverse traditions to create a new way of engagement was one of the objectives for this study. It was important to reflect on what experiential, artistic and intensely personal way of knowing would help better understand the phenomena to be explored, in order to create a unique method. The method design at times involved tension in creating original knowledge through highlighting new connections and relationships between concepts, fields and disciplines. In alignment with Olesen (2000) I recognise the complexities of knowledge, circumstances and identities in knowledge production. I acknowledge the tensions between notions of 'truth' from arts and social science perspectives (Edwards 2018; Raingruber, 2009; Gabriel and Connell, 2010), partially due to the specific characteristics of creativity to surpass certainty and fixed categorisations (Romanyshyn, 2013). Unlike social science understanding, relationships with boundaries could be perceived as restrictive from an artistic standpoint (Durre, 2008) or separate from scholarly engagement (Leavy, 2010). In this way, engagement with the creative process reinforced subjective and non-replicable perceptions of truth led by artistic paradigms (Sameshima and Vandermause, 2009) that highlighted the value of subjectivities and idiosyncratic knowledge.

My relationship with creativity has encouraged me to be open to new ideas as opposed to attempting to fit the data into a pre existing shape (Smyth and Shacklock, 1998). A large part of this study has been informed by an appreciation of uncertainty, which helped me stay with my process and encouraged me to withstand attempts to set and reach specific goals too early in the research. In my view, starting an exploration from a position of not knowing was a thought-provoking practice of trust in itself. This creative uncertainty regarding the exact

direction of the research exploration allowed a connection to my own creative centre that encouraged openness to inform the study.

I engage with Wosket's (1999) use of self, and particularly around my emotions and sensations in response to participants' interviews. In reflecting on privileges and status that I have had (Proctor et al., 2021), I openly seek knowledge and awareness of ways that I might unknowingly risk subjugating others in my interactions. My use of reflective journal and clinical supervision offered me the space to explore these experiences and perceptions. I maintained and completed a research diary after the encounters with the participants to reflect on significant moments, honour respondents' contributions, and process my own thoughts in response to the research interviews and image-making (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). I reflected on and negotiated using my own voice in this work whilst maintaining focus on participants' meaning-making and lived experiences. Throughout this study, I engaged in Art therapy supervision to allow a space of reflection and processing that is witnessed and held within a relational dyadic format. Response art and movement in space were also incorporated into these reflections. Initially, I considered including some reflective moments within this thesis but subsequently decided that this would take away from their vivid and meaningful accounts and images. This separation was necessary for differentiating between respondents' narratives and their evocation and resonance that intertwines with other subjectivities. I was aware of using first person and acknowledging my own story and influences but also was conscious of what Clandinin and Connelly (1994) considered as a threat of researchers' narrative dominating the participants' stories. I noticed that resonance points that remained for a significant time reflected my own pain, struggles and feelings of powerlessness. I also reflected on countertransferencial feelings and how, for some participants, a holding space might have been significant in relaying their narratives.

During this study, I attempted to attain co-creation, recognise power differentials despite efforts to facilitate an egalitarian research space (Glucks Mann, 1994) and consider how these differences influence knowledge generation. In line with Herod's (1999) recognition that the positionality of both researcher and interviewee might fluctuate in the course of the research, I perceived some circumstances and events as an insider, and other as an outsider. I was aware of the many privileges that I have, such as access to education, employment and social networks, as well as immigration permanence. I had spent nearly two decades of living in the UK, had access to linguistic and cultural knowledge and faced less barriers than the participants. In holding these circumstances in my awareness, I aimed to extend my sensitivity

to the disparities and injustices that participants might have encountered. I was mindful that some participants felt that their stories had previously been used for promoting the reputation of the services that they engaged with, and through this lens, my prior experience of working with men and women who are trafficked or at risk of trafficking could have been perceived as an outsider. I was conscious of my privileged status as a researcher to take a central position in making decisions concerning data analysis and presentation. I recognised that my research was concerned with representing participants' experiences and difficult circumstances. The study would enable me to complete a thesis, become invited to academic and public spaces to publicize the research findings as a specialist. However, I was mindful that disseminating these experiences might not benefit or change participants' circumstances.

Kusow (2003) outlines the advantages of having an insider status, to include familiarity and knowledge of the culture, relative ease with establishing trust and clearer cultural understanding of the insider position. Some of my experiential insights might or might not have influenced the participants' level of comfort in recalling their narratives but have contributed to my own sense of empathy, compassion and emotional resonances. As a facilitator of multi-cultural spaces and groups, I noted participants' engagement with others and relationship with the environment, and attended to key rituals and embodied communication used by them. My professional insider knowledge afforded me the recognition of individuals' difficulties, oppression and multiple sources of inequalities. Similarly, as a migrant to the UK, I experienced some structural barriers and constraints associated with migration, transition and citizenship.

Although originating from different socio-cultural contexts, my own experiences of being othered contributed to my sensitivity to some of these pressures and disadvantages. I have noted how my own process of challenging injustices and deep-seated hegemonic practices within my personal experiential spaces has left marks and footprints from the resistance that I have met in passing through such landscapes. I had a brief encounter with trafficking, and was fortunate that this event did not have lasting consequences for me. This happened during one of the most uncertain times I experienced after becoming a single parent within the intersections of patriarchal value systems. As I would later understand, this experience connected with a pervasive 'push factor' amongst many of the research participants who, after becoming single parents, were often expelled from the collective habitat for transgressing the moral codes of their homelands, thereby becoming exposed to extreme risk in the absence of any safety net or viable option to secure a livelihood. In my experience of standing across the dark collective

tribal as a subject who diverges from socio-culturally prescribed and established norms and routines, I noted how my relationship with the normative social order could often be configured as an act of deviance that justified expulsion and collective hostility. Accordingly, Bazalgette's (2005) analysis of collective tendencies to either demonise or offer empathic understanding, points to the fundamental link between the potential for collective empathy and the individual's common identifiers with the group. Within these lines, both individuals and groups can become dehumanised for their perceived transgression of social norms and become automatically constructed as outsiders if they fail to act according to the group's moral principles. In this sense, I have noted how elements of otherness can intersect with experiences of becoming subjugated, dehumanised and demonised by the crowd.

It is important to acknowledge the influence of socio-cultural factors on identity representations. Foucault (1980) argued that individuals could be classified as defiant in order for their institutionalisation and surveillance to be justified. During my initial stages of the research, I encountered participants who felt depersonalised and treated as socially defiant. Feelings of invisibility in society and perceptions that mainstream society regarded them as unworthy of respect due to their status. This sense of separateness from the mainstream society often contextualised respondents' narratives.

Conversely, adopting a broader empathetic framework of engagement that is based on common human characteristics could help unite, connect and invite experiencing knowledge regardless of subjectivities and positionality. As humanistic philosophies claim, aligning with shared human values could promote an affective understanding (Greenberg and Elliott, 1997) that evokes collective empathy and echoes the experiencing of the other in a similar way or with similar intensity (Mearns, Thorne and McLeod, 2013). In other words, empathic understanding as walking alongside the other could echo a reciprocal response, feelings and meaning, encouraging individuals to adopt a broader empathetic outlook and share common identifiers with others.

This conceptualisation of empathy suggests a deeper engagement with others' perceptions in the way that it connects to embodied and dynamic responses but differs from subjective perceptions, leaving space for others' senses of perceiving reality. Empathy, therefore, does not lay in imagining or cognitive understanding of individuals' circumstances and events but is located in the experiencing of the other 'as if' those feelings and experiences were one's own (Rogers, 1959). This 'as if' quality requires access and openness to own emotions and heartfelt responses that connect to the experiences of the other. In coming closer to the frame of

reference of the other, this process facilitates leaning into one another's experiences, thereby gaining a better understanding through others' points of view and perspectives. Therefore, it was essential to enable an empathic and ethical space of creating, being and encountering men and women who have previously been trafficked so that they paint an embodied picture of themselves that connects with shared human values and encourages empathetic connection with diverse audiences.

1.5 Heroes, Villains, Victims and Oppressors: Problematising Dichotomisation

Within the context of established strong trafficking stereotypes, this work presents an attempt to steer away from dichotomies, and counterargument binaried language and categories established. I was interested in exploring trafficked people's narratives informed by their experiences of undergoing the process of trafficking identification and receiving post-trafficking support through the lens of inequalities and social justice, trafficking representations and individuals' sense of self and identities. It also felt important to recognise the socio-political backdrop and the interlink between agency, host community living and respondents' voice representations. Beginning with an exploration of the pressure to fit individual circumstances within stereotypical victim typologies in order to secure a Conclusive ground trafficking status, the study explores the extent to which legislation and services might contribute to the need for trafficked people to perform vulnerability to fit the criteria for accessing support. I show the extent to which structural inequalities that have primarily influenced individual search for alternative pathways and individual's initial decisions to cross international borders have not been fully recognised within dominant antitrafficking narratives (Munro & Della Guista (2008). I argue that this omission of disparities that individuals had to overcome, allows for deeply embedded 'victim-blaming' that renders trafficked people responsible for their exploitation that further contributes to their marginalisation. I show the way in which these victim typologies influence how trafficked people represent themselves during trafficking identification and post-trafficking support.

This work contends that by positioning trafficked people's identities in opposition to what is habitually perceived as 'regular' and 'normative', mainstream ideologies have tended to diminish the importance of acknowledging complexities surrounding trafficked people's entitlement to protection and support. I examine the ways in which politicised hierarchical constructions tend to conceptualise trafficked people in terms of the binaries of criminality and

innocence (Berman, 2010). It appears that these dichotomising representations could suggest that individuals who are overtly coerced and imprisoned are likely to be perceived as worthy of protection, whilst those who agreed to work in the initial stages of trafficking, are considered responsible for their exploitation (Davidson, 2006; O'Brien et al., 2013).These classifications of deserving and undeserving (Bhabha, 2018; Phoenix, 2002), based on individuals' prior agreements or perceived agency in the process of searching for employment opportunities, are investigated through the political and practical implications to the lives of trafficked individuals. This study shows that such victimising views could serve to reproduce and consolidate trafficking narratives and further reinforce victim stereotypes,

In attempting to counter these stereotypical representations, the study aimed to present a more nuanced depiction of trafficked people, showing areas of everyday routine living, experiences and identities that might not be linked to the trafficking circumstances. Scholars have also highlighted the need to be aware of the dominance of the English language (Ndimande, 2012; Perry, 2011) and the privileging and subjugation of verbal linguistic ways of expression (Smith, Fisher and Heath, 2011 that might overlook diverse cultural preferences by imposing uncritical ways of working within the research environment. In this way, an empathetic approach built on shared human values aimed to highlight marginalised and less popular knowledge. Namely, attempts to create alternatives to dominant anti-trafficking representations were supported by considerations of knowledge construction and efforts to include diverse type of knowing. Notably, linked to the potential to associate with both instinctual and more refined themes and issues (Case & Dalley, 2014), communication through art was deemed appropriate in recognising the complexity of human experiences (Foster, 2007) instead of imposing dominant means of communication. Alongside the idiosyncratic nature of creative engagement, this method seemed to oppose conventional classifications to support the inclusivity of embodied involvement in the process and enhance meaning-making.

In support of Biggs' (2004) framework, process-based communication through the artistic media included content which could be verbalised; alongside tacit and ineffable knowledge, which has no linguistic equivalence. In some circumstances, the meaning was led by the experiential process and no attempt to connect to categories made. A need to illuminate previously overlooked interest of inner experiences and expression of profound meaning through artistic type of knowledge (Mursham, 2001). In problematising the opposing categories of the dichotomies concerned, it is important to recognise that such conceptualisations tend to dominate habitual thinking patterns and social science methods.

Although the aim of this research has been to reveal a counter narrative and more complex understanding of participants worldviews, I am conscious that the data analysis presentation through the frame of 'heroism' could be perceived as 'binary'.

I refute the premise of collective exhaustivity by providing counter examples of alternative representations beyond the ones already known. I attempt to show alternative viewpoints, highlights multiplicity of views and positions and indicate complexities of characteristics. I am aware that in problematising oppositional categorising, some of the findings within this study have also been built upon polarised language. For example, the heroes journey archetype could also represent a dichotomy as putting the character before a test helps crystalize their heroic qualities that could feed into the deserving – undeserving paradigms. It would be useful to continue to consider deconstruction of these categories, to form narratives that are fluid could help and do not include these categories.

1.6 Overview of this Thesis

This thesis comprises nine chapters. The first, current chapter provides an account of my experiences of the processes and personal perspectives that helped shape this research, alongside introducing the background of trafficking and modern slavery. The second chapter presents the literature review, which sets the background and landscape of the study. This section will start with defining the legal perspectives of trafficking and would subsequently examine human trafficking from immigration, gendered, health and reintegration perspectives. The literature review investigates how contemporary trafficking narratives constructed on trauma-informed conceptualisations tend to dichotomise actors into victims, villains, rescuers and spectators. I conclude this chapter by highlighting the need to conduct qualitative research in post-trafficking integration and rehabilitation that could also inform anti-oppressive and culturally sensitive post-trafficking support. The third chapter discusses the use of Arts-based research and Narrative inquiry as methodology, alongside ethical and other methodological issues that inform constructing a hybridised anti-oppressive perspective in response to the research aims. The fourth, Method chapter will present how the methodology was applied, including the development of the research procedure, recruitment and interview strategies, process-based work and analysis of respondents' arts-based and narrative data. Findings based on participants' narratives, creative work and reflexive insights will be presented within the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth chapters, wherein themes were distilled within three narrative

threads: trafficking representations, pre-trafficking vulnerabilities, trafficking identification and post-trafficking integration. Each findings chapter will consider the literature as well as report respondents' narratives. The conclusion chapter will draw together the themes, using a mythical story arc framed by oral myth and narrative. This thesis challenges the victimhood- and trauma-based discourses and contributes to collating visual and narrative representations of respondents that allow a glimpse into their subjective experiences, idiosyncrasies and emotional complexities. In the ninth, Concluding Discussion chapter, I outline key insights and implications from my findings. Further recommendations for professional practice and considerations for future research are also explored.

1.7 Summary

This introductory chapter provided the background context to the study, focusing on my positionality and the knowledge gap that prompted this investigation. I then outlined the rationale for the study, including issues that influenced this investigation. I discussed how this study interferes with dominant discourses of knowledge production and dissemination. I noted how some of the tensions between dominant trafficking discourses and subjective narratives of trafficked people could, at times, exhibit othering tendencies. I considered two types of rehabilitation, person-focused and trauma-focused and made a connection between person-centred ethos and inherent belief in the human potential to grow. I highlighted how in order to enhance the support services, there is a need to gain a better understanding of trafficked people's experiences, their constructions of self and what aspect of the support services they received were useful or not from their perspectives. I discussed how approaching a 'relational research space as a person living in the world required letting go of preconceptions and focussing on an empathic understanding of participants' subjective world that could respect their agency and affirm their sense of self. I considered the ways in which utilising embodied and experiential knowledge that further highlights respondents' self-expression and meaning-making could aid in establishing an empathetic connection with diverse audiences. In doing this, I outlined the relevance of this study, reflected in the research aims and objectives.

2

Contemporary Trafficking Narratives: A Review of the Literature

2.1 Introduction

Human trafficking is often described as a violation of human rights and dignity that involves extreme forms of exploitation and abuse (ECAT, 2005). According to the most precise estimates, trafficking has affected between 10,000 and 13,000 victims in the UK (Home Office, 2014). Registered numbers of modern slavery cases, relating mostly to labour exploitation, sexual exploitation and domestic servitude, have progressively increased in recent years (HMGovernment, 2019), with the most common countries of origin of trafficked people in the UK being Albania, Vietnam, China, Romania, Sudan and the UK itself (Office for National Statistics, 2020). Despite the continuous growth of trafficking in the UK, however, there is only limited understanding of the experiences and circumstances of trafficked individuals and how service providers should best support their rehabilitation.

Notwithstanding the need for governments and other bodies to categorise trafficked individuals' circumstances to allow for appropriate protection and support measures to be put in place, this chapter will provide a detailed overview of the existing literature and evidence in relation to trafficked individuals. The main arguments which are notable within this literature will be critically discussed. Further, attempts to deconstruct the function of the dominant trafficking representations that have populated the public domain, will show current

conceptualisations of trafficked individuals as somewhat naive and not fully able to make informed decisions about their lives. It is argued that this moralises behaviours and adversely impacts power dynamics between service providers and trafficked individuals. Analysis of the function and politicised construction of these representations would enable a better understanding of the trafficking backgrounds within the home countries' legal contexts. This, in turn, would serve as a counterpoint from which to examine alternative representations from the perspectives of trafficked people. This investigation will form the basis for considering how these dominant representations could affect trafficked people's identity construction, post-trafficking support and experiences.

The chapter, therefore, illustrates how human trafficking, as conceptualised both by governments and the individuals affected, has real-life consequences for the extent to which individuals view themselves and are regarded as being trafficked. By considering how the phenomenon has been defined and is incorporated into the relevant legal frameworks, the first part of this chapter begins by highlighting the tension between the necessary functions of official discourses and trafficked individuals' quests to recognise their status. Further sections will provide a contextual background of the trafficking discourses examined through migration, gender equality, and health outcomes lenses. This section will show that trafficking conceptualisations have often been introduced as issues brought into the host country by migrant workers. Rather than addressing the structural issues that are at the base of inequalities, the construction of the typical trafficked person within the vulnerability/crime nexus as a young and innocent individual, who is coerced and enslaved by foreign criminals, could further reinforce these already established links between trafficking and vulnerability. I will further argue that this could influence the broader constructions of the trafficked person as a coerced victim in need of rescuing, gain public approval, and justify border control measures. Lastly, the literature review will explore post-trafficking interventions and rehabilitation of trafficked people through international and UK perspectives in order to reflect the complexity of the issues surrounding post-trafficking rehabilitation and support. This section will show how, within this sphere, stereotypical trafficking representations tend to deny trafficked people's sense of agency and exclude those who do not fit the definition of the ideal victim.

2.2 Literature Review Approach

The aim of this review was to complete a comprehensive overview of the literature surrounding post-trafficking support, integration, and rehabilitation. The intention was to locate and critically examine the literature to provide a background to situate this PhD research study. Due to the scarcity of directly related studies, a more comprehensive narrative approach was adopted to encompass the complexities of the trafficking issues and position this study within the theoretical field. In alignment with the nature of the research question, studies that utilised qualitative methods and directly involved trafficked people were prioritised.

Since the main objective of this study was to explore the health and wellbeing of trafficked people in the UK post trafficking services, the search terms included the following: 'human trafficking' or 'sex trafficking' or 'trafficked persons'; and 'support' or 'reintegration' or 'integration' or 'rehabilitation'. This review focussed on literature published between January 2001 (immediately post-Palermo Protocol) to February 2021, were identified. The databases included for this review were CINAHL, Medline, PsycINFO and PsychArticles; the reference lists of all articles were also examined. Following this, a further manual search was carried out within the following peer-reviewed journals: *Antitrafficking Review* and the *Journal of Human Trafficking*. The selection of sources led by the research question considered different types of evidence within this review, including publications within journals, book chapters, grey literature, charity documents and practice-based intervention frameworks. After carefully screening titles and abstracts and removing duplicates and articles that were not peer-reviewed and non-English, 97 peer-reviewed journal articles formed the basis of this review on trafficking support, reintegration and rehabilitation.

This literature review will explore human trafficking in the context of migration, human rights, violence against women, health outcomes and rehabilitation discourses. The determinants and impacts of trafficking will be further analysed in order to present the different representations of trafficking and the effect of these suppositions in perpetuating inequalities and trafficking vulnerabilities, followed by considerations of rehabilitation and reintegration standpoints. Since there are currently no studies focussing on trafficked people's integration and rehabilitation in the UK, these phenomena will be examined through international studies before a summary in light of the literature review findings is drawn.

2.3 Definitional debates

The complex and intricate nature of the topic area is exemplified by considering the difficulties associated with deriving a suitable definition for human trafficking. One of the most common definitions of trafficking is the one used by the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (the 'Palermo Protocol'), which defines trafficking as

> The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of 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 minimum, the exploitation of 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. (Article 3, par a, UN General Assembly 2003)

While this trafficking definition has been widely accepted and is used by many governments and international bodies, it has been noted that it fails to recognise the complexity of the issue altogether. Due to personal histories of exploitation, individual responses and circumstances relating to the types of inequalities experienced may not neatly fit within the commonly accepted definition (Lambine, 2018). It can also be challenging to provide definite proof for inherently clandestine circumstances and may hold potential safety risks to individuals and their families following public disclosure of events (Aberdeen and Zimmerman, 2015; Skilbrei and Tveit, 2008). Furthermore, it has become apparent that individuals may not be clear about whether they have been trafficked, which further adds to the difficulties in defining and identifying trafficking experiences.

Given these limitations, there have been attempts to make the definition more all-encompassing to ease trafficked individuals' identification. Gallagher (2010), in this way, proposes a simplification of the Palermo definition by extracting the main characteristics of trafficking. First, the action component concerns recruitment, movement and transfer and serves to isolate the individual from their habitual environment. This component is seen to create symptoms of disorientation and detachment from familiarity and natural sources of support (Brayley and Cockbain, 2014). Second, Gallagher (2010) identifies means as an essential generic

characteristic of the trafficking process. This refers to the circumstances under which the trafficking condition unfolded and includes the extent to which this was characterised by the use of threats, force or coercion. Further, the purpose of trafficking refers to the presence of an exploitative element as part of the recruitment and movement of individuals (e.g., sexual and labour exploitation, slavery or removal of organs).

Although this definition succeeds in distilling into its essence the complexities of trafficking into three main components, several challenges remain. For example, it has been argued that it may not always be readily possible to unequivocally recognise the extent to which exploitation, consent and coercion are evidenced (Oram et al., 2011). Coercion, for example, may include overt and more covert forms, such as threat, deception or abuse of power, which may not be easily identified (Mitchell and Raghavan, 2019; Morewitz, 2019). Similarly, there are difficulties in defining exploitation by individuals who might have faced multiple inequalities (Dando et al., 2016). Further, tensions can be identified when considering the primary focus of these three elements. Accordingly, whilst some researchers contend that coercion is central to this definition (Loff and Sanghera, 2004; O'Connor, 2017; Baldwin, Fehrenbacher and Eisenman, 2015), other scholars tend to focus on exploitation patterns, and frequency (Munro, 2006; Segrave, 2008) and the rest consider the primary issue to be that of consent (Agnew, 2018; Balos, 2004; Elliott, 2014; Gallagher, 2010). These factors collectively contribute to a so-called 'battleground' of difficulties in trafficking identification and support (Meshkovska et al., 2015).

Further debates evidence tension between concepts of age-restricted consent and 'action' points concerning child trafficking and trafficking within the home country. It is generally accepted that individuals under 18 years of age cannot consent to exploitation; hence the means component is unnecessary for child trafficking (Modern Slavery Act, 2015). However, researchers have noted an overall confusion amongst health care professionals regarding children's perceived participation and self-control during the trafficking process, an outlook that prevents efficient trafficking identification and post-trafficking support (Pearce, 2011). Complicating matters further, it has been argued that fundamental definitions of trafficking may frequently become confused when trafficking occurs without crossing international borders (Munro, 2006). In an attempt to resolve this dilemma, Brayley and Cockbain (2014) outline three main factors which help define internal trafficking: the repetitive nature of the exploitation; the involvement of two or more offenders; and short- or long-distance transportation. These definitional debates provide an overview of some of the challenges in

understanding trafficking conceptualisations and thereby aid the stimulation of reflexivity amongst practitioners and researchers.

2.4 The Legal Framework Pertaining to Trafficking and Modern Slavery

The protection of rights and healthcare needs of trafficked people in the UK are governed by national and international legislation. The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and the Modern Slavery Act (2015) have been established in response to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (ECAT, 2005), which requires the implementation of a framework for the identification, support and protection of trafficked people. Apart from securing preventative measures and implementing strict penalties for organisers of trafficking, the Modern Slavery Act (2015) extended the entitlement to support to the victims of modern slavery, servitude and forced and compulsory labour. Despite this expansion of entitlement to post-trafficking support, the UK government has been criticised for not doing enough to safeguard trafficked people's rights and health needs (Oram et al., 2011), partially due to support provisions being conditional upon trafficking identification through the NRM.

In this way, post-trafficking support follows a two-stage victim identification system which in many cases exceeds the maximum designated time for reaching a decision (Oram et al., 2011). During the initial assessment stages of the referral, the NRM Competent Authority unit determines whether there are reasonable grounds to believe that the referred person is a potential victim of trafficking. If positive reasonable grounds are found, the potential victim is offered accommodation and granted a 45-day period of reflection and recovery (Human Trafficking Foundation, 2015). The next and final decision stage might guarantee a temporary 12-month leave to remain, which is subject to official identification as a victim of trafficking in addition to the trafficked person's willingness to cooperate with the police and assist with a criminal investigation (Human Trafficking Foundation, 2015). Alternatively, if the person is found not to be a victim of trafficking, the appropriate law enforcement agencies, such as the police or the UK Border Agency, are notified, and the referred person could then be asked to return to their country of origin. This conditionality of the offer of support poses some ethical challenges due to the practical difficulties in providing evidence of trafficking crimes and the risk of deportation if the trafficked status is not achieved, as well as fears around assisting with traffickers' prosecution, mainly when traffickers are family members or threaten retaliation

(Oram et al., 2011; Pearson, 2002). Overall, these reports indicate that despite the provisions to secure the short-term needs of trafficked people under the NRM, the risks involved might contribute to the reluctance of reporting the crimes and seeking support.

Added to the complexities inherent to an individual's decision to seek identification as a trafficked person, the National Referral Framework has been criticised for differential treatment based on trafficked people's nationalities (Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group, 2010). This was partially due to suspected inconsistencies in the trafficking identification process, which was initially handled by two different agencies until 2019 and resulted in apparent disparities in trafficking identification outcomes, depending on the applicant's origin and immigration status. In light of these differences, the UK Border Agency has been critiqued for treating potential victims of modern slavery from outside the EU as immigration offenders and for subjecting non-EU trafficked individuals to threats of removal and detention (Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group, 2010). Such discrepancies in the way potential EU and non-EU trafficking victims are identified could be indicative of how trafficking discourses could be linked to prioritising the state's border-control agenda in seeking ways to identify and expulse irregular migrants. This evidence suggests that preoccupations with border security concerns could adversely affect the level of uncertainty that trafficked people experience during the process of trafficking identification.

Further highlighting the need for appropriate personalised support, the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's (2020) most recent report suggests that more is needed to support trafficked people's rehabilitation, sustainability and perceived independence. This marks a step towards recognising the structural issues that individuals face, although by framing those, the report focuses explicitly on vigilance in distinguishing signs of trafficking and regularisation of labour rather than recognition of inequalities that might have initially prompted trafficked people's migration journeys. By means of identifying concerns relating to trafficking identification, support and care of trafficked people, alongside highlighting the need for more attention to the period after the support services have come to an end, the report calls for a need to better understand trafficked people's needs and ways of better supporting their rehabilitation. In highlighting the need to improve identification and victim support, however, the report does not define how this effect might be shown and, in general, tends to construct support within the mental health discourse. Although motivated by a wish to make an improvement, these medicalised constructions draw attention to professional training and the need to recognise and report signs of trafficking. Highlighting the adverse effects of a prolonged trafficking

identification process on individuals' wellbeing, the report calls for accessible research that enhances further understanding of trafficked people's support and rehabilitation. This gap in knowledge and insufficient attention to trafficked people's lived experiences reflect this research's aims, which seeks to systematically explore trafficked people's lived experiences of their attempts to integrate into the host community after the receipt of initial post-trafficking support in the UK.

2.5 Migration in the Trafficking Discourse

Although human trafficking is associated with involuntary movement across borders, studies suggest that a level of agency is involved, at least in the initial stages of exploring the options to migrate (Brunovskis and Surtees, 2012; Vijeyarasa, 2012). Examined through the migration studies lens, trafficked people's experiences are frequently considered in the context of the causative effect of pre-trafficking conditions, generally described as 'push' and 'pull' factors in the literature. Several qualitative studies, in this way, highlight the manifold stressors suffered by trafficked people due to economic, political, or environmental issues in their home countries (Demir and Finckenauer, 2010; Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012; Vijeyarasa, 2010; Silverman et al., 2007), which may act in combination with increased demand for cheap labour and commercial sex as well as imagined prospects of safety, political stability and employment opportunities in the host country, to drive individuals to instigate a change of their circumstances by seeking better employment and living opportunities abroad. In this way, several small studies that address the structural issues as foundations of inequalities have represented trafficked people as having suffered adverse physical and psychological effects of economics-related factors in their home countries such as poverty, unemployment, insufficient education and homelessness (Gjermeni et al., 2008; Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012; Vijeyarasa, 2010). The degree of severity of these difficulties has been found to increase an individual's risk-taking behaviours, particularly when under pressure to flee war and conflict when individuals embark on a journey to anticipated safety (Atnafu and Adamek, 2016). By recognising the structural and political inequalities faced by trafficked people in the context of migration, this body of work highlight the ways in which background factors may interact with current experiences as a counterpoint to more oppressive narratives.

In contrast to this view of trafficking, which considers individual experiences in the broader context of socioeconomic challenges impacting individuals' agencies and life choices, other

work documents how popular discourses on the topic are often less empathetic. A particular focus of narratives around trafficking, for example, has been what might best be described as 'habitual linking' of (in)voluntary pre-trafficking migration with border control. It has therefore been argued that the rise of anti-trafficking initiatives was prompted by government concerns relating to broader immigration issues (Sharma, 2005; Chacón, 2010; Adams, 2003; Andrijasevic and Anderson, 2009; Haynes, 2004; Shimmel, 2006; Chapkis, 2003; FitzGerald, 2012; 2016). According to these claims, the rising scale of migration in the UK as a result of large numbers of Eastern European citizens entering the UK labour market following the inclusion of the accession A8 states intensified immigration concerns and propelled anti-trafficking initiatives (Ibrahim and Howarth, 2017; Mawby and Gisby, 2009). Similarly, Rivers-Moore (2014) highlights an arguable paradox that, although sex work within the state's borders is generally tolerated, migrant sex workers are strictly monitored and raided. This discrepancy, according to Rivers-Moore, highlights the state's preoccupation with immigration concerns rather than the protection of sex workers. Through examining the specific historical and political context within which anti-trafficking discourses emerged, this work illustrates the extent to which anti-trafficking discourses could serve as an anti-immigration strategy that aids in rationalising the implementation of stricter border control measures.

Further to these claims, several opinion studies have suggested that broadcasting dominant trafficking scenarios through the media operates as a didactic tool that not only enables the public to recognise trafficking but also proposes the appropriate actions needed to prevent this (Ditmore and Thukral, 2012; Sanghera, 2017; Chuang, 2009; Ahmed and Seshu, 2012). For example, Berman (2010) highlights the tendencies to absolutise and polarise narrative positions concerned with trafficking, such as 'the good and the evil', 'white and dark', 'east and west' and 'developed and developing'. This purposeful propensity to conceal the structural inequalities as push factors for trafficking, from this perspective, acts to criminalise, dehumanise and ultimately reduce trafficked people to the position of victims whose transgression needs to be controlled and managed. This approach of proclaiming the rescue of vulnerable victims of crime as an act of obscure state-induced discrimination has been further criticised in Davidson's (2006) analysis of broadcasting anti-trafficking police raids, claiming that media representations disseminate sensationalist anti-trafficking narratives and link rescue raid operations with crime prevention to achieve migration control. Similarly, Hill (2016) documents the extent to which the underlying purpose for publicly enacting anti-trafficking police raid scenarios is to introduce the main actors of the trafficking scene: namely, the

victims, the criminals and the rescuers. In this way, analysis of trafficking representations suggests that reproductions of trafficking master narratives could act as a didactic means that introduces the trafficking scenario and suggests a preferred outcome involving public cooperation, police rescue, and trafficked people's repatriation.

This is arguably a re-enactment of underlying government anti-immigration strategies by publicising anti-trafficking raids and rescue operations in the media, and it has been further criticised for harming migrant workers (Chuang, 2009; Bernstein, 2010; O'Brien, Carpenter and Hayes, 2013). According to Vance (2012), the public broadcasting of stereotypical rescue operations compromises migrant people's confidentiality and threatens their reputations. This work highlights an apparent threat to individuals' safety by placing migrant people's perceived identity as trafficked people in the public domain and compromising their autonomy and consent to be identified in this manner. These claims support the notion that trafficking representations could appear to raise awareness of inequalities and human rights issues whilst overtly serving the anti-immigration interests of the state. Further to negatively affecting trafficked people's welfare, Hesford (2011) argues that the sensationalisation of trafficking discourses has been linked to using women in these raid scenarios merely as evidence that anti-trafficking measures are needed and justified. This work is important in illustrating the extent to which dominant trafficked people's representations could not only serve the interests of the state but could also cause harm and objectify irregular workers.

Further to raised concerns regarding compromising migrant workers' rights, the public reinforcement of dominant master narratives of trafficking has also been criticised for implying that once rescued; trafficked individuals will automatically receive the support and rehabilitation they require (Ditmore and Thukral, 2012; Vance, 2012). Despite such displays of the state's apparent willingness to support trafficked people, it has been noted that details of what happens with migrants after the anti-trafficking raids are usually not publicised (e.g. Ahmed and Seshu, 2012). Further to this, researchers (e.g. Anderson, 2010; Bosworth, 2013) claim that once the migrant workers become the police's responsibility, they are not only left unsupported but also categorised as illegal immigrants and therefore in danger of being detained, deported, or of being subjected to compulsory control interventions and surveillance. While habitual representations of irregular migrant workers as trafficked people could generate assumptions that the state would support rescued workers' needs, this evidence suggests that the extent to which migrants experience these rescue operations is mostly unknown and could have a potentially detrimental effect.

Therefore, it is argued that, on one side, the dominant master narratives of trafficking tend to heighten public awareness by representing migrants as trafficking victims and, on the other, when the trafficking status is needed to access protection and healthcare, it is difficult to acquire (Clawson and Dutch, 2008; Hoyle, Bosworth and Dempsey, 2011; Jahic and Finckenauer, 2005). This work further suggests that despite imbued state concern for trafficked people's wellbeing, what occurs to individuals after their rescue is largely unknown. This points to a paradox that despite the interchanging use of non-regulated migrant labour and trafficking within publicised narratives, the individual has the right to seek protection only after an investigation confirms that trafficking circumstances have been evidenced. Further discrepancies have highlighted the influence of nationality in the trafficking discourse. For instance, state records have indicated that a significantly lower percentage of non-EU citizens are confirmed as victims of trafficking (Oram et al., 2011; Goodey, 2000; Stepnitz, 2012). Overall, the body of existing research highlights the function of trafficking representations, arguably, to appeal for public attention, introduce sensationalist trafficking narratives and highlight the need to rescue vulnerable victims to serve anti-immigration objectives.

Alongside claims that representations of the trafficked victim in need of rescuing serve overt government strategies that aim to persuade the public of the need to employ anti-trafficking measures, other studies have highlighted an additional function of trafficking identification campaigns: they tend to enter the more personal domains of domesticity, to imbue the public with the responsibility of protecting public spaces. Within the umbrella of enabling social change via 'ethical consumption', the audience's attention has been directed to the close proximity of trafficking, which surpasses the domain of the commercial sex industry, to occupy restaurants, nail bars and the construction industry (Lewis and Potter, 2013; Scott, Craig and Geddes, 2012; Smit, 2011; Vogiazides and Hedberg, 2013; Rijken, 2011). Also illustrating the extent to which these portrayals mirror prevalent neoliberal values, Ahmed (2004) documents how trafficking representations are employed as a means of entering the protected emotional spheres of homes, food, digestion and bodies, to gain more immediate proximity to the public and imbue a sense of threat to otherwise comfortable and more intimate spaces. Within this context, workers' exploitation is not represented as the main issue; instead, the exploitation of consumers and citizens of the home country dominates the frame (Szorenyi, 2016; Attas, 2000; Cannon and Yaprak, 2002). This construction of trafficking-destination countries as vulnerable to exploitation provokes an empathic response that implies an individual obligation to report suspected crimes and protect the state's labour borders. From this perspective, anti-trafficking

initiatives have been criticised as utilising the trafficking discourses to forward another form of border surveillance, which sensitises diverse audiences and enables the public to identify trafficking and report irregular migrant workers.

In conjunction with these suggestions that trafficking is intrinsic to less advanced countries, researchers have examined emerging racialised categorising regarding criminality and trafficking exploitation. For example, a historical overview of England's early anti-trafficking movement shows how the typical trafficked victim is linked to the image of a poor and uneducated foreign woman (Attwood, 2016). Similarly, more recent research exploring the UK public's perceptions of trafficked individuals indicates that trafficked people are frequently perceived to be associated with either criminality or vulnerability characteristics, such as being a woman, uneducated, ignorant, having a low IQ or self-esteem (Dando et al., 2016). This wrongful stereotypical image denies the complexities of the lived experiences and structural inequalities faced by trafficked people, adds to the level of oppression and discrimination and supports the need to voice trafficked people's own experiences.

Further international studies using a range of visual methodologies have argued that constructions of trafficking as an intrinsically 'foreign' issue that should be removed from the nation's function to preserve the state's innocence and protect the nation's reputation (Aas and Bosworth, 2013; Kim, 2010; Herzfeld, Green, Epstein and Beddoe, 2006; Anderson, 2010; FitzGerald, 2016; Andrijasevic and Anderson, 2009). Particular attention has been drawn, for example, to reality tv programmes demonstrating how border security officials keep the risk of disease, irregularities and criminal elements outside the nation's borders (Walsh, 2015; Altheide and Michalowski, 1999; Comfort, 2005; Altheide, 1997; Altheide, 2017; Andrejevic, 2011). Within this context of preoccupation with immigration issues, the trafficked person appears as a contaminant that jeopardises the intrinsically pure national spaces. Accordingly, DeGenova (2013) summarises these main issues into the term 'border spectacle', where illegality is expelled from the national domestic borders to a separate space, situated outside the boundaries of the trafficking host state, in a way that deportation and extraction of irregular elements within this context are suggested as a solution to trafficking concerns. This body of research, therefore, argues that sending trafficked people to their 'homes' is not motivated by concern for others' sense of autonomy but instead prioritises the protection of the audience's comfortable home spaces. These associations of trafficking with foreignness, class and socioeconomic signifiers mark a clear divide between the respectable and undesirable members

of society and imbue blame for trafficking circumstances upon the underprivileged and needy individuals.

Despite these mainstream assertions that the solution to trafficking is stricter border control, punitive border security models have been subject to significant criticism (Sharma, 2005; Weber and Pickering, 2011; Newton, 2008; Little and Vaughan-Williams, 2017). According to Andersson (2014), the absence of legal migration alternatives drives illegality to a deeper and more secretive underground level. More specifically, critical incidents tend to provoke better-equipped technological defences, which in turn call for riskier border-crossing attempts that complete an organised network of 'shared militarism' within the 'illegality industry'. What is needed, according to Bhabha (2018), is the introduction of humane and legal pathways that offer opportunities, reduce risk and ease migration controls. These claims suggest that punitive border securitisation systems could push individuals to undertake more significant risks in order to escape poverty and discrimination. In other words, stricter border security measures could not only fail to provide the solution to trafficking but could also encourage an increase in illegality and trafficking practices.

These studies raise questions about trafficked people's mainstream portrayals and how these might align with the state's border control agenda. This section establishes how, at one extreme, trafficked people are represented as immigration offenders who might threaten the state's apparent safety and security. At the other extreme, however, services can often perceive trafficked persons as vulnerable victims in need of rescuing. These contradictory statements are important because, as I argue throughout this thesis, they influence trafficked people's experiences of post-trafficking identification and support. Apart from adversely contributing to the perpetuation of the victimised image of the trafficked person, the simplification of trafficked people's complex realities into binaries, such as legal and illegal, free and enslaved, deserving and undeserving, has arguably increased distancing from the complexity of the trafficking issues and added to the perpetuation of trafficked people's representational inequalities.

2.6 Gendered Perspectives of Trafficking

Alongside contextualising trafficking within the plethora of migration issues, further studies consider gender-related inequalities in this context. Consideration of these gender-related

barriers that affect individuals' everyday living offers clarification on some aspects of the pre-trafficking conditions that individuals might have faced in their home countries. It has long been noted that gender inequalities are ordinarily institutionalised and conveyed in the social, economic, political, cultural and legal systems of trafficking-source countries (Crawford and Kaufman, 2008; Vijeyarasa, 2012; Peled and Parker, 2013; Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012; Roopan and Stewart, 2011). Moreover, it has been reported that patriarchal and family-orientated societal values often position men as the primary breadwinners and decision-makers, leaving scarce employment and support opportunities for women (Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012; Vijeyarasa, 2010). These studies support a better understanding of some of the difficulties that could have acted as push factors to seek alternative living and employment opportunities abroad and further contribute to vulnerability towards trafficking.

Advancing these arguments further, another body of literature outlines culturally embedded factors as significant determinants of increasing expectations for women to fulfil the caring roles within the family. These influences are less acknowledged in the public discourse and relate to internalised feelings of social obligation to serve the interests of the family, found by researchers to be commonly held within trafficking-home cultures (Vijeyarasa, 2010; Peled and Parker, 2013; Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012; Brunovskis and Surtees, 2012; Rimal and Papadopoulos, 2016). In particular, feminist writers have widely criticised the unrealistic expectations placed on women to assume the roles of idealised mothers and carers, who can provide and fulfil a wide range of familial needs. According to these claims, such highly unrealistic views of women are commonly reinforced in many countries' family ideologies through employment laws, state benefits and taxation policies to instigate women's internalised feelings of obligation and social duty (Hays, 1996; Rich, 1976). This is further confirmed by evidence that a large proportion of trafficked women are mothers who ordinarily support their children and other family members (Brunovski and Surtees, 2012; Cwikel et al., 2004; Zimmerman et al., 2003). This literature usefully examines the extent to which women are covertly pressurised to serve internalised family values, suggesting that for a large number of trafficked people, the social obligation to serve the interests of the family could be a significant determinant of submitting to trafficking.

Furthermore, researchers have highlighted that particular tensions accumulated by these gender power imbalances on one side and pressure on women to enact internalised caring obligations on the other could additionally increase the levels of economic disadvantage amongst women. Accordingly, this body of work highlights what might be termed an incompatibility between

imposed and expected duties laid on women to care and provide, on the one hand, and gender-related barriers to accessing the labour market on the other (Vijeyarasa, 2010; Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012). This “feminization of poverty” has also been linked by further research to an increased amount of pressure on women to consider hazardous employment opportunities in order to contribute to the family income (McLanahan and Kelly, 1998). Following a similar inquiry line, Vijeyarasa (2012) outlines some important factors contributing to trafficked women’s drive to search for better options abroad. These include women's unequal access to the domestic labour market, wide-ranging wage differences, and barriers to employment or setting up small businesses. Similarly, Peled and Parker (2013) highlight the detrimental consequences of internalised conflicts, stigmatisation and heightened vulnerabilities associated with sex-trafficked mothers who do not appear to harmonise with the widely agreed and normative social order. This study contributes to the argument relating to the impact of gender discrimination and unequal access to the domestic labour market in the respondents’ country of origin.

In contrast to the mainstream narratives surrounding trafficking, which tend to focus on trafficked people’s perceived naivety and victimhood, this study highlights a less debated reality which reflects some of the courage, strengths and resilience associated with trafficked women’s lived experiences. This acknowledgement of the gender-based factors that could exercise pressure on women and contribute to trafficking vulnerability serves to deconstruct more oppressive victim-blaming ideologies. Reflecting on this tension between the need to provide and gender-based barriers to employment, these studies create an important counternarrative to the more dominant anti-trafficking perceptions.

Although the dominant image of victimisation presupposes a complete lack of agency and unwillingness to work, studies highlight the importance of acknowledging the complexities surrounding the provision of consent and entitlement to protection and support. Alongside covert pressure to serve family values, research suggests that coercion into trafficking could be exercised directly by acquaintances, intimate partners and family members (Goldenberg et al., 2014; Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012; Aghatise, 2004; Reynolds and McKee, 2010). While there is evidence that a large number of women could have been initially known to the recruiters and aware of the prospect of working in the sex industry, reports suggest that unexpected modifications of previously agreed conditions as well as extreme levels of violence encountered in the later stages of trafficking (Cwikel et al., 2004; Peled and Parker, 2013; Vijeyarasa, 2012). Accordingly, researchers highlight the importance of acknowledging the

circumstances, pressure and lack of alternatives within which initial decisions to cross international borders, might have been made (Munro, 2005). This body of research recognises a number of unequal and gender-based factors which might contribute to trafficking vulnerability, serving as a counterpoint to the dominant trafficking discourses, which tend to simplify the causalities and deny the exploitation and systemic inequalities that might have obligated the women to migrate and expose themselves to unknown risk.

Opposing such coercive propensities exercised directly by family members and acquaintances, awareness-raising campaigns seemingly aimed at warning women about the dangers of being coerced and exploited by criminals were prevalent throughout the history of trafficking representations (Doezema, 1999). Emerging at a time when female labour migration was a common occurrence, anti-trafficking prevention campaigns in post-communist Eastern Europe tended to feature survivor stories of endured violence, enacted through the image of the young and naïve foreign victim, who is coerced and bonded into modern slavery (Andrijasevic, 2007). It has further been argued that by associating trafficking with sex work, such campaigns, primarily focused on women, serve to imbue fear and reinforce traditional gender roles by discouraging women from migrating (Nieuwenhuys and Pécoud, 2007; Chuang, 2010; Andrijasevic, 2007). In this way, by claiming to educate vulnerable women, such discourses could indirectly imply women's responsibility for their oppression and perpetuate existing inequalities (Baker, 2013; Doezema, 1999). Further, these stigmatising representations tend to deepen the existing divide between deserving and undeserving trafficked people (Phoenix, 2002), suggesting that those who are coerced and imprisoned are perceived as worthy of protection, whilst those who agreed to commercial sex work are considered responsible for their exploitation (O'Brien et al., 2013). These studies are important because they indicate how such hierarchical representations could ostracise migrant women whose circumstances or socioeconomic barriers might have pressured them into engaging in sex work and in this way caused harm to those who do not neatly fit within the 'good victim' stereotype.

This small body of research has more directly acknowledged the oppressive impact of political, structural and gender-based influence that might have exercised pressure on individuals to expose themselves to unknown risks and seek not only economically sustainable but safer living prospects abroad. These studies have recognised some of the systemic inequalities that might have forced the individuals to initiate migration projects to support themselves and their families. Whilst acknowledging the broader structural barriers that play a role in individuals'

decisions to migrate, individuals' personal strength and resilience in making such decisions need to be better recognised.

2.7 Visual and Arts-Based Trafficking Representations

Similar to migration discourses, media portrayals are discussed in the literature as reinforcing the already established link between trafficking and vulnerability (Farrell and Fahy, 2009; Anderson and Andrijasevic, 2008; Vanaspong, 2002; Baker, 2013; Parreñas Shimizu, 2010; Krsmanovic, 2016; Cojocaru, 2016). These studies discuss the ways in which the promulgation of negative trafficking stereotypes and downplays the complexities of the lived experiences and structural inequalities faced by trafficked people. For example, Krsmanovic's (2016) analysis of trafficked people's visual representations published in the Serbian media identifies a clear divide between the image of the coerced, powerless victim completely lacking agency and the vulgar sex worker unworthy of compassion. According to this analysis, there is a clear differentiation between deserving victims, sexualised perpetrators and a complete absence of other actors, such as clients, traffickers or representatives of ethnic minority groups. These representations show the extent to which visual trafficking portrayals could be analysed from the perspective of serving as a moral warning and expression of societal fears rather than offering a perspective and understanding of human trafficking. At the very least, an overly problem-focused approach that seeks only to conceptualise trafficked people as adversely perceived 'victims' runs the risk of perpetuating an incomplete picture of trafficked individuals that could contribute to their oppression and discrimination.

Alongside media broadcasts, trafficking representations within the film industry and the arts sector continue to exhibit and perpetuate sensationalised narratives. For example, studies have indicated that the traditional sensationalist dichotomising of good and evil might add to the narrative aesthetics and appeal to public attention (Yea, 2015; Lindquist, 2013). From the film industry perspective, this trend of sensational expos has been referred to as 'rebooting' or the rebranding of successful films to extend the original concept's commercial lifespan (de Villiers, 2016). Likewise, films, documentaries and arts-based representations have tended to continuously disseminate and consolidate 'white slavery' stereotypes and set a template for conceptualising trafficked people's issues and experiences (Baker, 2014; Lindsey, 1996; Hall et al., 2008; Cojocaru, 2016). This points to the need to provide more flexible trafficking representations that steer away from the stereotypical victim/perpetrator divide and

communicate the complex realities surrounding trafficking. It is, therefore, particularly important to show more 'open-ended' narratives that evidence complexity and provide a counter-narrative to these simplistic representations.

2.8 Health Outcomes following trafficking

The extent to which trafficking is near exclusively considered through a problematised lens is also apparent when health outcomes are examined. The majority of the literature on trafficking is characterised by a tendency to focus on the negative consequences of recurrent maltreatment and exploitation. In this way, studies report that trafficked people suffer adverse physical and psychological effects in addition to facing human rights and gender-based violations (Kiss et al., 2015; Zimmerman et al., 2003; Cwikel et al., 2004; Cannon et al., 2016). These extensive health risks often permeate the periods before and during transit and exploitation and after the trafficking identification process (Zimmerman et al., 2011). Several studies highlight the causative effect of pre-trafficking conditions, such as unemployment, family or community poverty, minimal education, homelessness and discrimination (Gjermeni et al., 2008), which could trigger health conditions. Other studies refer to historical sexual abuse and rape as factors related to the risk of subsequent trafficking due to the normalising function of abuse and the construction of a predisposition towards trafficking (Zimmerman et al., 2003). These pre-trafficking experiences were also associated with the requirement for more prolonged and more intensive treatment (Cary et al., 2016) and violence before trafficking has been associated with almost half of the researched trafficked population. This historic violent experience was often enacted by parents, other family members, soldiers, acquaintances, strangers, teachers and pimps (Rimal and Papadopoulos, 2016). This evidence confirms that early exposure to health risks could create a predisposition to future health needs and highlight the importance of providing long-term health care for trafficked people due to the accumulative effect of historical health conditions.

The negative consequences of recurrent maltreatment and exploitation during trafficking are well recognised. The factors, mostly associated with high health risks, include forced labour, physical and sexual abuse, confinement and restrictions of movement, sleep and food denial, as well as lack of clothing, excessive working hours, substance abuse and unacceptable living conditions (Hamenoo and Sottie, 2015; Peled and Parker, 2013). The long-term repeated health issues often appear as medical, behavioural and psychological symptoms, physical injuries,

reproductive health concerns, exposure to infectious and sexually transmitted diseases and substance misuse (Cannon et al., 2016). Additionally, mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, PTSD and suicide attempts (Zimmerman et al., 2003; Peled and Parker, 2013; Vijeyarasa 2012; Cwikel et al., 2004;) have been reported, including nonspecific symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, back pain, stomach pains, dental pain, weight loss, fatigue and memory problems (Zimmerman et al., 2003; Oram et al., 2011; Cwikel et al., 2004 and Turner-Moss et al., 2013). These mostly quantitative studies confirm the high levels of physical, sexual, economic and psychological abuse that trafficked people endure before, during and after the trafficking process.

Research to date has focussed primarily on sex trafficking (Abas et al., 2013; Ostrovschi et al., 2012; Meshkovska et al., 2015; Simkhada, 2008; Cole and Sprang, 2014), reporting health concerns specific to sex work such as reproductive health issues, sexually transmitted infections, vulnerability to HIV (Gupta et al., 2011; Silverman et al., 2007) and tuberculosis (Ashwin et al., 2008). The complexities relating to other types of trafficking exploitation, such as research on men's health, domestic servitude, agriculture, labour exploitation or the removal of organs, have not been adequately reported (Cannon et al., 2016; Turner-Moss et al., 2013). A notable exception is a large-scale study conducted by Kiss et al. (2015), which points to a correlation between extreme restrictions of freedom, such as being locked up, excessive work overtime, inadequate living conditions, violence, and the severity of reported symptoms of depression, anxiety and PTSD. This suggests that the severity and length of the suffered maltreatment could proportionately affect the seriousness of the presented symptoms, as well as the length of required treatment and rehabilitation. Additionally, there appears to be a critical need to generate new empirical evidence to better understand and acknowledge the lived experiences and specific health issues of trafficked people to be able to provide adequate and tailored interventions which address these complex influencing factors and make a clear contribution to the health and wellbeing of trafficked people.

Mirroring international tendencies to focus on health outcomes and overlook trafficked people's perspectives, similar evidence has been observed in research conducted in the UK. A small body of research, for example, constitutes of studies exploring health care professionals' knowledge and understanding of trafficking (Pearce, 2011; Harvey et al., 2015; Munro, 2006; Ross et al., 2015). Although the findings might be location-specific, recommendations from these studies suggest the need for cohesive multi-agency work and additional training in trafficking identification and support. This suggests that although health care professionals are

in contact with trafficked people, they lack the knowledge to identify and respond to trafficking concerns. These findings are supported by other evidence which shows that health care professionals' perceptions and misunderstanding of trafficking could contribute to barriers between trafficked people and identification and support (Stanley et al., 2016; Brayley and Cockbain, 2014). Research representing trafficked people's views and opinions and focusing on the specific long-term health needs and experiences of trafficked people in the UK is scarce. The findings are consistent with other research exploring trafficked people's health needs and confirm the seriousness of the physical and psychological consequences of trafficking reported to date. Similarly, two other studies based on case records from the UK (Turner-Moss et al., 2013; Cary et al., 2016) have reported the prevalence of physical and psychological symptoms following trafficking experiences. These studies, mainly examined through healthcare providers' lens, afford a sense of professionals' awareness and perceptions. However, explorations from the perspectives of trafficked people are mostly missing from this body of work. Generally, it appears that whilst the health symptoms, conditions and immediate consequences seem to have drawn more attention, more holistic accounts from the perspectives of trafficked people remain under-examined to date.

This section highlights and discusses the focus within the literature on trafficked individuals' behavioural and health risks, conditions and outcomes, with a specific focus on the female and child survivors of trafficking. The literature largely excluded trafficked men and notions of masculinity from the trafficking narratives. The majority of the literature relating to this theme has been conducted through the lens of health professionals and there is minimal evidence of meaningful engagement with the first-hand accounts of trafficked individuals. Whilst affording a sense of awareness of the physical and psychological difficulties relating to trafficking, this body of research has tended to be overpowered by needs- and deficiencies-focussed discourses A more open methodological approach that allows for broader issues to be explored while also addressing more specific themes surrounding post-trafficking rehabilitation is needed in order to support a better understanding of trafficking.

2.9 Return and Reintegration of Trafficked People

In general, post-trafficking support could entail opportunities for individuals to stay in the host community or be assisted to leave the country (Timoshkina, 2019; Cockbain, Bowers and Vernon, 2019). Conversely, assisting trafficked people in returning to their countries of origin is, according to Brennan and Plambech (2018), one of the most commonly used strategies of post-trafficking rehabilitation. Such programmes, funded by the host country and offered as an alternative to deportation, provide a financial incentive for trafficked people's voluntary return, including paid travelling fees and temporary accommodation in the home community (Paasche, Skilbrei and Plambech, 2018). These voluntary return programmes have further been criticised as being driven by neoliberal strategies that attempt to articulate trafficked people's needs and endorse a solution based on this construction (Vidal-Ortiz, Robinson and Khan, 2018). These studies indicate that financial incentives for these government voluntary-return schemes are often offered to returnees with the anticipation that savings will be made from supporting trafficked people with their asylum claims. Investigations of these trafficking reintegration strategies have once again evidenced a link between anti-trafficking interventions and anti-immigrant legislation.

As with other research examining health issues following trafficking, investigations related to the process of trafficked people's reintegration into their home countries have relayed the post-trafficking realities as a function of inequalities and barriers faced by respondents. Although the Council of Europe Convention on action against trafficking specifies that trafficked people's return should ideally be voluntary (Council of Europe, 2005), typical patterns of habitually returning trafficking victims to their home countries have been identified (Paasche, Skilbrei and Plambech, 2018). Given this commonality among trafficked people's returns to their home countries, a lack of in-depth attention to the issues of re-integration of trafficking returnees has been noted (Brunovskis and Surtees, 2012). Despite this insufficient knowledge, this small number of international studies is indicative of the lived experiences of trafficked people's return and reintegration into their home communities. These studies have examined returnees' reintegration as a function of the ability to attain economic sustenance and fulfilment of familial responsibilities.

Although the termination of exploitative conditions could instigate an anticipated sense of relief and some resumed sense of belonging after they return to the home community (Atnafu and Adamek, 2016), studies show that trafficked people face a multitude of difficulties upon

returning to their home environments (Nikolic-Ristanovic, 2005; Brunovskis and Surtees, 2007, Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012; Donger and Bhabha, 2018). This is because returnees can face circumstances that are often closely related to the conditions that prompted their migratory undertaking (Eastmond, 2007; Plambech, 2014; Donger and Bhabha, 2018). Accordingly, studies have referred to limited access to economic resources and returnees' difficulties to provide for their families as two of the most prominent reintegration barriers. These financial restrictions and inability to meet personal and familial day-to-day needs were often due to losses of financial investments already incurred in the migration projects, lack of employment opportunities and limitations to work availability due to individuals' physical or psychological difficulties (Brunovskis and Surtees, 2012; McCarthy, 2018). The return could also mean debt repayments ceasing and the transfer of liability onto partners and family members (Brunovskis and Surtees, 2012). Adding to the strain on the family's financial resources, this could also lead to individuals' loss of status and being categorised as a burden to the family (Surtees, 2018). According to these studies, trafficked people's inability to secure financial resources caused family conflicts that had emotional implications on familial relationships upon their return.

Consistent with previous research indicating regular occurrences of pressure being exercised by individuals' close family members to migrate in search of better living conditions (Aghatise, 2004; Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012; Goldenberg et al., 2014), it is likely that those conflictual circumstances could be exacerbated when trafficked individuals return as failed wage earners (Tsai, 2017; Atnafu and Adamek, 2016). In general, returnees' financial instability was reported to add further vulnerability to the existing societal stigma associated with trafficking, often leading to ostracising not only the formerly trafficked people but also their wider family members (Silverman et al., 2007; Vijeyarasa, 2010; Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012; Rimal and Papadopoulos, 2016). These studies indicate that insufficient revenue sources and limited employment opportunities could adversely affect family reconsolidation, leading to the withdrawal of familial support and risk of social criticism, stigmatisation and further vulnerability for returnees. In this way, trafficked people's returns, primarily perceived as failed migration projects, could result in futile prospects of rebuilding links to individuals' families and communities.

Further studies have defined additional vulnerability factors contributing to trafficked people's increased reintegration difficulties, including perceived lower status and membership of a minority or marginalised groups in the home country, such as single mothers, divorced women,

women affected by infertility, and women pushed into trafficking by domestic violence circumstances (Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012; Gajic-Veljanoski and Stewart, 2007; Brunovskis and Surtees, 2012; Reynolds and McKee, 2010). Studies have also reported feminised socio-cultural barriers associated with the stigma of engaging in premarital sex, loss of virginity and impacting on the family honour, recurrently ensuing in family ostracising and denunciation (Aghatise, 2004; Silverman et al., 2007; Vijeyarasa, 2010; Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012; Rimal and Papadopoulos, 2016 and McCarthy, 2018). This offers a unique perspective of some of the consequences of culturally embedded condemnation for involvement in trafficking, indicating that pre-existing inequalities could augment the socio-cultural barriers faced upon return and repatriation. Additionally, it appears that trafficked people who already come from stigmatised families and lack social capital suffered additional barriers as a consequence of ostracism; hence, returning to the original conditions of difficulty and lack of opportunities that prompted trafficking vulnerability seems to have a cumulative effect of contributing to further difficulties and reintegration barriers.

Limited access to economic resources and the inability to secure sustainable living conditions have been found to contribute to compromising individuals' familial and social standings and further inhibit successful family reunions (Araujo-Forlot, 2002; Simkhada, 2008; Brunovskis and Surtees, 2012). This is particularly pertinent to rebuilding trusting relationships with children, who would have grown in the parent's absence (Brunovskis and Surtees, 2012). Adversarial effects on relationships were further intensified by returnees' prospects of having to leave their children yet again and seek more employment opportunities abroad (Paasche, Skilbrei and Plambech, 2018). Reflecting on the challenges faced by returning victims of trafficking when reuniting with families and resuming intimate relationships, Brunovskis and Surtees (2012) documented the extent to which the fundamental mother-and-child relationship is understood to be a significant reintegration factor. Similarly, Peled and Parker's (2013) study examines motherhood through the lens of identity instability, reporting a split between the preferred type of identity as a 'sacrificing mother', defined by responsibility, commitment and care, and other two spheres: the 'absent mother', who is expected to provide; and the mother who is governed by self-indulgent needs. These insights into trafficked mothers' intra-psychic struggles reflect a previously unidentified impact of trafficking on individuals' sense of self, and they are instrumental in informing person-centred and culturally specific post-trafficking care.

Conversely, studies show that it was less likely for trafficked fathers to be blamed for abandonment or neglect by their children, as absence from home and working abroad was perceived as the expected role of breadwinners (Avila, 2008; Brunovskis and Surtees, 2013). Furthermore, trafficked men's decisions to migrate have often been found to be driven by their parental responsibilities, frequently triggered by events such as children starting school and needing additional means to finance their education (Surtees, 2018). In this way, familial obligations and links were of central importance to participants' social identity, often acting as drivers for initiating migration work. Echoing findings from previous research based on trafficked mothers' personal accounts, these studies reflect the extent to which trafficked men's inability to ensure economic sustenance for the family could also significantly affect resuming relationships with their children.

The emotional difficulties in achieving family reunifications have also been examined through attachment and trauma perspectives. In particular, migration research highlights the psychological impact of the separation of children and families that could also lead to affirming new daily routines and re-distribution of roles within the family (Suarez-Orozco, Todorova and Louie, 2002; Mazzucato and Schans, 2011; Silver, 2014). Insufficient communication during returnees' absences has been linked to long-term tension between family members and interruptions to already established agreements and habits (Graham et al., 2012). These shortcomings, in turn, were found to have influenced remaining family members' mental health, triggering defensive reactions, such as accusing returnees of financial mismanagement and engaging in inappropriate behaviour (Graham, Jordan and Yeoh, 2015). Critical attitudes that add to trafficked individuals' noted tendency to avoid disclosing the full extent of their trafficking experiences could, in turn, contribute to feelings of estrangement that exacerbate relational issues (Schwerdtfeger and Goff, 2007). Research has also highlighted the impact of parental absence on children's attachment style. Studies have shown that children may need to process feelings of being abandoned by their parents before resuming relationships and adapting to new daily routines of life with their previously missing parents (Busch-Armendariz, Nsonwu, and Cook Heffron, 2011; Juabsamai and Taylor, 2018). These studies indicate the impact of extended absences on family reintegration, showing that rehabilitation prospects and family reunification following migrant workers' prolonged absences are likely to be problematic.

The literature in this section has highlighted challenges and tensions in return home and reintegration strategies for trafficked individuals. These challenges to rehabilitation within their homelands include socio-economic barriers, family- and culturally-specific difficulties, societal stigma, victim-blaming, misunderstanding of experiences and unreasonable expectations from families and communities. Research has, in this way, recognised the post-return vulnerabilities and inequalities which can be faced by trafficked people and their families. However, despite acknowledging the multitude of barriers and stigmatisation that formerly trafficked people may face upon returning to their home environment, such a narrow focus on reintegration difficulties risks placing overt pressure on individual and familial circumstantial factors and overlooks broader socio-political aspects that play a role in understanding trafficking issues.

2.10 Intervention and Rehabilitation Services

As with return and reintegration studies, investigations into intervention and rehabilitation services have been primarily based on the assumption that following the exit of trafficking circumstances, individuals regain control and make choices that inform their living. For example, Brennan's (2014) work suggests that while trafficking experiences interrupt individuals' lives, the post-trafficking period can offer opportunities to pursue future aspirations and return to authentic ways of living. However, many barriers to accessing legal protection and support services have been outlined. This is because entitlement for support is closely linked to individuals' identification as trafficked people (Gallagher, 2006; Zimmerman, Hossain and Watts, 2011). Although trafficked people have the right to temporary protection under European legislation, identification is a complex and often lengthy process (Roberts, 2018; Hadjimatheou and Lynch, 2018). More specifically, disproportionately large numbers of successful approvals of trafficking cases of EU nationals, compared to other citizens, points to a link between nationality and successful confirmation of trafficking victim status (Van Dyke, 2019; Pavlou, 2018), in this way disputing the overriding assumption that trafficking identification would ensure individuals rights and access to rehabilitation.

Further to these nationality-based disparities evidenced within the trafficking identification process, diverse conceptualisations of harm and exploitation, alongside the complexity of migrant people's circumstances, account for many difficulties in fitting individuals' narratives and circumstances into the precise components of the trafficking definition (Finckenauer, 2018;

Lambine, 2018). According to the Palermo Protocol definition, three essential elements – namely, action, means and purpose – ought to be present to complete trafficking identification (Gallagher, 2001). However, migrant people's sense of control over their working conditions might be marginal due to general uncertainties pertaining to defining and becoming aware of exploitative circumstances (Merry, 2018). In other words, individuals might have experienced severe exploitation and extremely traumatic events, but insufficient evidence of overt threat or coercion might suggest that they had consented to these exploitative labour conditions. On the other hand, since migrants' exploitation could be deep-seated and widely normalised within daily routines, it has been found that failure to recognise that they have been trafficked could be a common occurrence (Broad and Turnbull, 2018).

In other words, the normalisation of oppressive circumstances could inhibit individuals' awareness of their exploitation and prevent them from accessing support. To complicate the identification process further, whereas only individuals who are confirmed as victims of trafficking are eligible to receive support, those who are found to be exploited and could not verify their trafficking status would likely be treated as immigration offenders (Farrell et al., 2018; Muraszkiewicz, 2018), which would be a significant deterrent for approaching authorities in search of protection. Following the discussions around definition, it appears that this disparity once again highlights a clear divide between those deserving of protection and criminalised migrants, minimising prospects of accessing the initial identification stages of becoming aware of the exploitation and identification to the authorities, to further stages in ensuring trafficking identification status.

In general, little support is available for the post-trafficking period. Difficulties in establishing appropriate support services that adequately respond to individuals' diverse needs have been linked to individual variations in trafficking consequences, pre-existing conditions and timeframes of exploitation (Powell et al., 2018). Furthermore, limited funding for post-trafficking support (Dottridge, 2014), in addition to preliminary evaluations to examine the effectiveness of post-trafficking interventions (Cannon et al., 2016; Hemmings et al., 2016; Stanley et al., 2016; Cary et al., 2016; Gajic-Veljanoski and Stewart, 2007), means that very little is known about the appropriateness and efficiency of post-trafficking intervention programmes. Despite this insufficient understanding, a small number of international studies have demonstrated the need to apply a so-called holistic approach in addressing social, economic and relational issues as well as factors contributing to the marginalisation of social groups. More specifically, some studies suggest that re-integration requires financial support,

access to vocational training and employment-based skills (Gjermeni et al., 2008; Simkhada, 2008; Atnafu and Adamek, 2016; Brunovskis and Surtees, 2012; Crawford and Kaufman, 2008; Hamenoo and Scottie, 2015; Goldenberg et al., 2014). Accordingly, post-trafficking services in the UK during the period of confirming individuals' trafficking status appear to adhere to this seemingly all-round approach, including the provision of financial assistance, emergency medical care, counselling and specialist support, as well as guidance on education, training, and employment (Human Trafficking Foundation, 2015). However, despite such claims of providing holistic services, support appears to be mainly operating on a short-term basis (Hall, 2017) due to the apparent reluctance of UK government policies to provide an opportunity for trafficked people to stay in the UK after trafficking identification (Skrivankova, 2019). In this way, although it appears that post-trafficking support is appropriate and holistic, studies highlight existing tensions between the need for immigration restriction and securing longstanding post-trafficking rehabilitation opportunities. Further to this, approaches claiming to adhere to so-called holistic care models continue to assume medicalised and deficiencies-based assumptions of formerly trafficked people's needs.

Evidence from international research has emphasised the need for longer-term post-trafficking support. For example, the intervention services in Moldova consist of two stages: the crisis intervention period, where urgent health, safety and legal needs are met; and the rehabilitation stage, which aims at long-term recovery, reintegration and sustainability (Abas et al., 2013; Ostrovschi et al., 2011). This support, available for 12 months following a post-trafficking intervention, is deemed to encourage access to vocational training, social assistance and supported living in the community. Similarly, the services in Albania include a three-stage programme, aiming to address short-term, as well as long-term, needs (Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012). During the critical stage, basic needs such as housing, financial, medical, educational and vocational services are ensured. An asset-based approach during the later stages encourages personal development by supporting trafficked people's sense of confidence while progressively advancing the level of support from semi-independence to independence. This body of research supports a staged model of post-trafficking interventions that claim to take into account individuals' health and wellbeing needs, alongside incorporating educational and vocational requirements, to ensure the sustainability of their achieved progress. This working model places an assumed strong emphasis on employability and economic sustenance, which, although well-meaning, tends to prioritise needs-based discourses.

Although trafficked people's experiences vary in characteristics and intensity, a number of professionals tend to frame trafficking rehabilitation through the lens of presenting trauma responses and mental health disorders (Doychak and Raghavan, 2020; Chambers et al., 2022). Defined as experiences and perceptions of death or harm (Hawkins, 2022; Yeterian, et. al., 2019) and the meaning-making that individuals might invest in this (Mol et al., 2005; Cameron, Palm and Folette, 2010), psychological trauma tends to be at the centre of the most commonly applied approaches to supporting trafficked people's rehabilitation. It has also been noted that multiple exposure to distressing events could produce an accumulative effect (Cloitre et al., 2009) that might also be linked to so called maladaptive responses (McEwen and Ginaros, 2008) and symptoms of depression and anxiety (Sprang, Katz and Cooke, 2009).

While the importance of the therapeutic relationship and rapport has been endorsed by most therapeutic approaches (Chapman et al., 2001; Tripp, 2007), a number of techniques with varying emphasis on cognition, emotion-regulation and meaning-making, have been established as a form of proposed treatment and psychological support. Specific trauma-informed approaches, tend to include aims, such as addressing historical and traumatic events (Hemmings et al., 2016; Johnson, 2012; Harvey, 2007; Briere and Scott, 2014; Macias-Konstantopoulos, 2017; Evans and Coccoma, 2014; Ravi et al., 2017), supporting individuals' the ability to access feeling states (Ga Pifalo, 2007; Talwar, 2007), validating of feelings (Chapman et al., 2001), strengthening skills building (Suliman et al., 2002; Shapio and Forrest, 2001); emotional regulation (Deblingst et al., 2011; Pifalo, 2007), increased control over physical and emotional states through relaxation, visualisation and breathing techniques (Hans-Cohen and Finley, 2009); distraction (Reamkin and Taucher, 2003); re-narrating the traumatic events (Chapman et al., 2001), reducing the emotional intensity of the events and memories (Deblinger et al., 2011; Gantt and Tinin, 2001; Murrey et al., 2013), accessing and integrating of trauma (Lusebrink, 2011; Pifalo, 2007).

An increasing amount of evidence-based research suggests that addressing trauma through somatic symptoms (Le Doux and Warren, 2002) and through cognitive tendencies (LeDoux and Warren, 2002) could support a shift in established responses to thoughts and feelings and moving away from repetitive and unconscious patterns. Accordingly, practice-based researchers have outlined several key issues, informed by these trauma-specific concerns, such as the need to re-establish boundaries, structure and trust in others, as well as regaining self-control, establishing coping strategies to deal with dissociation and depression, and restoring a sense of meaning and predictability (Bennett-Murphy, 2012; Kleinschmidt, 2009). Despite the

useful potential in acknowledging the effects of experiencing distressing circumstances, such trauma conceptualisations tend to frame experiences and perceptions through the lens of physical and psychological symptoms and conditions.

Although it is commonly assumed that trafficked people might benefit from trauma-focussed psychological support (Casassa, Knight and Mengo, 2022), it is also important to acknowledge that exposure to traumatic events does not in all circumstances relate to developing long-lasting symptoms or a disorder (Friedman, 2015; Timble, 1985). This tendency indicates that framing individuals' representations through the consequences of the violence and oppression experienced, could equally be oppressive and simplifying of the circumstances. For example, Summerfield (1999) challenges the tendency to medicalise distress and argues that for many survivors of structural and political oppression, post-traumatic stress is a pseudo condition that obscures the contextual circumstances and minimises suffering as a technical difficulty.

Other therapeutic approaches that assume a more holistic conceptualisation of emotional distress and trafficking rehabilitation, included family counselling (Cecchet and Thoburn, 2014), music and dance therapy (Schrader and Wendland, 2012), and faith-based and spirituality approaches (Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012; Cecchet and Thoburn, 2014) acknowledge individuals' social context, as well as familial and psychological factors, to reinforce a sense of trust and safety. Mindfulness influenced approaches (Brahm, 2006; Hanh, 1999; Briere, 2012; Follet, Palm and Pearson, 2006) have also been found useful in encouraging attention to the present moment and supporting the individual's ability to experience emotions as opposed to dissociating from processing difficult feelings.

These practitioner-informed studies offer insights into post-trafficking intervention work, informing others of the effectiveness and challenges of specialist care approaches. Notable within this body of literature is the apparent lack of perspectives from trafficked people and their evaluation of the services and interventions reportedly designed to support their wellbeing. This apparent power imbalance might have contributed to the medicalisation of these discourses and the emphasis on individual behaviours as markers of psychological distress.

Hence, alongside arguments for the benefits of trauma-based interventions, another body of literature deems the nature of these needs-focussed approaches problematic. Underpinned by trauma-informed concepts, such as 'false consciousness' and 'trauma-coerced bonding', these intervention schemes have been found to underscore trauma-related impacts as innate

characteristics of the trafficked person (Contreras, Kallivayalil and Herman, 2017; Smith, 2010; Reid, 2013, 2016; Hopper, 2017; Raghavan and Doychak, 2015). Overly relying on such professional jargon, according to Cojocaru (2016), could set up a template as to how individuals should react following trauma, thereby further victimising trafficked people. Furthermore, since reactions to traumatic events and experiences do not always fit within pre-established categories (Bonnano, 2004; Rechtman, 2000), trafficked individuals could be denied support or be pressurised to act in accordance with the traumatised victim conceptualisations. As a consequence of these victim typologies, narratives that differ from the trafficked person's stereotypical image may not be accepted as credible, leading to the exclusion of trafficked people from the discourses that aim to support their rehabilitation.

Moreover, these mostly stereotypical conceptualisations of trafficked people as traumatised victims have been found to reinforce inequalities and exercise pressure on trafficked people to submit to the subordinate position of a vulnerable victim in need of intervention and redemption. In particular, rescue-based approaches to rehabilitation have been criticised as exercising pressure on trafficked people to submit to various educational or therapeutic programmes, which supposedly support their socialisation and integration (Dunn, 2004). For example, Shih's qualitative investigation with trafficked people in Thailand (2017) showed that formerly trafficked individuals were required to demonstrate excessive gratification for the post-trafficking support they received. Similarly, research with formerly trafficked people in Nigeria documented that returnees needed to enact obedience and appear as 'good' and worthy service users in order to gain sympathy and additional financial assistance (Paasche, Skilbrei and Plambech, 2018). This shows that inequalities reproduced within anti-trafficking work can covertly pressure trafficked individuals to prove their worthiness through enacting exemplary behaviour and performing identity characteristics associated with what is socially accepted as appropriate victim behaviour, further reinforcing the juxtaposition between underprivileged foreign citizens as victims on one side, and NGOs and other agents positioned as rescuers on the other. Within this context, these studies claim that these disparities create conditions for trafficked people to become even more dependent on third parties and further reproduce conditions of vulnerability and inequality.

Further to highlighting inequalities within post-trafficking interventions, rehabilitation approaches have also been examined through the lens of neoliberal values that link humanitarian aid to concepts associated with economic power and ethical consumerism. Underpinned by assumptions that consuming is linked to empowerment (Bret Leary, Vann and

Mittelstaedt, 2018), diverse audiences have more recently been introduced to the idea of ethical consumption as a way of supporting formerly trafficked people's economic sustenance and reintegration. For example, research (Henriksen, 2014; Paasche, Skilbrei and Plambech, 2018) has examined this commodity-focused approach to trafficked people's rehabilitation, in which goods produced by formerly trafficked people are marketed as ethical consumption. Offered as a solution to trafficking and exploitation, these market-based strategies encourage the public to engage in compassionate acts through everyday consumption, based on the assumption that those who aim for cheaper goods might be encouraging trafficking, whilst those who purchase trafficked people's products are contributing to a consumption-led solution (Kipp and Hawkins, 2019). Brought by neoliberal ideologies, these rehabilitation strategies locate post-trafficking support within ethical consumption and commodity production, evidencing commercialised attempts at rehabilitation and raising awareness of anti-trafficking by selling goods produced by trafficked people.

Although these rehabilitation approaches insinuate a transformation of trafficked people into entrepreneurs, such assumptions of empowerment through merchandise production have been deemed mostly unfounded. For example, O'Brien (2018) denotes a stark contrast of consumerist ideologies to discourses linking sex work with coercion and exploitation. This analysis juxtaposes trafficked people's stereotypical representations as sex slaves before being rescued and follows their conversion into entrepreneurs who exercise their free choice. In this way, these discourses distinguish between disempowering sex work and empowering low-skilled, low-wage labour. Despite these reformative connotations, Shih (2018) highlights that many rescued trafficked people face oppressive conditions which differ from the ethos of freedom and democracy that NGOs claim to facilitate. While these consumer philosophies associate freedom with production and consumption, these studies highlight the lack of evidence that engagement in low-skilled production post-trafficking identification could be linked to empowerment and long-term financial stability. It has also been noted that this rhetoric could further contribute to power disparities between the foreign victim of trafficking and the Western consumer as rescuer (Gleason, Baker, and Maynard, 2018). This is because trafficked people become the responsibility of corporate actors, consumers and NGOs, where humanitarian actions are linked with for-profit objectives (Berger-Walliser and Scott, 2018).

As with other approaches to post-trafficking rehabilitation, attempting to engage consumers through purchasing merchandise produced by trafficked people, these more consumerist discourses fail to consider issues of inequality and long-term sustainability. Moreover, the

claims to support a free life after trafficking through developing low-skilled production shifts the power dynamics and further emphasise the disparities between the disadvantaged trafficked people and privileged agents and consumers who have access to opportunities and resources. These consumerist approaches to rehabilitation have been found to extend beyond the product of migrant labour to retrieving personal narratives of empowered life after trafficking. According to Henriksen (2018), such initiatives advocate for rescuing people and positioning them within unequal dynamics, where they depend on the public's compassion instead of the provision of fair working conditions and long-term sustainability. Similarly, consumption of victim narratives, according to Flores (2018), could perpetuate inequalities and open new pathways of exploitation where narratives of their transformations and empowerment enhance commoditisation and add value to merchandise produced by them. This work highlights that consumerist approaches encourage distancing from individuals' authentic experiences, impose compulsory victimhood personification and commoditise post-trafficking narratives.

Further, the propensities for putting pressure on trafficked people to produce and reproduce narratives of their lived traumatic experiences and reformation have also been criticised for tending to perpetuate the problematising and objectification of trafficked individuals. These ideologies, according to Agier (2011), further reinforce victim stereotypes that justify implementing interventions aimed at surveillance and management of disadvantaged migrants. In the same line of argument, Cojocaru (2016) denotes a paradox that although sex-trafficked women are often denounced for objectifying their bodies, it seems socially acceptable for increasing numbers of third parties to perpetuate trafficked workers' commodification and generate conditions for their 'secondary exploitation'. Further to opposing what appears to be a socially acceptable commoditisation of trafficked people, these studies draw attention to the profit that opportunistic government and non-government actors could derive under the umbrella of anti-trafficking motives. It appears that such consumerist tendencies of accessing individuals' narratives of reformed living post-trafficking could influence trafficked people's efforts to move away from their trafficking experiences and re-establish new identities. This rhetoric positions trafficked people as being rescued by third parties and takes away the focus from subjective perspectives that could enable a more accurate representation of their circumstances and establish a form of support that respects their autonomy.

2.11 Integration into the Host Community

Similar to the lack of involvement of trafficked people in rehabilitation and post-trafficking discourses, the experiences of trafficked people's integration into the host community have not been sufficiently investigated (Zimmerman et al., 2011; Cannon et al., 2016; Turner-Moss et al., 2013; Cary et al., 2016). Due to this gap in current understanding, researchers have suggested the transference of knowledge and evidence from similarly marginalised populations, such as investigations of post-migration experiences of asylum seekers and refugees, migrants, trauma victims or exploited workers (Gajic-Veljanoski and Stewart, 2007; Zimmerman et al., 2011). This is deemed appropriate due to the likely duality of immigration status that individuals may hold and identify as both being trafficked whilst also having refugee, asylum-seeking or refused asylum status (Moser, 2018). Apart from perceived common aims of rehabilitation, readjustment and settling into the host country, these groups have been deemed to share some other similarities, such as perceived previous exposure to traumatic experiences, the endurance of complex and often prolonged journeys to the host countries, and experiencing isolation and lack of social support (Zimmerman, 2011). Despite the absence of literature that immediately reflects trafficked people's experiences, research has indicated that post-migration distress could have more substantial negative consequences than exposure to conflict and trauma experienced before facing difficulties relating to integration and adjusting to living in the host country (Gorst-Unsworth and Goldenberg, 1998). Further analysis into the causes and effects of post-migration stressors suggests that emotional distress could be exacerbated by the lack of social support (Wade et al., 2005; Dyregov and Yule, 2006), poor housing and accommodation (Marriott, 2001), social exclusion (Levenson and Sharma, 1999) as well as uncertainty about the future, frequent moves, disruption of social networks and language and cultural barriers (Vostanis, 2004). Correspondingly, such an increase in psychological distress is likely to relate to the lived experiences of the integration and rehabilitation of trafficked people after their initial trafficking identification.

Securing legal immigration status amongst asylum-seeking people has been outlined as one of the most immediate concerns, often accompanied by uncertainties concerning future education, housing and employment entitlement (Chase et al., 2008). More specifically, the stressors associated with the immigration application process have been found to also re-trigger earlier experiences of loss, insecurity and traumatic events (Abas et al., 2013). Furthermore, insecurities during trafficking recognition and securing legal immigration status are significantly heightened due to the imminent prospect of individuals being returned to the

original conditions of poverty and inequality that initially prompted trafficking vulnerability (Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012). Thus, those who have been deemed unsuccessful asylum seekers and categorised under s.4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act (1999) would have no eligibility for housing, work, study or monetary allowance and might have limitations to receiving free healthcare (Oram et al., 2011). Such uncertainties surrounding trafficked people's confirmation of their trafficking status and securing permanent residence are likely to have an accumulative effect and add to the distress and difficulties experienced in the period of post-trafficking.

Besides practical immigration concerns, scholars have drawn attention to some personal and social characteristics that aid rehabilitation and integration in the host country. For example, resilience, defined as the ability to adjust to new environments and circumstances (Kline and Mone, 2003) despite living in or having lived in adversity (Schofield and Beek, 2005), is often associated with successful integration and rehabilitation. On the other hand, a range of social and practical factors have been outlined in the research literature: such as developing long-term friendships; attaining permanent housing and immigration status; maintaining familial and cultural relationships; access to education; hobbies and interests; high self-esteem and being optimistic about the future (Rutter, 2003). Such approaches highlight integration as a function of a long-standing collaborative process involving the individual's active involvement in the host country's economic, cultural, civil and political life (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 2002). Suggesting the need for an all-around approach to aiding integration and rehabilitation, this body of evidence builds on self-development, interactions with others and relationship with place and considers both needs- and strength-based approaches to rehabilitation.

2.12 Research Question

With view of the existing insufficiencies in understanding in current research with trafficked people's lived experiences, this study aimed to facilitate an investigation led by participants who have experiential knowledge of the researched phenomena but have so far remained overlooked within the research literature. The broader aims of the study, therefore, relate to employing a flexible and anti-oppressive methodology based on direct contact with respondents to facilitate trafficked people's active and creative roles in their own

representation. In this way, a better understanding of participants' agency would enable the generation of practice-based knowledge and inform post-trafficking support and rehabilitation.

The study design, underpinned by relating to formerly trafficked people as experts in their experiences, provides a choice of arts-based and narrative means of expression to facilitate a reflexive research environment that allows the exploration of participants' embodied understanding, illuminating questions of meaning and constructions of self. Within this hybridised methodological approach, narrative and arts-based data presented experiential accounts in a way that enable a deeper understanding of participants' realities.

During Phase 2 of the research study, the participants were invited to explore their experience since the first stage to better understand how they have readjusted over time. The second stage was planned with the intention to follow-up in a subset of interviews and/or image making conducted during the first year, to understand how readjustment processes have evolved over the time and gain insight of how trafficked people have developed new integration strategies. The follow-up interviews and image-making took place between 12-18 months after the initial interviews.

This research aims to systematically explore trafficked people's lived experiences in the UK, with an emphasis on trafficked people's integration and rehabilitation.

Research Question: What are the lived experiences of trafficked people after their initial trafficking identification in the UK?

Research objectives:

i) To examine post-trafficking experiences and perceptions of wellbeing, integration and rehabilitation in the UK from the perspectives of trafficked men and women.

ii) To collaborate with trafficked men and women within a process-based creative exploration to better understand who they are and allow for a holistic understanding of how they construct their sense of self and experiences.

iii) To develop a new understanding of the ways in which post-trafficking services can be utilised for individuals who have previously been trafficked.

2.13 Summary

With a particular focus on post-trafficking integration and rehabilitation, this chapter examined trafficking from the perspectives of migration, feminist and human rights and rehabilitation lenses through an investigation of policy discourses concerning trafficking. I outlined the topic of supporting the health and wellbeing of trafficked people by, first, presenting the scale and prevalence of trafficking in the UK and, second, by investigating the broad context of mainstream responses to trafficking. The chapter had a dual aim: first, to present a broad historical and contextual background that provides a backdrop to this study; and second, to outline the gaps in the literature and often contradictory representations of trafficked people within the media and policy aspects on trafficking. The apparent focus on individuals' support and rehabilitation post-trafficking identification informed the examination of the literature on human trafficking. Given that trafficked people's own experiences are mostly missing from the literature, I highlighted two main areas: trafficked people's representations and rehabilitation approaches within the support and intervention services.

Although scholars have outlined the perceived tension between trafficked people's own identification and stereotypical views, these identity representations cannot be understood as entirely disconnected from dominant trafficking depictions. Therefore, analysis of these tendencies is essential in highlighting the complexity of factors that could influence participants' articulation of their identity and a sense of agency post-trafficking identification. These varied representations of trafficked people, constructed as victims on the one hand, while on the other represented as foreign criminals and immigration offenders, provide a backdrop of the complexities that influence public perceptions and inform contemporary responses to post-trafficking rehabilitation and wellbeing. With this in mind, I suggested throughout the chapter that trafficked people's narratives of their identities, and post-trafficking experiences cannot be articulated without reference to the ways in which they are represented in public discourses. In other words, outlining state responses to trafficking is important because, as this will be explored in the next chapters, trafficking discourses influence participants' trafficking identification and support experiences.

Before offering an exploration of participants' identities and experiences through their narratives and artwork, it is important to outline the methodology and methods that informed the research design. Hence, the next chapter will explore the use of process-led arts-based and narrative methods in facilitating creative engagement and reflexivity. Alongside artistic

expression, the methodological aims relating to facilitating participants' experiential engagement allow for reflecting on and processing their experiences in a meaningful way that aligns with their intrinsic process and ways of being. Since I am proposing to work with a methodological approach that has not been well-established, I will start with a review of the existing methodological applications of this research in an attempt to make a case for exploring transferability to justify its application. Although this was not the research aim, I will consider how this methodological approach could also be particularly appropriate in offering therapeutic potential.

3

Methodological Considerations for Constructing a Hybridised Approach

3.1 Introduction

The aim of the study is to explore the lived experiences of trafficked people post initial trafficking identification. As discussed in the previous chapter, the main research question addressed by the study is: How do trafficked people experience living in the UK host community post initial trafficking identification? Consistent with the ideological and democratic philosophy of respect for human dignity, promoting individual empowerment and uncovering marginalized discourses required facilitating the active participation of those whose lives are most affected by the issue being studied. In this way, by giving prominence to subjectivities and illuminating previously marginalized discourses, this study aimed to provide alternatives to dominant positivistic paradigms in the social sciences. To facilitate the empowerment-orientated aims of the study, a hybrid methodological approach provided respondents with a choice of participation methods and shape this research in the way they deemed most meaningful. Therefore, in this chapter, I will critically evaluate the use of image-making and narrative methodologies alongside their research applications to formulate a basis for integrating methodological elements that are most applicable to this study's aims. Starting with a consideration of the use of imagery in art and visual research methodologies, this chapter will then provide an overview of contemporary Narrative Inquiry approaches. I will then critically discuss the methods and techniques used in this research study. This chapter will start

by setting the Methodological foundations of this research by exploring epistemology and theoretical perspectives.

3.2 Ontology, Epistemology and Theoretical Perspective

Clarifying the philosophical perspectives helps frame the research design, and reveals assumptions that the researcher has made about the methodology and approaches to data analysis (Carter and Little, 2007). Ontology, or the study of being, focuses on the ways in which individuals can acquire knowledge, specifying the extent to which certain suppositions, such as claims of truth, legitimacy of knowledge and negotiating conflicting claims, could be applied to the researched phenomena (Moon and Blackman, 2014). This study aligns with relativist ontology in disputing the notion of singular objective reality and adopting a view that reality is constructed and relative to subjective perception, informed by sociocultural context (Botha, 2021). I accept the relativist notion that multiple realities interact and that reality is subjective.

Epistemology examines questions of knowledge representation, production and dissemination (Espiritu and Duong, 2018). An examination of the points of intersection between the philosophical approaches can support criticality and reflexivity. I adopt social constructionist epistemology and accord with Young and Collin's (2004) supposition that reality is informed by subjective and objective interactions. Social constructionism has challenged fixed conceptualisations of truth, calling for an exploration of meaning that is embedded in language, narrative and embodied exploration (McLeod, 1997). This position assumes that knowledge is generated and interpreted through interactions and relationships and social conventions. Within the research context, collectively created knowledge becomes transmitted through a collaborative interaction between the researcher and participants (Losantos et al, 2016).

The subjectivist epistemology supports the notion that reality can be relayed through symbolic and linguistic means, shaped in a way that expresses subjective meaning (Bulle, 2019). This slant on subjective meaning making focuses on perceptions and experiences that reflect personal and social negotiations. For the research process, this means adopting an approach that is embedded in co-creation between researcher and participant and humility in making claims of 'truth' that might be universally applicable. This also includes openness to others'

cultural background and awareness of own assumptions, multiple perceptions, values and ways of engaging with others (Pedersen, 1990; Hook, Davis Owen and DeBlaere, 2017).

Deconstruction of dominant discourses and mundane reasoning (Derrida, 1981; Friedman and Combs, 2002), awareness of privileges of discourses and attention to marginalised discourses (Speedy, 2001), informs researcher reflexivity that allows a co-creation of multi-faceted knowing and complex holistic understanding. Deconstruction of conventional values requires separation from mundane thinking and an invitation for an open approach to perceiving events and experiences that emphasise new fresh perspectives that might not fit in within existing categories. The research challenges ideas of universal and fixed truths and recognises that knowledge is co-created within the sociocultural and political context. In alignment with the social constructivists perspective, it was important that I don't impose my view or communication preferences, or present inherent and fixed understanding that might reflect mundane knowledge.

The philosophical orientations that guide the research has been collated by interweaving a number of influences. I draw on post-modern philosophy and attention to power interactions and construction of knowledge (Moon and Blackman, 2014; Derrida, 1981); poststructuralism and focus on the ways in which language and discourses help construct meaning (Freedman and Combs, 1996; Payne, 2000; Speedy, 2021); Narrative understanding (White and Epston, 1990) and Arts-based methodologies (Eisner, 2008; McNiff, 2008). I have also been influenced by feminist philosophy and an invitation to be conscious of personal politics, ideology and cultural influences (Hertz, 1997). The research design has been underpinned by a recognition of the impact of diverse factors that might contribute to inequality, such as gender, social class and ethnicity (Doucet and Mauthner, 2006). A significant place in this discussion has played the concept of 'other' in relation to the self, with focus on factors such as identification with the 'other', diminished agency and subordination. Considerations of the multi-layered nature of identities (Frost et al., 2010), as opposed to dominant views of self and characteristics that tend to be regarded as universal, guided the data generation and interpretation.

With a view to reducing misunderstanding and power imbalance, considerations of my subjectivist philosophical stance into the research inquiry have underpinned the research interactions. The supposition that knowledge is directly influenced and co-constructed by the researcher's beliefs and epistemological stance (Crotty, 1998) calls for the need to critically reflect on my own ideas and assumptions as a researcher. This stance informed data generation

in this research as part of a collaborative approach, where the dyadic relational elements were key in the interactions, expression and knowledge construction.

Philosophically, I adhere to the principles of pluralism, an approach that recognizes a plurality of beliefs, values and customs as diverse resources of knowing and meaning-making (Cush, 2008; Ayer, 1982; Samuels, 1989). I understand this as an appreciation of diverse knowing, including experiential, visual and storied understanding. This is important in counteracting hegemonic hierarchies of knowledge where cognitive understanding could be considered more valuable. Instead, the pluralistic approach is based upon epistemological humility and eagerness to learn from others' beliefs, values and customs, even when their views differ significantly (Cush and Francis, 2001). This involves affirming participants' autonomous and competent knowing without unwillingly imposing preferred values on them. Apart from demonstrating respect for diversity and difference (Cooper and McLeod, 2007), pluralistic philosophy principles indicate the need for the researcher to employ a range of skills to accommodate individual needs during data collection (Lambert et al., 2004). This calls for a diversity of ways of meeting others by offering a multitude of communication methods, to allow the respondent to speak as close to their natural language and intrinsic form of expression as possible.

The pluralistic framework underpinning this research surpassed the idea of language as an intrinsic way of expressing individuality, drawing eclectically on a range of ideas, from radical perspectives, feminist theory, community work, and empowerment principles. This holistic acknowledgement of the broader context in which researched phenomena took place aimed to facilitate congruency and contribute to a non-judgemental research environment (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The complexities of this epistemological position offer openness to participants' diverse values and meaning-making and aimed to facilitate an anti-oppressive ethos of the study. Therefore, a subjective stance involving reflexivity and commitment to empowerment (Harding, 2004), co-creating an honest dialogue (Harding, 2004, Smith, 2004), and aiming toward equal distribution of power between the researcher and participants, guided the implementation of this study.

Within this interpretivist-constructionist paradigm, considerations of the intersectionality of gender, class, ethnicity, and sexuality (Alcoff, 1988; Nelson, 2002) supported the research's aims and objectives. Such reflections were pertinent, given the diverse composition of the research participants. In this way, the integrative framework of Intersectionality, underpinned

by feminist theory, critical race theory, post-structuralism and other theories (Weber, 2001; Zinn and Thornton-Dill, 1996; Talwar, 2010), informed a conscious contemplation of participants' socio-cultural contexts and inequalities experienced. Attention was drawn to understanding how participants were situated and positioned themselves regarding their intersections of gender, race, class, and sexuality. This highlighted the need to examine oppression, power imbalance and the impact of popular culture and media in positioning trafficked people as vulnerable and influencing trafficking representations.

In this way, structures of domination and inequality were systematically examined through identity markers such as race, class, gender and sexuality, to draw attention to the hybridity as opposed to the homogeneity of personal identities and experiences (Dill and Zambrana, 2009). This means that instead of focussing on singular identity markers, such as race or nationality, this approach emphasizes that individuals' identities are constructed by a multiplicity of cultures and characteristics that are continuously negotiated and hybridised with time. For example, contrary to positioning individuals within the binaries of white/ black, educated/ uneducated, etc., this framework requires awareness of the researcher and participants' own complexity of identity markers. Within this line of thinking, it was particularly relevant to incorporate complexity, temporal and social factors, as well as considerations of how to include participants who might be otherwise excluded and marginalised. Although commonly, research could position trafficked individuals as 'vulnerable', it is useful to recognise that as intersectional, a sense of vulnerability could be fluid in time and diverse settings. Recognition of this temporality calls for rejection of Universalist values and truths and pressure to conform to a positivist non-flexible type of thinking that excludes behaviours and identities which do not conform to what is socially perceived as the norm.

In line with this pluralistic and anti-oppressive thinking, this research included contemplations on reducing and eliminating factors that exclude trafficked people's discourses to develop an inclusive framework that allows for diverse knowledge to be appreciated, communicated and shared. I considered the ways in which racial, gender, and socio-cultural norms that could increase advantages or take away privileges. Recognition of inequalities and power dynamics between researcher and participants in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality, education and citizenship have also informed the interpersonal spaces within this study. These reflections required taking into account participants' cultural and historical context to ensure that this research does not perpetuate forms of domination and imperialism. Other contemplations that relate to the role of knowledge and power in creating a dialogical and collaborative research

space called for considering to what extent might the research methods further marginalise or emancipate participants' subjective experiences.

As dominant types of knowledge might further subjugate trafficked individuals, an investigation of diverse participatory tools in facilitating a research atmosphere conducive to reduced power differentials was needed. Accordingly, the next section will examine alternative communicative methods to the dominant linguistic forms of expression to explore approaches that evade the imposition of dominant ways of communicating and facilitate inclusivity. More specifically, these considerations will involve using art and visual tools and examples from participatory research that have demonstrated employing sensitivity to issues of power, agency, and active engagement of participants to facilitate a more holistic exploration of participants' worldviews.

3.3 Knowledge construction through Art and image-making

A number of sources describe artistic expression as a natural way of communication, expression and processing information. Therefore, these approaches fit with my subjectivist methodological approach. Having been used as a form of expression and communication since pre-historic times (Conkey, 1993), primaeval mark-making and ritualism endorsed the creation of images not only for the acquisition of aesthetic goals but for exploration, inspiration, and distinct form of communication (Cardinal, 1989). This historically established familiarity with the use of art could therefore serve as a strong connective link to individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds and, in this way, counteract hegemonic ways of relating to others.

Apart from being an intrinsic activity to all human beings, art has the potential to connect to diverse groups, themes and issues (Gilroy and McNeilly, 2000). This is particularly relevant to people who may have experienced displacement and traumatic experiences. The hybrid nature of the image has also been related to the openness and ability to represent multi-layered concepts relating to race, gender, religion, ethnicity, culture, and sexual orientation, denoting personal and political signifiers for the client (Campbell, 1999). It has also been noted that some individuals consider the artistic mode of communication more comfortable and naturalistic (Case and Dalley, 2014). In this way, art can assist individuals toward a harmonious state by fitting together in a way that holds diverse material to achieve wholeness and harmony (Darley and Heath, 2008). This indicates the immense potential for artistic communication to engage individuals from diverse backgrounds, learning styles and preferences. In particular,

the openness and eclectic nature of the artistic image suggest that communication through Art is an appropriate approach to minimizing the need to classify and categorise multi-faceted identities, states and experiences.

The use of arts-based methods aimed to recognise the hybridity of respondents' identities and express subjectivities through creative expression. For example, the idiosyncratic nature of communication through artistic media has been recognized and well-documented by the Arts-based community (Cohen, 2006). More specifically, communication through art has not only been associated with facilitating expression but has been deemed to encourage a new way of abstract and non-verbal thinking which could differ from and even complement logical-deductive reasoning (Case, 2005). This literature suggests that artistic expression can facilitate an instinctual and embodied type of knowledge that is distinct from cognitive processing and could contribute to an all-rounded expression of the physical, behavioural and subconscious aspects of the artist's experiencing. Accordingly, visual social science studies (e.g. Kearny and Hyle, 2004; Guillemin and Drew, 2010; Den Besten, 2010) claim that facilitating a creative atmosphere can enable individuals to relay feelings and emotional states which may have been missed through solitary use of textual or verbal communication. The access to the affective and expressive sphere has also been linked to participants' enhanced and more elaborate narratives (Barker and Weller 2003), further highlighting the potential of visual communication to glimpse into subjective experiences and convey deep meaning.

Similarly, another body of knowledge has extended the recognition of the holistic and meaningful aspects of experiences that creative engagement facilitates to denote the transformative and therapeutic effects of facilitating a creative atmosphere. Examples of health research have indicated that the use of imagery can provide a safe space for exploring emotionally sensitive themes due to the physical separateness of the artefacts from the rest of the data. This allows for holding intense emotions and exercising a greater degree of control over attaining closeness or remoteness from the artefact (Harris, 2010; Burke, 2008). It has also been claimed that the marginal characteristics of the image could enable the expression of scapegoated feelings onto the hard surface of the paper sheet, allowing for the artist to achieve a sense of separateness (Schaverien 1999; Dalley, Rifkind and Terry, 2013). This indicates that the physicality and separateness of the image can facilitate an expressive release, enabled by the capacity of the imagery to contain material that could otherwise be considered illogical or unacceptable. In other words, this creative engagement could ease communication, deflect some of the emotional intensity, and allow for deeper understanding and awareness.

In this way, the physicality of an image could facilitate a safe space and could also enhance reflexivity and symbolic engagement. Accordingly, studies have highlighted the potential of image-making to access subconscious phenomena that could contribute to increasing self and others' awareness (Liebmann, 1990; Storr, 1972). Further to deepening image-based communication, using a symbolic way of thinking through the image has been found to be particularly suitable for responding to a wide range of learning styles and needs. Namely, symbols offer the advantage of condensing and transforming meaning into small-scale, representational and non-threatening forms (Case and Dalley, 2014). These studies highlight the potential of the creative process to add depth and opportunities to more holistically explore the researched phenomena. In particular, imagination and risk-taking could suit various learning needs and physical abilities to provide unique learning opportunities that stimulate growth and awareness. This type of communication could contribute to richer exploration, aid freedom of expression and include imagination and symbolic representation. This closely aligns with this research's aims to offer an atmosphere and methods which are inclusive to diverse types of processing and exploration.

This highlights the potential of artistic expression to surpass the function of being a communication tool and include the process of creation as a way of knowing and reflecting. In particular, contemporary approaches to image-making, based on Art therapy, recognise the significance of process-based work, facilitated through artistic media. More specifically, playing, facilitated by the creative process, was associated with taking risks and self-discovery (Youell, 2008). This process has also been considered as enabling transition, change and growth through supporting relational work (Winnicott, 1989). In this way, participants could be supported by the creative process in various ways that facilitate imagination and experimentation without the commitment to produce a logical argument.

Studies have shown that the construction of knowledge through art and image-making could closely align with individuals' natural thinking that enables connectivity to diverse people and identities. Knowledge constructed through art tends to include tacit knowledge and reflects the complexity and holistic nature of experiences (Biggs, 2004). This approach relates to authenticity, emotive expression and representing idiosyncratic viewpoints. Establishing a creative atmosphere has also been linked to facilitating reflective and deep thinking, which could reveal new worldviews and perspectives as well as carry beneficial therapeutic effects (Gilroy and McNeilly, 2000; Case and Dalley, 2014). This highlights the diverse forms of knowledge production enabled by the use of art and image-making. Further exploration of

participatory visual methodologies will examine the applicability of visual communication through social science research (to further examine ways to facilitate participants' agency) suggest an eclectic approach that utilises elements of different studies that could aid the anti-oppressive approach of this study and position the study in a methodological community.

3.4 Participatory visual methodologies

The use of art in social science research can be situated within several overlapping fields: participatory visual methodologies, narrative studies, arts-based research and the use of communication through image-making in psychology (Theron et al., 2011). Whilst within participatory visual methods, participant-created images are used as a tool to elicit a textual form of data (Wand and Burris, 1997), arts-based researchers have tended to prioritise experiential and process-based knowledge (Biggs, 2004). In other words, whilst one methodological community does not consider the image as sharing experiences as a standalone method without an accompanying narrative, the other way of working relates to the image as a unique form of knowledge construction that differs from narrative thinking. The following section will further explore the use of diverse media and experimentation in social science research to inform the eclectic decisions as part of constructing this research methodology.

Traditional methodologies, often relying on participants' linguistic ability to relay knowledge, have been criticised as exploitative and reducing participants to their data-providing functions (Reinharz and Davidman, 1992; Letherby 2003; Johnson, Pfister and Vidrola-Padros, 2012). It has also been noted that conventional data collection methods might fail to convey profound aspects of knowledge and depth of experiences (D'Amico et al., 2016). Accordingly, an effort to include subjective knowing and provide an alternative to the more dominant and conventional representations of knowledge has recently been advocated through the use of visual methodologies in qualitative research (Banks and Zeitlyn, 2015, Pauwels, 2000; Collier and Collier 1986; Pink, 2007, Rose 2016). Researchers, in this way, have been urged to consider the appropriateness of employing visual tools as a platform for encouraging wider inclusivity and anti-oppressive research practices.

Participatory visual methodologies include a wide plethora of tools and approaches, such as photography, video, drawing and mapmaking (Banks and Zeitlyn, 2015; Pink, 2007; Prosser, 1998). Within this realm of visual research methodologies, the use of photography, both in individual and group settings, remains the most popular method explored to date (Mitchell,

2011; Ruiz-Casares, Rousseau, Morlu, and Browne, 2013). Being initially introduced as a health-promoting tool, the use of participatory photographic approaches draws on feminist theory, action research and photography (Wang and Redwood-Jones 2001). This group-based participatory approach has been reported to be primarily governed by community-based values, encouraging group strength and cohesion, interpersonal support, enhanced awareness and critical dialogue (Wang and Burris 1994; Wang et al. 1998). Furthermore, De Lange, Mitchell and Stuart (2007) refer to photovoice as a tool that encourages self-advocacy, agency and social change, which, in turn, develops transferable skills and improves individual self-esteem. Some of these skills-building capacities relate to promoting visual expression, team building, critical thinking skills and reflection (Wang and Burris, 1997). For example, in her work with low-income social groups, Robinson (2013) used photovoice to encourage the expression of community issues to policymakers. This research inspired intra-community links, enabled individuals to reduce feelings of isolation and counteract negative representations and stereotypical beliefs.

Similarly, Oliveira and Vearey's (2015) study enabled marginalized participants to use photography as a tool to support creativity and present a public exhibition that was designed to connect to wider audiences and alter existing stereotypical perceptions. Furthermore, a participatory visual study, facilitated by Ritterbusch (2016), used labelling as a tool to empower street-connected adolescents to communicate a strong visual message, oppose negative stereotypes and educate their community. These studies demonstrated the transformative potential of visual and participatory methodologies to counter stigmatisation, generate consciousness and achieve a greater power balance than traditional methods.

Additionally, visual methods were extensively used to elicit previously unexplored discourses (Clark 1999; Punch 2002 Rasmussen 2004; Lomax, 2012). For example, researchers (White, Drew and Hay (2009) used photography, video, and narrative interviews to draw links between chronic illness experiences, young people's identity, and social connectivity. Similarly, Sawyer, Drew and Duncan's (2007) study with young people combines photographic tools and narrative methods to examine the self-management of chronic health conditions. These studies demonstrate a combined approach of using visuals and narratives to explore sensitive health issues and illuminate themes of profound importance that are less explored. The respondents in these studies, children who experience health issues, bear some similarities with participants in this current study, as they are often conceived as a marginalized and vulnerable population. Such attention to so-called 'less heard heard' populations could provide opportunities for

counter-narratives to oppressive and stigmatising ideologies to highlight marginalised, vulnerable, and hard-to-reach populations (McCloy, White, Lee Bunting, and Forwell, 2016) and enable increased agency and therapeutic effect.

Alongside the applicability of photographic visual tools for exploring health issues, the use of visual mediums within social science research has also been used to investigate less sensitive themes relating to daily routines, belonging, and place. For example, Sonn, Quayle and Kasat (2015) used photography and photo-elicitation to examine aboriginal children's constructions of home and identity. Visual analysis of the photographs captured and recorded unique perspectives and afforded a glimpse into children's emotive meaning-making and their relationship with the built and natural environment. Similarly, another place-investigating study conducted by Emmel and Clark (2011) combined photography and walks within the local neighbourhood to explore initiating and sustaining social networks across space and time. Similar research objectives relating to newly-arrived migrants' visualisations of home, everyday routines and belonging, were facilitated by Faber, Moller and Pristed-Nielsen's (2013) visual research. These studies contribute to the sociological understanding of place, routine practices, and social links documented from participants' unique perspectives.

Additionally, the function of visual methodologies as a mnemonic device that aids the recall and documentation of events and places was highlighted. In contrast to research aiming to explore health issues, this group of studies steered away from more intense and sensational issues. Instead, it emphasised the importance of routines in understanding experiences of belonging and connections of self and place. In addition to this, other useful characteristics of visual data, such as capturing and preserving sensitive information and experiences, have been illuminated. Visual methods, in this way, have established their applicability to contribute to understanding and expressing complex issues that link individuals and the environment. This exploration and expression of connectivity between individuals, places, memories and identities, closely relate to the aims of this study, to illuminate experiences of integration and rehabilitation of post-trafficking identification.

Another main advantage of visual methodologies is their particular applicability to research with a presumed 'less heard' adult population. The participatory element of visual methodologies has been considered to promote the participant's status of being experts in the researched phenomena. For example, Oliveira and Vearey (2015) combine ethnography and participatory visual methodologies with exploring the lived experiences of migrant women sex

workers. This research captured less popular views, highlighting participants' strengths alongside areas of concern associated with working in the sex industry. Participants' visual narratives were collated and disseminated through exhibitions and publicly available resources, in this way promoting a more positive counter-narrative to the stigma-influenced representations of sex-working migrant women. In particular, the authors highlight the suitability of visual methodology to engage assumed vulnerable and marginalised participants and afford participants more control over the research process and the ways in which they wished to represent themselves. Enhanced sense of agency, in this way, alongside amplification of respondents' voices and meaningful self-representations, has the potential to offer valuable contribution applicable to this study.

A similar ethos of enhancing participants' autonomy and level of control over the research process informed the study conducted by Lenette and Boddy (2013). This study used a hybrid approach, consisting of combined visual and ethnographic methods to explore the lived experiences of refugee women in Australia. In particular, participants in this study were asked to photograph and discuss their sources of strength and resilience. The study concluded that visual means of exploration were useful in obtaining authentic viewpoints and highlighting themes and issues significant for participants' wellbeing, which also has practical implications for professionals and service providers. These studies evidence the benefits of facilitating an enhanced level of choice and commitment by using visual methods to promote the elicitation of rich narratives and diverse worldviews. The transmission of these authentic narratives has included strength and resilience-based perspectives to challenge the assumption of homogeneity and vulnerability, often associated with marginalised populations. These studies show how the use of images and visual methodologies can enable a deeper understanding of marginalised communities and can offer reflexivity and transformative effects.

3.5 The Use of Drawing as a Research Method

Although this appears to be a less widely used participatory visual approach, the use of drawings in research has been reported to appropriately facilitate the elicitation of emotive themes and issues that perhaps could not have been achieved through textual means alone (Guillemin and Drew, 2010; Guillemin and Westall, 2008). Research examples of these inquiries include the use of drawings to facilitate the expression of children's sense of self and their surroundings (Herth, 1998; Driessnack, 2006), the exploration of developmental issues

(Miles 2000, Theron, Mitchell Smith and Stuart, 2011) and health-related views (Williams and Bendelow 2000; Backett-Milburn, Cunningham-Burley and Davis, 2003). These studies have usefully demonstrated the way in which drawing can be used to explore profound and meaningful themes of personal nature that could have parallels to this research.

Health research studies, in particular, have begun to establish the benefits of using drawing as a method to utilise children's unique perspectives and improve health professionals' understanding of less-known aspects of children's experiences. For example, Vindrola-Padros (2012) used drawings in her study with children undergoing oncology treatment to better understand participants' viewpoints and make recommendations for their personalised treatment and recovery. Similarly, Williams and Bendelow (2000) incorporated children's drawings of cancer to explore links between transgression and malignancy related to body image and social relationships. It appears that there are parallels between research with children and respondents in this research as drawings could be particularly useful when participants have less access to complex language. Particularly suitable for this study is the way reflections facilitated through the research process positioned the participants as experts of their experiences and enabled an exploration of intensely personal and sensitive experiences.

Alongside exploring particularly emotive health-related themes and issues, another body of research has focussed on exploring areas of strength alongside the areas of difficulties that children may face. For example, Hert's (1998) study with homeless children used drawings and qualitative interviews to explore children's resilience in the face of adversity. Instead of focussing on the children's vulnerabilities, Hert (1998) aimed to reveal how children generate and sustain hope, build on their strengths and better assist professionals who support them. Similarly, Miles (2000) used drawing to explore militarised children's future hopes and aspirations, in this way, emphasising their strength and resilience. These studies demonstrate that the combination of visual and participatory elements has contributed to facilitating an enhanced level of engagement, promoting the elicitation of embodied narratives and contributing to knowledge that has practice value for supporting their rehabilitation, fairer representation and empowerment. Of particular relevance to this study is the way the emotive themes have been supported by the use of drawing as a research method and the ways in which this image-generated knowledge has contributed to deepening professional understanding of respondents' areas of strengths and difficulties.

Drawings have also been used as a tool to access children's inner world to better understand their resilience strategies, adjustment after transition and the links formed in their surroundings. For example, a study conducted by Huss and Alhaiga-Taz (2013) combined drawings and phenomenological explanations to examine Bedouin children's experiences of being raised in unconventional settlements. Findings from children's drawings and narratives revealed strategies that children used to adapt to living in illegal villages. Specifically, children's artwork expressed an extension of the feelings of home and belonging to the outside spaces and areas. This assimilation of inside and the outside spaces, communicated through the children's artwork, enabled understanding of the authentic emotional connections that participants attributed to place and belonging. Similarly, in a return migration study, Cena, Heim and Trandafoiu (2017) utilised drawing as a tool to elicit children's experiences of changing place and acculturation. This longitudinal study, conducted in two phases, captured visual and narrative illustrations of children's progressive strategies to inform their sense of belonging and advance their connections with everyday spaces through social interactions and relationships. The drawing approaches in these studies have been used to explore and document complex negotiations relating to the experiences of home, belonging and connections to everyday spaces.

Although drawing as a research method has been conducted primarily with children, these evocative and meaningful engagements relate very closely to the aims of this research. Alongside the use of drawing as a research method with children, a smaller body of research has also drawn attention to the use of participants-constructed imagery conducted with adults. Studies have, in this way, focussed on respondents' visual exploration of health issues (Vitora and Knauth 2001, Cross, Kabel and Lysack, 2006; Guillemin 2004; Guillemin and Westall 2000). For example, Martin's (1994) ethnographic work included adult participants' drawings of their immune system to demonstrate the tension and balance between the inside and the outside. This drawing provided a visual aid to deepen the participant's reflection and illuminate her narrative.

Similarly, other health studies report the use of drawings and image-making to add depth and reflection to participants' descriptions. For example, health-related studies incorporated participants' drawings of the experiences of menopause (Guillemin, 1999), post-natal depression (Guillemin and Westall 2008; Guillemin and Drew, 2010) and heart disease (Guillemin 2004; Guillemin and Drew, 2010). Participants in these studies produced and interpreted their own images relating to their health issues and post-rehabilitation experiences.

These studies concluded that drawing the experiences during and after the illness provided a structure and basis for comparison and enabled participants' recollection and analysis of their experiences. This enhanced facilitation of a sense of structure has been found to add to the richness of narratives by using drawings to add stability, order and reorder events and experiences. Particularly relevant to this research is the way visual exploration could offer a structure that could aid respondents' narrative inquiry.

Due to the potential to explore and engage in analytical depth, the use of drawings and creative activities have also been recognised as a therapeutic approach. Alongside examining worldviews, perceptions and health issues, several studies document how visual tools have been used as a method of exploring and integrating traumatic experiences (McNiff, 2014; Dwivedi, Nicholson and Irwin, 2010). It has also been noted that expression through visual means can be more encompassing, to include states and feelings, which can be overlooked and are difficult to express in textual terms (Harris, 2010). Furthermore, it is argued that creative exploration could aid coding experiences into a symbolic image projected onto a hard surface, enabling physical and emotional separation and contributing to participants' increased level of control (Burke, 2005). Due to the unique perspectives that such visual methods offer, some researchers (D'Amico et al., 2016; Greenhalgh and Weiringa, 2011; Hamilton and Moore, 2004) introduced the idea of research as becoming a means of intervention that has therapeutic properties to support individual wellbeing. In particular, studies with children who have faced displacement (Rousseau et al., 2005; Miles, 2000; Leckey, 2011), natural disasters and global adversity (e.g. Brolles et al., 2017; Akesson, 2014, 2015; Marshall, 2013; Chilcote, 2007; Roje, 1995), have highlighted the therapeutic effect of facilitating creative expression to address emotional issues. The emotional intensity of the themes explored within these studies is relayed through an artistic way of communication that supports expression and adds therapeutic value.

Alongside the advantages of drawings as a visual tool, Theron et al. (2011) outline some limitations, namely the way in which communicating through more formulaic and stereotypical pictograms could often function very similarly to writing. Furthermore, the use of traditional art materials, such as drawing pencils, requires a relatively greater degree of control which could intimidate participants who are less confident in producing a line drawing (Guillemin and Drew, 2010). Conversely, some of the advantages of including diverse artistic media in research have been linked to offering greater control and flexibility to participants (Wix, 2000) and sustaining a relaxed and more engaging research environment (Carter and Ford, 2013).

This shows the significance of including a wide range of art materials to enhance flexibility to individual needs and facilitate a more creative research environment.

Furthermore, new working methods that reflect respondents' diverse ways of communicating could generate useful information about the research inquiry process and function. The Art therapy domain could offer an in-depth exploration of the use of the full spectrum of the creative process, which includes the production of original artwork and relational aspects of the creative process. As an interdisciplinary field that recognises the value of various tools and methods (Patton, 2002), art-based research draws on diverse approaches to generating new knowledge (McNiff, 2008). In this way, Art therapy research includes both the produced artefact and the creative process as tools for the inquiry (Deaver, 2002), indicating that the investigation places equal value on both art as a process and art as a creative expression. Although this method is particularly appropriate for exploratory purposes, it has been observed that the use of art as a research tool in social science research has not involved an in-depth appreciation of art therapy knowledge that recognises the full potential of arts-based data (Musham, 2001; Nainis, 2007). This highlights the potential for utilising experiential art-based knowledge within research.

Initially, investigations of artists' and art therapists' own work have been established as a way of researching themes and symbols that enhance professional understanding of art processes (Moon, 1995; Allen, 1995). These included exploring the use of arts-based methods as an introspective and experiential way of knowing, developing self-insight and understanding of phenomena. Following this, Arts-based research as the investigation and understanding of a research question and generating new knowledge through creating art was first introduced by McNiff (1998a; 2008), who positioned the relationship with the image as a focal point of the research investigation. This conceptualisation was later broadened via a more wide-ranging exploration of the creative processes that include subjective experiential knowledge within the context of research (Kapitan 2003a; Kapitan and Newhouse, 2000). In this way, in contrast to visual methodologies, Arts-based methods acknowledge the distinctive nature of the artistic process involving art-making and creative expression as a way of knowing and communicating, with or without a narrative.

This contributed to a new understanding of artmaking as a way of thinking and meaning-making. Accordingly, the creative process and the emotional states it facilitates could often provide more valuable than the content analysis of the artefact itself (Malchiodi, 1998). Added

to this, diverse intersections of reflections have also been found to contribute to the continuous development of art therapy as a method of facilitating the creative process. For example, to make full use of the artistic process within research, Spaniol (1988) suggested integrating reflections on individuals' attitudes towards art and previous experience with art materials within the research context. More recently, Kaplan (2000) called for facilitating more connections and intersections between the scientific and artistic types of knowledge from one side and art therapy from the other. This marks a shift from more traditional and introspective forms of arts-based research as a reflective investigation to a wider and more encompassing spectre of knowing.

Currently, most art therapy research constitutes case studies, the use of art as a diagnostic tool, establishing the efficiency of art therapy, and arts-based investigations for self-study purposes (Kapitan, 2017). The dynamic influence between the artist; the image, and the facilitator of the creative process, often referred to as a 'triangular relationship' (Schaverien 2000; Dalley, Rifkind and Terry, 2013; Case and Dalley, 2014), enabled artistic expression and stimulated reflexivity. Within this field, a process-orientated artistic expression has been well examined and established. Health-based research within this professional area has examined image-making and artistic processes in relation to working with individuals who have experienced trauma and transition (Harber, 2011; Gerteisen, 2008; DeLucia, 2016), grief processing (DiSunno, Linton and Bowes, 2011; Gantt and Tinnin, 2007; Chu, 2010), cancer care (Monti et al., 2006; Nainis et al., 2006; Collie, Bottorff and Long, 2006; Luzzatto and Gabriel, 2000), as well as issues of race, identity and sexuality (Garlock, 2016; Campbell, 1999; Hiscox and Calisch,1998; Isfahani, 2008). Although in this context, art-based methods have been mainly employed as a basis for promoting therapeutic effects, these studies have also contributed to facilitating the expression of particularly intense emotional experiences. In this way, process-orientated work conducted with a range of artistic media has enabled self-exploration, contributed to supporting individuals to reconnect with their personal strengths and uncovered unique worldviews which could better inform healthcare professionals.

Although the significance of the creative process for enabling transformation and change within art therapy practice has been well-established within the professional literature, this is less prevalent in applications to research (Spaniol 2000; McNiff 1998 a). It appears that although the value of art therapy within the private realms of individual work is well-established, applicability to social service research has been less widely explored within studies outlining the process-based work within AT. However, contributions to practice-based

experiential knowledge have indicated a shift from a more extensive focus on the qualities of the artefact to the way in which the process and dyadic interactions could be significant in knowledge production. For example, Bird's (2018) use of image-making to investigate women's domestic violence experiences shows how the arts-based methodology enabled a better understanding and challenged stereotypical thinking. Similarly, in a study with youth survivors of a natural disaster, Mohr (2014) employed arts-based methods to examine post-traumatic growth and meaning-making following trauma. These studies demonstrated the use of art as a way of understanding experience. Specifically, these inquiries have focussed on examining particularly difficult to express, subjective, relational and social issues pertinent to this study. Findings show that apart from being an expressive method, the creative process as a thinking tool that supports individuals' innate way of expression and relatedness to self and others could generate new knowledge.

It would, therefore, be useful to outline the differences between the use of art or imagery in research and process-orientated arts-based research. For example, Sullivan (2005) distinguished between using art as a visual data collection tool within social sciences research and arts-based research, founded on experiential and process-centred knowing, providing an enhanced understanding of the research phenomena. As Daley (2007) further notes, facilitating creativity calls for alertness to the extraordinary whilst integrating artistic and analytical skills. The combination of aesthetic, relational and process-experiential components, in this way, places equal value on the relational approach as well as on the arts-based creative process (Kapitan, 2017). Artistic involvement, in this sense, does not point to a methodological distinctiveness but instead lies within the quality of observational skills, attentiveness to the creative process and sensitivity to the use of visual language.

Alongside the gap of knowledge in the specialist trafficking discourses revealed within Chapter 2, a methodological gap in conducting so-called sensitive research has also become apparent. The majority of arts-based studies within social science research relate to the use of drawing. This limits the potential of arts-based research to incorporate the creative process as a tool for processing and understanding. Conversely, findings from art therapy case studies suggest that respondents benefitted from this research encounter and enhanced their sense of agency (DeLucia, 2016; Linton and Bowes, 2011; Luzatto and Gabriel, 2000; Isfahani, 2008). Since the application of the artistic type of knowledge has not been fully explored in research (Mursham, 2001), there is a need to illuminate previously overlooked interest in inner experiences and expression of profound meaning through art-making and process-based

communication through artistic media that surpasses the boundaries of the visual aesthetics. Biggs (2001) outlined three types of experiential knowledge: explicit content, which could be verbalised; tacit knowledge, which could be partially relayed through textual means; and ineffable content, which has no linguistic equivalence (Biggs, 2004). Similarly, McNiff (2008) distinguished studies that use arts-based processes and expression on one side and research that utilises creative means as a prompt to elicit verbal expression on the other. For the purpose of facilitating anti-oppressive communication, it will be useful to consider including both the experiential and textual types of knowledge.

Since this study recognises the complexity and polyphonous nature of expression, there was a further need to establish commonalities in joining narrative and non-textual forms of expression, to facilitate the unfolding of the storied understanding and imbue meaning construction with considerations of socioculturally-constructed, embodied, textual para-verbal and non-verbal expressions. Therefore, alongside arts-based representations, it was important to offer respondents an alternative form of expression that could be facilitated within a relational research encounter. This inclusion of both linguistic and experiential lenses was important in allowing for more holistic representations that supported the naturalistic, organic and relational approach of this research. The following considerations of Narrative inquiry approaches explore ways in which sharing narratives and significant moments could further support respondents' reflections and meaning-making.

3.6 Historical and theoretical underpinnings of Narrative Inquiry

Underpinned by the assumption that stories are an organic way of living, processing and relating to others (Clandinin, 1990; Clandinin and Connelly, 2004), Narrative Inquiry has increased in popularity due to its applicability to diverse circumstances, settings and people (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou, 2013), alongside well-established links between oral histories, narratives and social identities (Mishler, 1986). A wide range of theoretical variability within narrative inquiry includes the spheres of anthropology, education, therapy and research. Therefore, numerous definitional considerations, academic disputes and suppositions of what constitutes a 'narrative' contribute to this complexity. In more general terms, Narrative research includes storied material as a basis for investigating, understanding and subscribing meaning to events and processes (Tambouktou, 2008). Within the more nuanced theoretical underpinnings of Narrative Inquiry methods and their applications to social

science research, this study closely aligns with humanistic thinking and appreciating the idiosyncratic, symbolic and expressive qualities of storied understanding (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou, 2013). The authority afforded in respondents' telling, retelling and interpreting their own narratives in examining their individual life stories, is particularly appropriate for the aims of this study.

These Humanistic Narrative conceptualisations are further complemented by socially constructed aspects of oral histories and representations of ordinality (Sarbin, 1986; Sliep et al., 2004), alongside the storied expression of agency and potential to institute change and transformation (Squire and Goergakopoulou, 2007). In this way, the poststructuralist (Genette, 1979) and postmodern (Foucault, 1972) turn influenced the examination of the function and structural components of narratives to contain complexities and contradictions whilst maintaining focus on resistance to power structures and dialogical content of narratives. These theoretical insights are relevant in highlighting the importance of mundane everyday experiences in affording a glimpse of the individuals' domesticities, particularly relevant to the wider aims of this research, in counteracting stereotypical sensationalist trafficking discourses and offering a common ground of interactions and relatedness in space. In opposition to placing extensive focus on the complexity and emotional depth of dramatic and unusual accounts and events (Freedmen, 2006), attention to everyday stories, with an emphasis on the habitual and naturalistic stories relayed in conversation style (Bamberg, 2006; Georgakopoulou, 2007), accentuates the everyday and organic environment. Similarly, in her exploration of what makes a 'good' story, Frank (1994) calls for researchers to attend to respondents' routine experiences rather than reporting problematised views. This could incorporate the use of silences, emotional investment, difficult-to-define material, symbolic content, as well as what is not said or clarified (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). As inequalities are intrinsic to the everyday, this focus on the mundane could highlight points of tension and misalignments that would be of significance within respondents' narratives.

In this way, varied emphasis on textual and non-textual elements of expression has been accompanied by an awareness of the way storied representations could reflect individual agency, self-concept and personal tendency to project or succumb to domination and objectification. For example, constructions of identity representation have been found to reveal the social nature of narratives that uphold social connections (Denzin, 1989), negotiate moral agreements (MacIntyre, 1984), and contribute further to the understanding of the narrator's way of making sense of the world (Frosh 2002). Accordingly, White's (2000) empowerment-

orientated interpretation of Narrative Inquiry conveys the acknowledgement of multicultural perspectives, aiming to empower individuals to relay their lived experiences, re-evaluate dominant discourses and challenge the subjugation of distinctive elements, to uncover and restore marginalised voices. These principles complemented the wider aims of this study, i.e. to illuminate marginalised discourses, support recognise and respect respondents' sense of agency and facilitate a participant-led research process. Therefore, the methodology underpinned by a strengths-based approach, assuming multiple positions, perspectives and voices, could offer the potential for multiple layers of understanding (Billow, 1977) to reveal participants' experiences as expressed in their stories. These core principles afforded the flexibility to accept conflicting views without the pressure to communicate a narrative based on consensus. In this way, Narrative inquiry could reveal a diversity of views and provide a holistic overview, to incorporate participants' values, beliefs, emotions and prejudices into the research.

Narrative Inquiry approach, deemed to reflect the principles of empowerment and social justice, closely relates to the aims of this study. This exploration of contemporary approaches shows how the storied way of expression could allow participants to attribute meaning to their life experiences whilst relaying events and circumstances. As a space of interactions and negotiations (Tietel, 2000), Narrative inquiry incorporates the broader socio-cultural context whilst emphasising the idiosyncratic nuances of the storied way of relaying these perspectives. Moving away from the focus on syntactic and compositional qualities, experiential approaches to narratives founded on phenomenological understanding and hermeneutics focus on both the semantic elements of narratives, alongside socio-cultural aspects (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou, 2013). This is important in highlighting the multifaceted nature of experiences, contextuality, power relations and identity constructions. Due to incorporating diverse fields of knowledge, it is also important to highlight the cross-cultural nature of the study and how this impacts related to principles that inform data collection and analysis by involving respondents as much as possible in the data construction and interpretation.

3.7 Summary

With view of the existing insufficiencies in the current understanding of trafficked people's lived experiences, this study aimed to facilitate an investigation led by participants who have experiential knowledge of being trafficked but have so far remained largely overlooked within the research literature. Methodologically, the use of creative arts-based methods and narrative inquiry was discussed as offering the potential to facilitate trafficked people’s active and creative role in eliciting their own representations. This chapter, therefore, critically investigated historical and contemporary perspectives underpinning the use of image-making along with narratives as a research method. The rationale for choosing specific approaches of arts-based and narrative methodologies that combine visual and narrative material with supporting the purposes of this research was discussed in relation to questions of how knowledge production and generation relate to hierarchies and inequalities that could further marginalise on the basis of class, gender, sexuality and cultural variability. Specifically, this chapter reviewed the primary methodological considerations that accompanied this study to provide a backdrop and data generation context. In alignment with the egalitarian and democratic values consistent with the aims of this research, the multi-disciplinary nature of narrative and arts-based methodologies include diverse forms of knowledge production that counter the more dominant type of logico-deductive knowledge and allow for more equally distributed power balance between participants and researcher. The next chapter will focus on the application of this hybrid methodology with details of how the collaboration with trafficked men and women within a process-based creative exploration contributed to a better understanding of their constructions of self and lived experiences in the host society.

4

Method

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the decision-making processes regarding recruitment, sampling and participant considerations, followed by how the methods were applied within the study. Attempts to encourage increased participant visibility and transformative elements guided the intersectional standpoint of this research. Informed by the wish to gain a deep understanding of individuals' sense of agency and inequalities alongside illuminating what is hidden and marginalised, I aimed to steer away from theoretical rigidity and ways of working that assume unquestionable truths. Throughout this chapter, I will reflect on the process of creating a space for creative engagement and link to respondents' authentic representation, positionality and co-construction. Additionally, the chapter will offer reflections on the practical and ethical issues I encountered in conducting sensitive research.

4.2 Recruitment and Sampling

Purposive sampling techniques was used to recruit participants who have received or are in receipt of post-trafficking services. The research was conducted within the organisations where trafficked men and women receive support. I contacted all organisations working with NRM in the UK in conjunction with other charities that support trafficked people's rehabilitation to explain the purpose of the study and invite the organisations to help identify participants. The study included trafficked people from three post-trafficking support centres in the North-West of England. Two of the contact centres (A1 and A2) were managed by an umbrella charity providing post-trafficking support through the National Referral Mechanism. The third contact

centre (B) provided integration and rehabilitation support for asylum-seeking and refugee people. The programs and services at this organisation were not linked to NRM. It was important to include both an organisation working with NRM and one that provides voluntary support services to trafficked people alongside to other marginalised groups. Hynes (2003) notes that interviewing individuals from one organisation might risk not capturing the diversity of a specific group. Conversely, approaching multiple gatekeepers and involving individuals who might not be associated with an organisation could contribute to inclusivity and multiplicity of viewpoints. For ethical and practical reasons, it was not conceivable to recruit individuals who are not associated with an organisation as it would have been difficult to determine if individuals have left the trafficking circumstances and whether pre-existing conditions or lack of available support might increase the risk of re-traumatisation following participation in the study.

The second phase of the research was completed 12-18 months after the initial interview. Since the research took longer than anticipated, it wasn't uncommon for respondents to change their contact numbers and location or transfer through international borders. A small number of respondents could be located after this passage of time. It is also important to note that some participants found continued engagement with trafficking services unhelpful and re-traumatising. Others, however, were eager to re-connect and reflect on their lived experiences. Overall, most respondents who participated in Phase 2 of the research did not report significant changes to their circumstances and over time. Respondents who had experienced substantial shifts in relation to their immigration claim were more inclined to reflect on those differences in access to opportunities and resources.

4.3 Participants

Male and female participants were in various stages of the process of achieving their final trafficking decision. A total of fifty-seven trafficked people, forty-six women and eleven men, took part in this study. The participants were recruited from post-trafficking support centres working with the National Referral Mechanism (centres A1 and A2), and three participants were recruited from an organisation that was not affiliated with the NRM (Centre B). Both organisations were located in the North-West of the UK. The majority of the participants (fifty-four out of fifty-seven) were recruited from a single organisation. Some participants identified as being from the following countries: Albania, Romania, Nigeria, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary,

Eritrea, Ethiopia, India, Iran, and Pakistan. Other participants have chosen not to specify their place of origin. All except two participants had been referred to the NRM and progressed through the first stage of trafficking identification, which deemed them likely to be considered victims of trafficking. This group of participants had some support to meet their immediate needs, such as access to a safe house and means to secure basic sustenance. From the remaining respondents, two identified as having experienced trafficking in the past but had not registered with the NRM. The rest of the participants were post day 45 of the NRM system. The majority of the participants were still in the process of establishing their status as victims of trafficking, and their immigration status was still unsettled. A smaller proportion of participants had their trafficking, asylum or residence status confirmed. Furthermore, a minority of those who participated in this research consisted of participants who have received a negative decision regarding their trafficking situation.

4.4 Image Making, Meaning-making, Materials and Ways of Working

Creating an image was perceived as affirmative action by both participants and the post-trafficking organisations. Most of the participants were in the process of confirming their trafficking status, meaning that they did not have the entitlement to work or engage in full-time or higher education. Moreover, due to financial constraints, most participants could not afford to travel, and therefore their exposure to social and recreational activities was very limited. Within this context, most participants expressed their appreciation for being able to create an image, noting that this tangible outcome of the research would be valued as a reminder of their journey. Many respondents expressed satisfaction with their visually communicated image. At the completion of the project, some participants expressed the wish to continue exploring image and mark-making. The creative methodology contributed to the active engagement and sustained interest in the research on behalf of both participants and gatekeepers. The aesthetical and engaging aspects of the creative process, owing to the relational nature of arts-based methodologies, added innovative dynamics to the exploratory process and contributed to supporting participation.

Facilitating a safe space has been deemed to enable necessary conditions for an environment where participants would feel comfortable creating and engaging in a meaningful process (D'Amico et al., 2016). Therefore, establishing a safe space for reflection and meaning-making (Foster-Fishman et al., 2005; Sonn, Quayle and Kasat, 2015; Eagle, 1998; White, 2004; Perren,

2004; McLoughlin, 2010), where participants could create and relay their narratives, was of paramount importance for this study. A number of theoreticians have highlighted the symbolic function of the space as a container (Killick, 2011; Case and Dalley, 2014; Edwards, 2014), highlighting the significance of ensuring an orderly and predictable creative space. This indicated that in a more practical sense, it would be useful if the creative space could offer the potential to contain free expression by ensuring that the space is inviting, confidential, and ideally equipped with hard, washable surfaces (Rubin, 2005; Hogan, 2014). These considerations were important in informing the facilitation of creative space for the research activities.

In attempting to facilitate a creative research atmosphere, it was important to consider how the research methods were presented to respondents. Particular considerations were extended to the way in which the terms 'art' and 'art-making' might suggest a requirement for artistic aptitude and exclude respondents. Conversely, the term 'image making' refers to a range of creative activities, including simple mark-making and the use of art materials, to the creation of images, artefacts and abstract art through drawing, painting, pouring or modelling (Case and Dalley, 2014; Edwards, 2014; Moon, 2002; Malchiodi, 2011). Therefore, a broader formulation of the creative activities as 'image making' and 'use of materials' has been adopted throughout the study, in an attempt to facilitate inclusivity of the use of diverse media as well as to differentiate from the aesthetic aims of the creative activity which might be associated with 'art' and 'drawing'. In this way, an invitation to participants to use the materials was designed to dissociate from expectations to produce an aesthetically pleasing outcome.

Further considerations included the type and range of the materials provided as part of this research and how this could relate to issues of inclusion, participation and agency. In view of Theron et al.'s (2011) suggestion that providing a known and comfortable media of expression could help reduce power imbalance, familiar and mundane materials, such as pencils, pens and paper, were offered to participants. Alongside this, it was essential to consider the counterproductive associations that some participants might have with directive activities suitable for very young children (Johnson, Pfister and Vindrola-Padros, 2012). For that reason, during the image making activity, participants were provided with a range of artistic media, containing materials that require more control, such as pencils, crayons, paintbrushes and scissors, sculpting materials such as clay and cardboard and liquid forms of materials such as acrylic paints and inks. The choice of materials and resources aimed to facilitate conditions for inclusivity and allowed participants in shaping the research design and methodology. For

example, participants were provided with materials and were invited to identify additional materials they would like to use. Respondents suggested the inclusion of supplemental materials, such as fabrics, glass and different-sized paper. This facilitated a dialogical space and participants' preferred way of communicating, contributing to the creative and anti-oppressive atmosphere.

4.5 Ways of beginning the creative exploration

During data collection, participants were invited to respond to the aims of this research through either visual or textual means. It was further elucidated that using art materials during the research process was to help explore and communicate ideas rather than produce an aesthetically motivated final artefact. The experiential process aimed to facilitate an inner dialogue (Malchioidi, 2011) and encourage a sense of playfulness and creativity. Many participants used the artistic materials to connect to and re-evaluate their inner experiences in a deeply personal and meaningful way. In this way, participants did not only provide a visual and/or textual response to the researched phenomena; they were aware that data could be used to inform a deeper appreciation of the issues and circumstances of trafficked people, and as such could aid better understanding of their holistic experiences. Respondents' way of beginning was diverse and idiosyncratic. Some participants felt at ease using the art materials without aiming to produce an image. This was, however, new for other participants who attempted to plan their images. Other respondents showed interest in image making but also expressed initial apprehension of not being able to produce an intended aesthetically pleasing image. In response to such initial hesitations, participants were assured that the image-making process required only willingness to use the materials and no specific technical skill.

Encouragement to engage in the creative process and communicate their ideas through their most preferred medium was of most importance. It was recognized that striving to produce an aesthetically appealing image could be 'finishing before starting' (Croft, 2016) and stifling creativity. It was important to prioritise participants' active involvement rather than presenting participation through a technique and an extensive focus on producing an ideal final artefact. Accordingly, attention was extended to the way participants might be influenced by expectations of being able to create a skilful drawing. In general, such idealization and aims-orientated drawings tend to be more formulaic and stereotypical and could often inhibit authentic expression (Milner, 2010). In contrast, what Shaverien (1999a) refers to as 'embodied

image', or authentic expression, tends to be imbued with emotion that overlooks the final artefact production. These considerations informed setting the tone of this engagement with an invitation for respondents to participate in the use of materials rather than aiming to produce an image.

Conversely, it was important to acknowledge that the final artefact might have significant value for participants. Arts-based practitioners have linked creative expression with the process of sublimation, where the creative process facilitates the reshaping of intense feelings into an artistic form (Kramer, 2000). According to Kramer, this creative expression could achieve a symbolic resolution by converting intense feelings into socially accepted and non-threatening forms that highlight the importance of participant satisfaction from completing the original intentions of the visual exploration. In relation to this, researchers (i.e. Packard, 2008; Wang and Burris, 1997) have discussed the importance of supporting participants' technical knowledge by providing appropriate training to avoid potential detrimental effects arising from feelings of embarrassment and inadequacy as a result of producing an image discordant with participants' intentions (Guillemin and Drew, 2010). Likewise, Appleton (2001) suggests demonstrating the use of media or technique to ease the discomfort of engaging with unknown materials before leaving an open space to allow for introspection and autonomous use of the materials. Accordingly, some of the participants asked for technical support to enhance image clarity and accuracy. Depending on participants' self-identified prior knowledge, experience, physical ability and need, this support varied from demonstrating the use of diverse media, the colour wheel theory and basic printing technique to more immediate involvement in initiating the first strokes on paper, finishing off finer details and on one occasion, making the image upon instruction by a participant who had limited control over her hand movement. On these occasions, my role was to facilitate the authentic expression and original intentions of participants.

Some individuals were naturally drawn to explore the creative materials and allowed curiosity to lead their explorations. These initial points were facilitated by respondents noticing favourite colours, textured material, or paper quality that was used at the beginning of the creative process. Other respondents asked for practical assistance, for example, on how to create a monoprint or how to work with specific tools or materials. On some occasions, respondents asked for specific known to them material (such as glass paint, fabric and coloured clay), which was brought in the next interview session. Other respondents started with movement that led to releasing a feeling or emotion on an abstract scale that was further developed. On one

occasion, due to participants' physical restrictions, I offered to work on their image under their instruction. In this way, points of curiosity, initial interest and knowledge became a scaffolding frame (Vygotsky, 1987) that respondents used to construct their narrative and visual puzzles.

4.6 Methodological diversity of image-making

Image-making within this study has not been considered merely providing a visual illustration but instead presented as an invitation for reflection, thoughts processing and generating ideas that involved introspective insights and gaining a deeper understanding of experiences and phenomena. At the same time, it is essential to note that respondents' subjectivities and preferences shaped and formed this method in the way that most suited their aims. This contributed to a methodological diversity of the image-making based on several distinct functions that the creative activities fulfilled within this study. As a result, the purpose of image-making was imbued with diverse denotations and meaning, according to the timing of the image creation and the level of participant collaboration with other methodologies within the study. The image-making activity was completed within three main paradigms: as a sole participation method, or as a beginning or a final point in a combined image-making and textual-based contribution. Due to the differentials between the purposes of these activities, new connections with participants' emotional investment expressed through the images were formed.

In addition to the combined approach of using image-making in conjunction with narrative approaches, the sole image-making followed by process reflections offered respondents an unstructured way of engaging with themes and issues which they considered meaningful. As part of the research, participants were invited to use the creative materials in any way that they wished, subsequently followed by respondents' reflections in response to their image-making process and experiences. Some participants in this category had a clear vision of a representational image that they intended to produce to reflect themes and related issues. Another group of respondents within this sole image-making category engaged in process-based mark-making without reliance on pre-conceived ideas. Whilst some participants spoke as they were making the image, others felt that the image had expressed their feelings in a way that communicated a sense of completion that could not be verbalised or did not need to be relayed through textual means. Compared to other respondents, the images produced as a sole image-making activity were more unstructured and process-orientated. Whilst process

reflections deferred in length and level of detail, it appeared to be considerably shorter than descriptions produced in conjunction with narrative interviews and image-making.

The majority of the participants who chose to contribute through both image-making and textual-based representations within this research design used the image-making activity as a starting point of their discussion. This group of respondents instigated their exploration from a blank piece of paper to create original artwork and set the undertone of subsequent narratives. The experiential process-based method allowed extended time for immersion in image-making whilst reflecting, re-storying and relaying meaning synthesis within the image. Usually, respondents worked quietly and tuned into their image-making. Many participants relied on non-verbal communication to notice their mark-making patterns and visual vocabulary, demonstrating sensitivity and exploration of themes of personal and broader significance. I emphasised that the person who created the image could only explain or give detail of what they think this signifies for them, whilst I could offer additional perceptions and viewpoints without judgement or imposing their opinions. Subsequently, respondents were able to facilitate an inner dialogue with their images and continued to explore and imbue meaning within their creations, where they could be present in their flow, and were less concerned with producing a final outcome once they had established a sense of comfort. Following this, respondents usually reflected on their image-making process and inner dialogue and shared some of their processes and reflections by adding layers of understanding.

Continuous reference to image-making allowed participants to return again and again to the image, notice new details, frame and re-frame their own interpretations whilst weaving in the visual findings within their narratives. Apart from presenting an opportunity to think visually whilst moving between textual and visual modalities, this approach allowed revealing new understanding, creating closure and entering a transitional space that facilitated new awareness and insight. In this way, within the image-making and narrative interview methods, the image-making at times followed the narrative interview to form a conclusion, reflect or allow more process-based, recreational or transitional purposes. In these instances, images could function as re-storying or concluding final thoughts and reflections. In addition to this, some images were entirely process-orientated and may not have resulted in the production of a recognisable figurative image. From this perspective, image-making functioned as a thinking tool that facilitated understanding and representation on a symbolic, contained and minimised scale. Furthermore, this process-orientated experiential approach offered space for engaging in play and immediacy without the pressure to produce a recognisable image.

4.7 The lifeline of images

Facilitating a reflexive process was one of the most prominent characteristics of the image-making activity (Guillemin and Drew, 2010). Most participants carried out image-making in silence. This created a quiet reflexive space where participants had time to engage in introspective contemplation and clarify their ideas. Often, a period of stillness preluded the participants' choice of media colour and theme during the image making activity. The follow-up reflexive discussion trailed the process of creating and meaning-making for each participant. Having had time to reflect and create an image, participants decided how much and to what extent to share their thoughts and symbols arising from this experience. In this way, the process of image-making incorporated a transition from individual to shared public meaning (Schaverien, 1989), which needed to be supported with sensitivity and respect for the participant's pace and decision of how much and what to share in the context of this research.

The symbolic nature of the image enabled the encryption of themes and issues that are not easily identifiable. This provided respondents with the choice to avoid discussing the meaning revealed through the image. Rose (2016) draws particular attention to the role of multiple audiences in the process of reflection, image production and research dissemination. Similarly, Guillemin and Drew (2010) note that the relational process of connecting between self and others through the image starts with participants themselves. In the first instance, participants would decide whether or not to share their reflections during the research encounter. Subsequently, the audience could be widened to include sharing the image with significant others or through an exhibition, presentation and publication. Several participants, in this way, produced elaborate images and later decided to give concise information and detail about what the image meant to them. Accordingly, other respondents offered a brief description of their image as: "It is what it is", suggesting that the image has conveyed "enough" information, thus deeming linguistic deliberations of the meaning expressed through words unnecessary. Some participants created images but did not express interest in discussing their creative process, artistic representation and meaning. Apart from participants' preferred communicative preferences and style, other explanations for this reluctance could be attributed to participants' trust in their process and self-preservation skills. Other respondents shared the images with others with a sense of pride and affirmation of their creative process. Some participants offered warm gestures of appreciation and commented on how important they thought the visual and narrative perspectives that this research facilitated for them was. The role of the imaginary audience was also present within the participants' imagery and narratives. A final sharing and

exhibition served to celebrate participants' artwork to mark their sharing and exploration within this study.

Usually, respondents communicated pride in their images. However, it was essential to acknowledge that some respondents might wish to destroy the images or not take them. Art therapy practitioners suggested that participant destroying their own work could relate to their value systems and self-esteem (Case and Dalley, 2014). Equally, the image could incorporate 'scapegoated' emotional material (Schaverien, 1999b), which could be too powerful for participants to assimilate and take home. Bearing this into account, the participants' wishes to abandon or discard their images have been acknowledged and respected. Three of the respondents chose to leave their images behind and did not wish to reunite with them. As previously agreed, the unwanted imagery was confidentially disposed of.

4.8 Difficulties during Image-making

Subsequent deliberations on how art can become oppressive and reproduce inequality if used inflexibly informed reflections of how arts-based methods might be dissonant with participants' views of themselves. It is important to mention that creative exploration was not always appreciated as a valuable activity. Within the context of some respondents' understanding of active agency as focussed on labour-power, achievement and productivity, a spontaneous and process-orientated creative activity was at times not highly esteemed. Some participants, in this way, indicated that they appreciated a more industrialised notion of art, where the value of the final product would inform the intrinsic worth of the image-making activity. From this perspective, image-making was valued by some respondents through the lens of the final artefact and producing an aesthetically accomplished image. Conversely, the process-based creative work that does not necessarily aim to produce an artefact was perceived by some participants as an exclusive activity associated with a more leisurely state of mind. Within these lines, image-making as a playful activity that facilitates experiential knowledge, experimentation, and reflection was not continuously appreciated as an appropriate expression by some respondents. However, on other occasions, respondents reflected on how their image has attained symbolic and even iconic powers, where respondents cherished them as deeply significant markers of their journeys.

4.9 Illuminating Idiosyncratic and Experiential Knowledge through Narrative Inquiry Interviews

Facilitating an open atmosphere that integrates participants' holistic and multi-dimensional experiences was at the cornerstone of this research. Although studies have demonstrated that the use of artistic media can ease communication, it was also important to recognize that individuals with a stronger preference for concrete operational thinking might have difficulties sustaining communication through abstract thinking and image-making (Case and Dalley, 2014). Therefore, offering a choice of participatory methods, involving one-to-one image-making and/or semi-structured narrative interviews, was utilised to expand inclusivity and develop an in-depth understanding of respondents' lived experiences. A one-to-one semi-structured narrative interview, incorporating non-verbal aspects and active listening skills, facilitated the unfolding of respondents' stories. This openness to respondents' experiential process and preferences afforded participants the flexibility to relay their narratives in their preferred way of sequencing experiences and events. The facilitation of the narrative interviews was aided by creating conditions for an open and flexible environment to avoid the risk of re-traumatization and harm to participants. The interviews were conducted in a way that followed the participants' natural form of expression while aiding elicitation through an invitation for clarifications.

Starting from experiential knowing that reflects life experiences (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000), the first 'question' or narrative beginning related to participants' 'here and now' position. Having departed from this present moment, participants could discuss anything that they felt was relevant to this research. The aim was to facilitate a spontaneous narrative, where respondents would develop a personal connection and assume a leading role in constructing their narratives. From the focus on 'here and now', location in space and embodied understanding of their experiences, participants moved back and forwards to make sense of their current position and contextualise their narratives. An interview questionnaire [Appendix 3] was used as a prompt to invite respondents to reflect on points relating to their post-trafficking lived experiences without imposing a rigid structure. In this way, if respondents had not referred to some of the themes within their narratives, I invited them to share their more specific perspectives. This was done in a way that preserved the organic relational atmosphere, with curiosity and dialogical sensitivity, rather than utilising a formal approach to asking a question. However, in following the process of respondents telling their stories, the narratives usually evolved to a sense of completion, without the need to ask further questions. Through

the lens of a subjective understanding of self and others, narrative meaning-making included reflections on typical daily routines and rituals, relational aspects and connections to communal and spiritual issues, approaches to well-being, recovery and rehabilitation process, as well as life story accounts that participants deemed important. This allowed for eliciting rich personal stories that may have not directly related to participants' trafficking experiences but were considered significant and contributed to the participant's ownership and meaning-making process.

The narratives were followed through non-judgemental empathetic listening and occasionally asking for clarification, paraphrasing or summarising participant's thoughts. The interview questions were grouped thematically, which afforded the flexibility to adapt to participants' naturalistic pace and enable a more fluent narrative. At the end of the interview, if some of the themes had remained undiscussed, I invited the participant to add further reflections. Respondents were reminded of the research aims and were invited to discuss anything else that they felt was relevant to this study. If a wide range of themes were discussed, participants were invited to specify which of the discussed issues are most pertinent to this research. This allowed sufficient consideration to organic narratives and storytelling but also invited respondents to evaluate their narratives and determine what they thought was the focus of their representations.

Further to illuminating subjective meaning-making, relationality within these interactions contributed to a collaborative atmosphere. Dewey's (1981) understanding of experiences as underpinned by interactions between self and others suggests that experiential or storied knowing is closely related to continuous relational work that can transform and impact identity and representations, validated through re-visiting the experiences. In this way, narratives could be understood as representations of interactions and relational work that inform, enact, and reinvent individuals' links with self, others, and place (Clandinin and Roseik, 2007; Clandinin and Cane, 2013). The Narrative way of knowing, therefore, emphasised the deep appreciation of stories as a way of living and connecting to others, both as an individualistic process of meaning-making, as well as a relational aspect of experiencing. Facilitating a research relationship required considerations of how the ethos of such encounter could be led by dominant Western perspectives and worldviews (Ermine, 2007), including more careful considerations of socio-cultural, political and economic factors that could influence the context of this research. Explorations of power dynamics between researcher and participant including reflections on imbalances, hegemonies, and inequalities informed the interview process.

Alongside the examination of the narrative scale, the degree to which storied knowing was linked to transformative potential for agency restoration prompted attention to the ways in which experiential knowledge as a narrative foundation of meaning-making involved re-storying and transforming narratives into a number of storylines that could change and adapt to diverse audiences (Andrews, 2013). In this way, re-storying of narratives and imagery could contribute to expression, meaning-making and active engagement with respondents' social discourses, practices and interactions. Apart from the process of relaying a story, the construction of narratives included living, retelling and reliving the narratives, which has been linked to therapeutic functions of the storying and re-storying of data (Clandinin, 2013). Accordingly, the importance of temporality and cyclicity of the narratives was attended to throughout my encounters with the participants. Reconsiderations of the stories through the process of retelling, reliving and reconstructing, prompted reflecting on variations of personal significance and integration of new elements. In attempting to directly incorporate holistic viewpoints from people who have experience of the researched phenomena, it was vital that the interviews do not focus extensively and disproportionately on respondents' needs and overlook the strengths, ethical and spiritual dimensions of their experiences. At the end of the research encounter, respondents were invited to reflect on the most important moments of their story that felt appropriate and add anything missed and inform the subsequent analysis and focal point of the narratives. Throughout the research encounter, respondents were perceived as holders of valuable knowledge and insight. Their strengths and inspirational way of perceiving transitional circumstances were acknowledged and reaffirmed before the end of the narrative interviews.

4.10 Interpretive – Analytic Considerations to Visual Analysis

The study employed a flexible and anti-oppressive methodology based on direct contact with respondents. In collating a hybridised data analysis approach that was most suitable for the aims of this study, I aimed to steer away from theoretical rigidity and ways of working that assume unquestionable truths. I assumed a Post-modern approach (Moon and Blackman, 2014) of correlating diverse elements rather than following a purist analytical approach. This philosophical underpinning emphasised the continuous flux of being and reality, claiming that reality is incomplete and dependant on the socio historical context, individual and social interactions.

It was important that the presentation of the analysis of the individuals' voices preserved the intrinsic qualities of the data. Considerations included ways of analysing participants' narratives and artwork that does not reduce the complexity and richness of data captured through artistic exploration. The exploration of the most appropriate ways of analysing the data followed several main leads: Visual analysis, an Art-therapy and Arts based data analysis and Narrative analysis. In alignment with McNiff (2008)'s observation that it is important to design a transparent systematic and replicable analytic method that focuses on answering the research question, specific points guided the clarity and purpose of the research analysis whilst also preserving the subjective nature of the data. I will start with critically exploring each of the strands and methodological elements that are most suitable for the fulfilment of the research aims and will subsequently outline the practical implications of these approaches.

Despite the increasing popularity and appreciation of visual methods in contributing to the understanding and documentation of humanistic and social sciences phenomena (Pauwels, 2000; Collier and Collier, 1986; Pink, 2007), knowledge relating to analysing and understanding visual data has not been thoroughly investigated to date. The most comprehensive overview of methodologies applicable for analysing visual data to date has been collated by Rose (2016). Instead of relying on a single interpretative method, Rose (2016) suggests that an eclectic mix of methods contributes to a more reflexive and critical process. In this way, Rose does not limit her exploration to methodologies that directly relate to visuality but provides a bridge between a range of arts, humanities, and social sciences methodologies to discuss each approach's advantages and limitations as a visual analysis method. An excellent visual analysis, according to Rose, is a passionate engagement with the visual, where an eclectic methodological approach further emphasizes the appeal of appreciating the visual from a variety of lenses. This eclectic approach, suggested by Rose, is informed by a systematic examination of the applicability of diverse approaches to analysing visual data, including compositional interpretation, content analysis, semiotics, psychoanalysis, discourse analysis and other mixed approaches.

Since Rose's 2016 visual methodology is suggested to be most effective in analysing found and mainly photographic images, her approach overlooks the process of creating an image with art materials. In photographic approaches, participants are typically supplied with a camera and asked to investigate a theme or an issue through photographic means. During this process, the researcher is usually not present when photographs are taken, and artistic decisions are made. Conversely, the image-making process requires that the researcher be present within the

creative process when participants use the materials. Artistic decisions relating to the process of creating the image, such as function and pattern of the process of image creation, shifts and changes of initial intentions, types of materials used, facilitation of imagination, experimentation and play, could be more significant than the final outcome. Although Rose (2016) included psychoanalysis in her visual framework, her interpretation of the psychoanalytic approach primarily focused on gender issues and sexuality. This feminist perspective is useful in distinguishing social aspects of image production and dissemination. However, there are opportunities to incorporate broader knowledge derived from the use of images based on Art therapy, which take into account process relating to image production, co-creation and relational work (BAAT, 2017; AATA, 2017). This points to the potential to incorporate Art therapy knowledge in relation to creative expression and image-making. Other methodologies, such as content analysis, compositional analysis, discourse analysis, and semiotics, have also been considered within this framework. Eclectic elements from these academic fields could offer methodological hybridity that aligns with the research. However, data analysis prioritised participants' interpretative agency and the humanistic underpinning of this research in the first instance.

It was important that the data analysis method aligned with the ontology, epistemology and ethos of the research. I echo Seon-Hoy and Elloitt's (2008) assertion that recording and disseminating the research needs to be completed in a way that resonates the experiences and embodied knowledge collated through the research process. Based on the systematic use of the artistic process as a principal means of knowing_and researching experiences (McNiff, 2008), Arts-based methods were deemed appropriate for relaying sensory information, evocation and a stronger sense of presence, empathy and understanding of the other (Eisner, 2008). In agreement with Kapitan, (2011), I was mindful that attempts to find a linguistic equivalent of the artistic knowing could undermine the artistic philosophy and way of working.

Since the aim of respondents' visual exploration was to facilitate participants' individual expression and intrinsic worth without imposing aesthetic considerations or rigid application of theories, eclectic art therapy-based approach (Robbins, 1994; Rubin, 2012) in conjunction with narrative analysis approaches, was used as a theoretical knowledge base for exploring participants' image-making. Drawing on the complementary nature of art therapy theories, such a hybridised approach, according to Wadeson (1987), avoids rigidity and power imbalance of following a single approach. Such embeddedness in heterogeneous practices enabled relatedness to individual issues that deepened understanding of participants' originality

and subjective experiences. The image analysis, therefore, was primarily led by participants and their interpretations were of principal importance. Despite the richness of methodological hybridity, the theoretical knowledge base was supplementary to participants' idiosyncratic way of making sense of their artistic and narrative exploration.

Therefore, the analysis was completed in the first instance by the respondents themselves. I asked questions to help clarify the meaning and then suggested my own observations to encourage dialogue without imposing an interpretation. Participants titled some of the images. This added another dimension and clarified what respondents considered as significant focal points of their work. In this way, the Visual analysis included the content and title of the image in addition to the meaning attributed by respondents who created the image. Content analysis (Cassidy and Maule, 2011), including coding the image content, title and captions, was completed. Further to this, the images were broadly grouped according to how they reflected the main themes and issues. These included themes of belonging, identity and representation, a sense of wellbeing and visions for the future. Attempts were made to preserve the cyclicity and holistic nature of the images and accompanying narratives in presenting research puzzles.

4.11 Collating Narrative Puzzles

Since the emphasis of this study is not on ascertaining the veracity of participants' accounts and histories but on their subjective understanding and meaning-making, a more experiential approach to narrative analysis was needed. Due to the complexity of respondents' reflections, including the narrative and visual methods, the deeply personal nature of storied data was difficult to synthesize and analyse without editing out important parts that retain the coherence of the stories. In line with this study's aims, narrative analysis starting at the core of experiencing within this study focused on illuminating subjective perspectives and understanding of participants' experiences without the tendency to lean toward drawing conclusions. Therefore, from perspectives informed by Narrative Inquiry and Arts-based research, participants' narrative accounts were considered and collated as research puzzles (Clandinin, 2013), alongside visual findings and other artistic outputs founded in the context of the enquiry (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Collating these research puzzles meant that I was guided by respondents' holistic worldviews rather than closely focussing on specific themes and issues. Verbal and visual narratives were bricolaged to present participants' unique cultural and aesthetic worlds. These 'research puzzles' or 'thematic montage' (Thompson,

2000) were longer and more encompassing than most qualitative research and strict thematic classification to retain the cyclicity and wholeness of the story.

Focussing on the core of experiencing, Narrative analysis does not emphasise the content and lists of events, but how this is relayed, including the function and positionality of the narrator or what is included or excluded in their story. Additionally, attention was drawn to turning points and episodes that were more distinguished within the narratives, to incorporate considerations of the purpose of the narrative and respondents' participation within the storyline, such as the way they constructed their positionality as active agents or recipients of events that happened outside of their control, alongside considerations of how these interactions shaped their representations. In this way, the experiential narrative context that included respondents' socio-political, cultural and gendered identifications (Mishler, 1986; Reissman, 1993) illuminated the complexity of respondents' experiences of support systems, discrimination and subjugation that might have resulted in health, social, economical, educational and political inequalities.

Whilst accounts of events might have relevance in setting the scene and backgrounds, this was not prioritised for this study's aims. It was important to acknowledge that such information-based accounts might have been deemed valuable for legal and immigration purposes, leaving more subjective and nuanced knowing less appreciated. In counteracting such tendencies, the focus of this research encounter aligned more closely with experience-centred approaches, where emotive, embodied and expressive elements were illuminated. Within hybridised narrative methods, including experience-centred (Squire, 2007), social and co-constructed approaches (Georgakopoulou, 2007; Plummer, 2001), ranging from variations of focus on historical circumstances, the process of facilitating experiential understanding and the dialogical and social nature of narratives informed the narrative analysis.

This research aimed to incorporate a more holistic understanding of participants' experiences that illuminates their subjective narrative point of view and recognises sociocultural and gendered factors that have influenced the construction of narratives. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) highlight the significance of considering the interactions and connections that participants reveal in their stories, including personal and social spheres evident in participants' narratives, could indicate their relationships with their inner lives, others and the social realities that drive respondents' narratives. Further, continuity of experience refers to how past, present and future are intertwined alongside developing relationships. Finally, spatial considerations

denote the specific place of narrative construction that contextualises the story. In this way, participants' narratives constructed at times when they are waiting to hear of the trafficking claims could contribute to a greater understanding of the factors that influence their perceptions and experiences.

Marxist criticism of ideologies informed my analysis of the causes of oppression and complexities of negotiating relationships and entry into a field of knowledge and opportunities. I was mindful of the influence of micro-social factors on participants, to include low socioeconomic status and the impact of inequalities and hegemonies (Adams 2000; Chrisjohn and Young, 2006; Miller, 2000). Critical theory (Coyote and Holmes, 2006; Morrow, 20005), supported considerations of participants' narratives and also attended to how these stories relate to larger sociopolitical and cultural issues. This underpinning highlighted issues of alienation, exploitation and dehumanisation (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007), to acknowledge hierarchies of oppression, relevant to participants' position as being exploitation and objectification.

This focus on social and cultural influences that inform and shape narratives highlighted the importance of noticing how individual stories are influenced by larger Institutional, social, cultural and linguistic discourses. Specific attention to the expression of individual and collective agency through the narrative emphasised the performative aspect of storied understanding, including a focus on narrative schemes and functions, as well as highlighting the qualitative characteristics of the story (Georgakopoulou, 2007; Plummer, 2001). Given the collaborative nature of narrative constructions and tendencies to adapt according to diverse audiences, the narrators' inclinations to address imaginary addressees were noted.

For example, some participants identified themselves as active agents in a dialogical relationship that conveyed a sense of authority in their decision-making. This focus on the interaction between participants and decision-makers and identification as political actors opposing stigmatising discourses of deserving and undeserving trafficked people was illuminated in the scenes of imaginary dialogues. Drawing on the difference between individual and social underpinning of storied material, this orientation highlighted specific meaning to narrative constructions that surpassed the level of linguistic and semiotic significance. Accordingly, attention to the function of the narrative emphasised the subjective nature of the storied material, acknowledging both individual and social factors that influence narrative constructions illuminating the influence of larger social patterns on individual storied constructions.

Alongside attention to structural, content and context-centred knowledge, considerations have been extended to the role of language in facilitating cognitive, embodied or experiential expressions and connectivity. In shaping the distinctiveness of the stories, language could reveal wider denotations of constructed or reproduced societal standing that reflect narrators' subjective and social reality (Salmon, 1985; MacIntyre, 1984). Contrariwise, in contesting the privilege of textual elements within the narratives, incorporating diverse non-textual media such as visual materials and artefacts (Seale, 2004; Georgakopoulou, 2006 a,b) would facilitate respondents' accounts of their experiences in their full potential and aesthetic evocation. Thereby, contrary to the hegemonic prioritisation of linguistic data, holistic understanding of narratives incorporated non-verbal and para-verbal elements, emotional expressiveness and embodied narration that could contribute to meaning construction.

Narrative Analysis also drew attention to the compositional characteristics of the narrative, including the structure and functions of narratives. Specific attention focussed on the narrator's contribution to their own identity, voice, agency and social makeup alongside their effect on audiences. Along similar lines, the Six-Part Story Method offered a projective framework that outlines six main elements: 1) the character and setting, where the story takes place; 2) the character mission and aim, 3) the hindering aspects to achieving the mission; 4) the helpful factors; 5) the final resolution and 6) conclusion, aftermath and moral of the story (Dent-Brown, 2001; 2011). Originally a Dramatherapy assessment method used to identify individuals' self-identification, barriers and coping strategies, this simplified structure allowed emphasis on the individual meaning that shows experiential knowledge and transformation. The six parts maintained focus on subjective points of significance, as well as on the narrators' reflections, non-verbal language and broader ethnocultural narratives. In its original application, the individual draws each part of the story anew, and once each section is completed, they elaborate on and retell the full story. Within this research setting, the analysis was conducted by drawing attention to the main structural elements.

Within this analysis, it was important for the teller to identify the most important element of the story, focussing on character beliefs, action and consequences. This invitation during the Narrative interview allowed for simplifying the autobiographical material and checking for respondents' perspective and core meaning. The participatory nature of Narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Reissman and Speedy, 2007) required attention to how the research process could facilitate shared understanding with participants. Following analysis of

the narratives, findings were shared with some participants and discussion around the veracity of the narratives was facilitated.

Particularly valuable to this research was the way in which respondents could use their own expertise to evaluate helpful and hindering factors of services through non-threatening means of expression. This was closely linked to the research question. Specific focus on characterisation allowed focusing on the ways in which participants described themselves, with attention to spiritual qualities, cultural affiliation and personal resources. Narrative constructions could symbolise subjective histories (Boenisch-Brednich, 2002), align with individual tendencies to perceive self, others and the world (Freeman, 2010), and reveal relational and societal aspects. In this way, a polyphony of voices and dynamics were analysed and linked to wider socio-cultural discourses by giving importance and considering each perspective as valid. In this way, analysis aimed to locate respondents' social positioning in relation to self, others, audiences, but also the way in which imaginary audiences construct the narrator. These elements could relay participants' worldviews and important aspects of character motivation through both visual and verbal means. Specific focus on character aims and motivation is useful in synthesising meaningful elements about the storyline, movement and narrative flow. The helpful and hindering aspects present in respondents' narratives could be indicative of their sense of connectedness to self and others and the way the character positions themselves in relation to the barriers faced.

Alongside the Six-Part Story Method, Campbell's (1999) monomyth conceptualisation is particularly applicable to providing a shared archetypal framework for capturing significant moments from participants' experiential journeys. According to this framework, equivalents of the heroic journey archetype are shared within cross-cultural myths, literature, symbols and everyday reality. Within the Departure, Initiation and Return stages, Campbell traces the protagonist's venture into the unknown, encountering unprecedented barriers before returning home, having acquired a special gift, skill or talent. The current analysis, therefore, connected to the broader umbrella of themes and stages of the journey without adhering to the typical order and the traditional story arc. The journey, in this way, included events of profoundly personal significance that highlighed the protagonist's learning in comparison to earlier phases in the narrative. In this way, the myth of the hero who transgresses the boundaries of home to venture into the unknown, overcome obstacles and encounter challenges, presented as a counterpoint to more reductive narratives that examine trafficked people's more holistic experiences, rather than specific events as a function of their labour exploitation.

The metaphorical nature of the storied way of expression allowed for the classification of the experiential material in a simplified way, while retaining the emotional richness of the narratives. Following Campbell's (1999) framework, common outlines within participants' imagery and narrative constructions could trace respondents' experiential process, through i) character identification; ii) analysis of the protagonists' heroic qualities and iii) examination of the journey and meaning-making (Sanders and van Krieken, 2018). According to this framework, identifying the main archetypes within the narratives was followed by examining the protagonists' qualities or characteristics before completing an analysis of the heroic journey process through the narrator's constructions. The analysis in relation to the Heroic Quest outline could be particularly relevant due to the multi-cultural conceptualisation of the story arc pattern.

Being guided by the overlaps between the above storied approaches, a Multi-modal Analytic Framework was developed to best align with the ethos of the study. Since there isn't a distinct method of analysing narratives (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000), Narrative analysis started from transcribing the encounter, followed by reading and re-reading of the narratives whilst reflecting on interactional, temporal and situational paradigms within the texts. This incorporated identification of meaningful components including considerations of resonant non-verbal and emotive elements and characterisations within the narrative representations.

Subsequent coding against the research questions as well as broader coding reflected the full complexity of the data. It was important to stay close to respondents' core meaning (Bazeley and Kemp, 2012) and to acknowledge all parts of the data and context (Gadamer, 1975). As Polkinghorne (1995) proposes, Narrative analysis requires considerations of the author's sociocultural context, identity, what interactions with others does the protagonist have, what choices and actions thus the protagonist have, characterization and continuity of the character, structure of the narrative, beginning middle and end.

The following shared points were highlighted as particularly meaningful in informing the narrative considerations:

1. Character self-description or characterisation;
2. Setting and context;
3. Character mission or aim;
4. Helpful and hindering factors in achieving this aim;

5. Meaning-making and function of the narrative;

In terms of the thematic content of the narratives, attention focussed on:

1. The relationality of the teller to others;

2. Use of linguistic characteristics, such as metaphors, tense, grammatical person, repetition and transition as identifiers of emotional resonance or core meaning;

Attention to the narrative form focussed on:

1. Progression: whether the story ascends or descends;

2. Agency, or how the teller influences the events and their reaction to events.

These categories were used to provide structure whilst supporting the integration of diverse visual and narrative content. The data was analysed through this staged method following the main features of the narratives. This structure helped move from very subjective data to organised structured themes and subtheme identification. Participants' visual outputs were also considered alongside this to help identify the main themes and core meaning and support data interpretation.

Pelias (2004) highlights importance of writing in a heartfelt way that offers the possibility to engage creatively with experiencing in a way that could connect and facilitate a dialogical space. As evocative means of presenting participant data (Koelsch, 2015), poetry conveys a range of emotional intensity that surpasses the meaning expressed through traditional means (Eisner, 2008). Poetic language could challenge dominant ways of engaging with the world (Lego, 2007), counter hegemonic representations (Foster, 2013) and encourage creative engagement through establishing new connections

I-poems were considered particularly appropriate in reflecting participants' representations. The poetic analysis included focus on metaphors, interactions and what these might add to participants' meaning-making (Kara, 2015). The collation of I-poems focused on participants' own representations of themselves within the interviews. After carefully reading the transcripts, participants' referrences to themselves, with particular focus on I- statements within the narratives were noted (Edwards and Weller, 2012).

The main characters were created as composites from the data with attention to relations with self and other in the world, rhythmic components and breath to be included within the stanzas (Kingston, 2002). This offered the opportunity to include unusual elements and include

indiscriminate focus on all elements of the poems, such as grammar, lexicology, rhythms and specific qualities. Participants' idiosyncratic keywords and phrases were documented and used to construct stanzas. The 'I' clauses and other connected clauses were highlighted and positioned in a new line. This included participants' evocation and subjectivities, meaning-making to better understand their experiences or reveal hidden parts of the narratives that included attention to Poetic language could forms (Winterson, 1995), such as on verbal expressions, transitions and pulls, that indicated a passionate expression.

4.12 Ethical Issues

Ethical approval for the research was granted by Edge Hill University Faculty Research Committee. The study was conducted within the professional guidelines and research ethical frameworks of WHO (2003); GSCC (2010); BACP (2016); Bond (2004); The British Psychological Society (2010) to ensure the safety and well-being of the research participants.

4.12.1 Ethical Considerations during the Identification of Participants

In line with current recommendations for minimising risk (WHO, 2003) suitable participants were identified by the gatekeepers. This enabled considerations regarding participants' suitability for taking part in the research after considering the potential risk of re-traumatization. After identifying the organisations, I met with service providers to offer more detailed information about the research aims, procedure and method, introduced the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) and discussed the potential process for referral and support. Several visits to the post-trafficking support organisations offered the opportunity to develop a good relationship with the gatekeepers and collaborate with them in the participant recruitment. It was important to incorporate existing practical knowledge and established best practices of working with the participants with regards to the routines, cultural preferences and attitudes to working with the participants. In this way, the connection with staff also functioned as a cultural link and deepened my understanding of the participant group, routines and preferences established within the organisation. In addition to this, I attended several drop-in sessions over two consecutive weeks before commencing the research recruitment stage, to familiarise myself with the organisational culture and gain an understanding of the practices established within the organisation, share information about the research and answer questions. The continuous relationship with the organisation offered opportunities for the teams to better

familiarise themselves with the research approach and refer potential participants for the research.

4.12.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Identifying potential participants, at the initial stages of the research, was completed in a conversation with the organization. This enabled a discussion of potential participants' suitability for participation in this research. The referral process included considerations of the ethical issues, such as length of time since trafficking took place for each potential participant and support available, to minimise risk of harm and re-traumatization.

Only English-speaking participants aged over 18 were included in the referral process. Despite considerations of inclusivity, it was also essential to ensure that participants were in a position to exercise control and provide informed consent. As a result, exclusion criteria relating to age, 'severe mental health concerns' evidenced by the referral through the contact organisation and 'limited English language skills' were introduced to manage risk and reduce the potential harm to participants. Although the image-making sessions could surpass the requirement of linguistic competence, it was essential for participants to fully understand the research aims and procedure in order to provide informed consent.

Initial considerations included the use of an interpreter to ensure broader participant inclusivity. However, an ongoing debate (WHO, 2003) has highlighted increased risks relating to participants and interpreters. Questions regarding potential exposure to traumatic material, difficulties with guaranteeing confidentiality, risk to participants' privacy and visibility to a member of the same culture were considered. Other factors included prolonged time of data collection, alongside the relational implications with information being passed through a mediator, financial and practical difficulties. The decision was made, therefore, to exclude participants who required an interpreter.

The expected total involvement in the study for each participant depended on their choice of participation. Participants were expected to take part in an image making activity, interview, or both image making and interview, lasting for about 1-2 hours. In addition to this, respondents were invited to participate in Phase Two of the study, to revisit their experiences and comment on any changes they perceived after a passage of time. The second stage was planned with the intention to follow-up and examine any developments after stage one data collection, in order to understand how readjustment processes have evolved over the time and gain insight of how respondents have adjusted and developed new integration strategies. A separate PIS and

consent form were used for each stage of the study. Participants who took part in the first stage, were approached in 12-18 months following the first data collection event and were offered the option to participate in the second stage.

4.12.3 Consent and Confidentiality

Before starting data collection, contact with potential respondents was maintained over several weeks to discuss the research process and aims of the study with participants and offer opportunities to ask questions. This included a discussion about the purpose of the study and the methodological specificity of the research process. An overview of Narrative inquiry and arts-based research methods was also detailed during this introduction. Participants were also provided with written and verbal information regarding the research aims, procedures and potential risks. Confidentiality, consent and right to withdrawal were discussed. The Participant information sheet included information about the study, reasons why participants were invited to participate, the right to withdraw and their role in the study (Appendix 1). The information was relayed verbally, during the initial information meeting. Participants could also take a copy of the participant information sheet, read this in their own time, or share this with others, before deciding to participate. To ensure that the information was fully understood, every point within PIS was revisited, clarified, and opportunity to ask questions and more time to consider participation was offered. Contact details within the forms were shown to offer opportunities for participants to contact the researcher and ask more questions. Sufficient time of at least a week was allowed for participants to decide whether or not they wanted to participate. This aimed to ensure that the participants are in control and do not feel obliged to participate in the study.

The Participant Information Sheet (PIS) was collated following a Public Involvement consultation to ensure that PIS adequately explained what the participants would be asked to do. I approached Asylum-seeking community groups through a specialist organisation to seek feedback and ensure the inclusivity of the research methods and information-sharing. Twelve public involvement representatives engaged in this process and provided verbal feedback. This preliminary service user feedback validated that the study materials were written in an appropriately accessible language and are comprehensible to the potential participants. In addition, the design of PIS followed specialist guidance notes on the inclusion of participants who have diverse learning and linguistic skills (European Commission, 2017; HRA, 2017; Department of Health, 2010).

In particular, this information guided the assembly of the study documents to consider techniques for reducing visual distress, simplifying words, and visually emphasising text segments to make written information easier to comprehend for people with diverse learning and language skills. In this way, participants could more easily focus on the main points and understand the information in order to make an informed decision.

Participant information sheet (PIS) provided detailed and clear information to ensure participants' expectations and informed consent. PIS outlined relevant data protection, voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity and right to withdraw policies. Consent was regarded as a mutual and ongoing process (Haverkamp, 2005), and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time during the interview/image-making activity and within 30 days following their interview. Withdrawal could be completed by contacting the lead researcher (details were provided).

The research encounters were held during the organisation's drop-in sessions to enable participants to access additional support if this was needed. These encounters took place in an adjacent space that respected respondents' confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were interviewed on their own, in an adjacent room, where art materials were also brought for each session. All interviews were audio-recorded. The process of gaining consent and ensuring that the participant has the necessary language skills to fully understand the nature of the research included the initial consultation with the organization, followed by an explanation and reading through the PIS with every participant prior to the data collection. Once all issues were discussed, participants could ask questions, and take time to consider taking part or withdrawing from the research.

Facilitating a trusting atmosphere is an important factor in the research encounter. Hynes (2003) examines the issue of trust through the framework of government policies on migrant removals, deportations and repatriations which have historical, political and societal implications to generating feelings of mistrust. Despite the collaborative relationship with the post-trafficking organisation, participants were informed that this research is entirely separate from the organisation providing post-trafficking support, and therefore the delivery of services was not affected by participation in the research. It was important to specify that participation in the research does not affect participants' access through the support organisation, contacts with the therapist or immigration claim. It was highlighted that my role as a researcher was independent of the service and participation is voluntary and has no implication on

respondents' involvement with the organisation. I clarified that I wasn't a member of staff and that I did not have any legal powers, such as influences over respondents' immigration status at the organisation and that my role was independent. This information was highlighted during the initial information-sharing meeting with the participant, and confirmed in writing within PIS. It was important for participants to understand that the study and the post-trafficking services are entirely independent and that their participation would have no bearing on their current or future contact with the service.

It is important to note that informed consent requires participants to fully understand what the research will involve. Although some authors have commented on the therapeutic value of processing and sharing personal narratives within the research (Birch and Miller 2000; Abrams 2014), creating a comfortable and safe space could lead to participants disclosing information that might later be considered too personal or inappropriate. It is also possible that in the process of the interview, new information emerges within the participants' awareness that might have implications on the participant's privacy (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2018). Participants were informed that they could request for some or all of the data to be withdrawn.

Respondents were made aware that all collected data will be kept confidential. Participants were also informed that they do not have to give their name, hometown or village, or their true nationality. Codes were used to link the notes with the respondent and those were kept separately from the file notes. Where sound recording devices are used, no names but identifying codes were used. The audio recorded files were encrypted, password protected and destroyed after transcription. The transcripts were anonymized and identifying information was be removed. The analysis was undertaken on password protected personal laptop computer. Participants' names were anonymized, and pseudonyms were used to protect client confidentiality. The participants were also aware that I had no access to their records, immigration case notes and history. Pseudonyms were used to protect participants' confidentiality. Reference to participants' personal characteristics and identifiers, such as age, religious belief and nationality, have also been omitted. Likewise, the name and details of the support organisations have also been anonymised with a view to participants' privacy and confidentiality. Electronic data was stored within encrypted files on password protected computer. Paper data was scanned and stored electronically. Participants' images were also anonymised, and all identifying details have been obscured.

4.12.4 Protection from Risk, Harm and Distress

Protection from risk and harm was at the forefront of the research. Only participants who have left the trafficking situation were invited to take part in the study. Prior to the interview, participants were asked not to divulge information containing names, addresses or details of themselves and /or anybody else. Respondents were also offered the option to not disclose their real names and any other identity characteristics. As the primary aim of the study was to explore the lived realities of individuals after exiting the trafficking situation, participants were not asked direct questions relating to their trafficking experiences to minimise the potential risk of re-traumatising. Nevertheless, some participants felt that to contextualise their narratives, they needed to revisit their trafficking experiences. This decision was left to respondents' own sense of judgement and control of the research process. It was however important that trafficking was not imposed as a primary event that informed participants' identity and sense of self. Studies have warned against identifying participants through the lens of their perceived vulnerability (Powell and Smith 2009) due to the risk of disempowering participants. Accordingly, most participants expressed the need to position themselves as independent individuals who had histories, life experiences, and visions for the future that were not shaped by their trafficking experiences. This self-identification was respected and continuously applied in my references to participants throughout this research.

Before data collection, the participants were informed that the questions asked during the interview will not focus on their traumatic experiences. In addition to this, the interviews were conducted at times when many of the support workers were available for on-site support to respond to participants' distress. There were two to four staff members on-site whenever the interviews took place so that the participants could access additional support if this was needed. Participants were also offered a break and the assurance that they could terminate the interview at any time. In approaching the interview space with sensitivity and care (Field, 2006; Pascol Leahy, 2021), the stance adopted was to be vigilant for signs of participant distress. If this occurs, the interview will be paused, offering the participant enough time to recover, asking for permission to continue, postponing or cancelling the interview. Following the research encounter, an opportunity for a debriefing period was offered to all participants. Within this reflexive and transitional space, the participants could engage in meta-processing and indicate any emotional residences following the interviews. A list of local health and social wellbeing services where participants could be referred to for future support was also prepared.

In agreement with Kvale (2006), I tried to step away from a technical and instrumentalized approach to the interview that objectifies human interaction and focuses on obtaining data. Alongside attempts to facilitate a dialogical space, it was important to recognise that power inequalities exist within the research environment with the researcher exercising choices concerning data analysis, presentation and dissemination. The semi structured format of the narrative interview aimed to offer opportunities for co-creation and participant-led responses. The interviews were facilitated in a way that encouraged participants to take an active role in informing the direction and themes discussed. This also aligned with emancipatory and transformative aims and standpoint with specific attention to power distribution (Harnesk and Isgren, 2021). In alignment with good practise (Madill and Sullivan, 2018), a preliminary analysis of the findings was shared within a follow-up stage with some respondents, to gain feedback and suggestions of how this might align with what they intended to say, and whether the presented analysis of the findings is congruent with what participants invested in this.

The use of artistic media offered the potential to diffuse the intensity of the interview and draw the focus outside of an individual to a third neutral space. This afforded the opportunity for participants to convey a message in a more cryptic and protected form. In this way, the use of image-making and metaphors as a form of non-verbal expression offered an alternative communication option to participants and additional protection in events where they did not wish to disclose their circumstances. This provided an added sense of safety, reduced power imbalance and allowed participants to narrate at the depth and level of disclosure they felt comfortable with. Additionally, an image or an abstract third form aided the discussion and contributed to facilitating a relational and creative atmosphere.

To mitigate image-related risks, a separate Image Release form ensured that participants had full control over their decision to share their images. Respondents specified how they wanted to share each of their images. For example, they could decide that some of the images could be used in all domains of the study (such as in the analysis, publications and exhibitions) while other images might be used only for the analysis of the study. Participants were re-assured that they did not have to have technical artistic skills to participate in the study. However, some basic use of materials were demonstrated to prevent participants' disappointment in the event of producing an image which was remotely different to what they originally intended to do.

Further preventive measures ensured participants' safety and protection from risk, harm or distress. Accordingly, selecting a sample of participants who are registered with a support

organization was designed to add a level of protection and ensure participants' and researchers' safety and well-being (WHO, 2003). For example, this ensured that the interviews took place at a familiar and safe location, within the post-trafficking support centres where participants had established rapport with service providers and were receiving continuous weekly support and services. Moreover, cooperation with post-trafficking service providers aimed to ensure participants' safeguarding and minimised the potential to become distressed during the interview or image-making. Therefore, participants with a recent history of attempted harm to themselves, or those who had just left a trafficking situation, were not included in the study to minimise potential distress.

Bahn and Weatherill (2013) reflect on the likelihood of adverse emotional impact for researchers when interviewing participants who have experienced distressing circumstances. Practical considerations included use of clinical supervision, ensuring that mobile phone call system was in place, and reflexive knowledge originating from prior experience of working with the participant population. My professional training and practice in Psychology, Art therapy, Counselling and Social work allowed me access to knowledge of how to respond to potential occurrences of participant distress appropriately. My prior professional experience included working in crisis where issues of distress and discomfort are often faced. This experience includes work in women's centres, rape crisis centre, front line child protection, offender management services, secure units and refugee support. This knowledge had informed my professional judgement and practical skills in facilitating a safe space and reducing risk to participants.

By offering a non-judgemental attitude, positive regard, and empathic understanding, a sensitive listening approach was conveyed to the participants. I was also prepared to make a referral in the event of participants becoming unduly troubled or choosing to disclose sensitive issues. In practice, this was not required as participants were already in contact with support organizations, and many of them were in receipt of Counselling services. However, information about additional services was provided to participants upon request. At the end of each interview and image-making session, I offered a debriefing period and additional support. Support workers were also available at the time of the research encounters and respond to participants' distress if this was deemed appropriate and needed.

Although largely assumed that support organisations would have facilitated a positive relationship with respondents, this was not always evident. During the research process, I

noticed that relationships between participants and organisations could, at times, exhibit tension. This was due to a conflict of interests where the receipt of Government funding may have influenced the organisation’s tendency to prioritise the state's interests versus those of the trafficked people. More reflexivity would be needed in the future as to how potential tension between respondents and the organisation could influence the research atmosphere and inclusivity.

4.12.5 Ethical considerations in relation to the Creative Engagement

The creative methodology contributed to the active engagement and sustained interest in the research on behalf of both participants and gatekeepers. The aesthetical and engaging aspects of the creative process, owing to the relational nature of arts-based methodologies, added innovative dynamics to the exploratory process and contributed to supporting participation.

The research encounters took place within the existing drop-in sessions of the organisations, which were held every week. Facilitating a safe space has been deemed to enable necessary conditions for an environment where participants would feel comfortable creating and engaging in a meaningful process (D’Amico et al., 2016). Therefore, establishing a safe space for reflection and meaning-making (Foster-Fishman et al., 2005; Sonn, Quayle and Kasat, 2015; Eagle, 1998; White, 2004; Perren, 2004; McLoughlin, 2010), where participants could create and relay their narratives, was of paramount importance for this study. A number of theoreticians have highlighted the symbolic function of the space as a container (Killick, 2011; Case and Dalley, 2014; Edwards, 2014), highlighting the significance of ensuring an orderly and predictable creative space. This indicated that in a more practical sense, it would be useful if the creative space could offer the potential to contain free expression by ensuring that the space is inviting, confidential, and ideally equipped with hard, washable surfaces (Rubin, 2005; Hogan, 2014). These considerations helped underpin the facilitation of creative space for the research activities.

In attempting to facilitate a creative research atmosphere, it was important to consider how the research methods were presented to respondents. Particular considerations were extended to the way in which the terms ‘art’ and ‘art-making’ might suggest a requirement for artistic aptitude and exclude respondents. Conversely, the term ‘image making’ refers to a range of creative activities, including simple mark-making and the use of art materials, to the creation of images, artefacts and abstract art through drawing, painting, pouring or modelling (Case and Dalley, 2014; Edwards, 2014; Moon, 2002; Malchiodi, 2011). Therefore, a broader formulation

of the creative activities as ‘image making’ and ‘use of materials’ has been adopted throughout the study, in an attempt to facilitate inclusivity of the use of diverse media as well as to differentiate from the aesthetic aims of the creative activity which might be associated with ‘art’ and ‘drawing’. In this way, an invitation to participants to use the materials was designed to dissociate from expectations to produce an aesthetically pleasing outcome.

Further considerations included the type and range of the materials provided as part of this research and how this could relate to issues of inclusion, participation and agency. In view of Theron et al.’s (2011) suggestion that providing a known and comfortable media of expression could help reduce power imbalance, familiar and mundane materials, such as pencils, pens and paper, were offered to participants. Alongside this, it was essential to consider the counterproductive associations that some participants might have with directive activities suitable for very young children (Johnson, Pfister and Vindrola-Padros, 2012). For that reason, during the image making activity, participants were provided with a range of artistic media, containing materials that require more control, such as pencils, crayons, paintbrushes and scissors, sculpting materials such as clay and cardboard and liquid forms of materials such as acrylic paints and inks. The choice of materials and resources aimed to facilitate conditions for inclusivity and allowed participants in shaping the research design and methodology. For example, participants were provided with materials and were invited to identify additional materials they would like to use. Respondents suggested the inclusion of supplemental materials, such as fabrics, glass and different-sized paper. This facilitated a dialogical space and participants’ preferred way of communicating, which aligned with the creative and anti-oppressive ethos of the research.

Although the therapeutic use of images is well documented (i.e. Case and Dalley, 2014; Edwards, 2004), attention has also been drawn to the potential for arts-based risk (Sondford, 2007; Springham, 2008). Accordingly, Springham (2008) comments on three elements of working with arts-based interventions that could potentially harm: client vulnerability, inappropriately selected task and an intense, emotionally charged personal link between the art and participant material. Springham (2008) refers to a case where an individual who has had a history of diminished impulse control was asked to portray an emotionally charged and personally significant image and was later encouraged to address the image, a practice which resulted in physical and emotional damage to the individual. Springham (2008) suggests that agencies work together to complete an assessment before engaging in relational work to

eliminate the risk of client vulnerability. This risk was mitigated by a collaborative approach with the support organisations to ensure the safeguarding of participants.

Further, Springham (2008) urges careful consideration of the choice of theme, avoiding negativity, splitting and absolutizing themes into good and evil. It was fundamental that participants felt in control, and interventions that could take the participant beyond their tolerance threshold were avoided. Accordingly, risks were mitigated by offering an open approach of undirected image-making activity as opposed to task-based themed exploration to reconsolidate respondents' decisions of what they wished to focus on. This would have been more difficult if offering a specific theme due to the risk that seemingly neutral concepts could carry emotional weight and distress participants. Further, discussions were held about the image, but entering into a dialogue with the image was avoided as this was likely to intensify the experience and could invite the perception of the realness of the image. Participants understood that they could withdraw from the research at any time and that this would have no repercussions for them.

Another ethical issue was concerned with questions of ownership, relating to both the images and narratives. Participants retained ownership of their stories and images. The use of these images and stories has been agreed upon by participants. It was discussed that although both narratives and imagery will be included in the research, respondents could do whatever they wished with both their creative inputs. Ethical issues have been considered concerning narrative interpretation and presentation, as well as decision-making in relation to the narrative and image-based data. Despite the difficulties with repeated access to participants, draft copies of findings chapters have been shared with a small number of participants to engage in a dialogue, clarify the narratives, suggest changes and edit their accounts. This allowed incorporating of multiple perspectives, interpretations and reflexivity that encouraged openness to variability over time.

4.13 Summary

This chapter explored the application of narrative inquiry and arts-based research in relation to this study's aims. I discussed the practical aspects of narrative inquiry and arts-based research and how this consideration supported collating a hybridised approach that most suited this study's aims. Since this research focused on understanding subjective worldviews and how participants made sense of their perspectives and experiences through their narratives and artwork, the purpose of this study was not only to present respondents' stories but to gain a unique aspect of narrators' idiosyncratic point of view that relates to the experiences and interactions with others and the environment. In this way, embodied engagement in this study aimed to facilitate a better understanding of respondents' sense of self and experiences, alongside how they make sense of these interactions through their creative representations. In other words, the research encounter did not serve data collection purposes only but aimed to facilitate a reflexive ethical space that could afford a sense of connection between narrators' intrinsic meaning-making, circumstances and their interpretation. These methods enabled a relational research encounter, where participants shared narratives and reflected on moments of significance that linked with their meaning-making and identity transformation. Drawing on Narrative Inquiry and Arts-based research perspectives, the next chapter will present participants' own meaning-making and representations in their own words and aesthetic evocation.

5

Trafficking Representations, Identities and Heroic Journeys

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines trafficking representations and identities, as expressed by the research participants themselves. Respondents' imagery and narrative constructions will be examined following Campbell's (1999) Heroic journey quest outline. Images and accounts from this research invite the readers to enter the participants' realm and inform understanding of their reality without sensationalising or othering tendencies. By means of offering the prospect for readers to gain a close sight of diverse backgrounds, characters, plot and narrative points of view, these expressions of thoughts and feelings, are presented in the participants' own words and images. In doing so, this chapter is an invitation to engage with the themes and issues via respondents' language, experiences of transformative events, daily realities and ontologies as understood and interpreted by them. Through analysis of both visual and narrative data, I argue that participants' representations of themselves include relational and distinctive characteristics, as well as identity markers that have not been directly informed by trafficking. It is important to note that respondents' narratives and artwork aligned to the mythic Heroic Journey process, which is featured routinely in their accounts. In this way, the monomyth structure was referred to as a flexible and open to interpretation pattern, rather than a fixed and defined construction. This analysis, through the heroic journey pattern, is important in challenging dominant antitrafficking perspectives that depict trafficked people as passive

victims in need of rescuing. In this way, reconceptualising this narrative by trafficked people themselves, in their own emotive words and images, challenges widely accepted concepts of inherent vulnerability, absence of agency and trauma-coerced bonding that frequently characterise professional trafficking discourses. Building upon the theme of agency, which will be further developed throughout this thesis, I will highlight participants' sources of strength, creativity and resilience alongside areas of difficulties evident in their accounts of everyday routines and practices.

In attempting to convey the complexity of representations, participants' artistic profiles presented in the form of 'I' poems will be illuminated within this chapter. These synthesised poetic narrations revealed respondents' first-person perspectives and helped enhance understanding of individuals' idiosyncrasy and narrative points of view. This allowed immediacy in experiencing participants' own voices and aesthetic inclinations constructed from the research narratives that incorporated direct engagement, tentative knowledge, fragmentary narratives and subjectivity. The chapter will continue by introducing the context followed by respondents' representations in their own words and aesthetic exploration. A discussion section within this unified chapter will juxtapose separate voices into the broader umbrella theme of trafficking representations before uniting all themes within a summary section. Respect for cyclical narrative rhythm and polyglossia will set a tone for presenting these collations of diverse subjectivities, meaning-making and socio-political positions.

5.2 Trafficking Identities and Representations

Trafficked people's representations within the visual and arts-based fields emphasise themes of victimisation, powerlessness and compliance, expressed through visual language and slavery-induced aesthetics (Farrell and Fahy, 2019; Baker, 2013). In general, trafficked women's physical representations tend to signify depersonalised body parts and objectified relationality, whilst trafficked men's identities seem obscured and completely missing from the dissemination of trafficking issues (Krsmanovic, 2016; Anderson and Andrijasevic, 2008). Commoditised or trauma-based depictions could risk reducing the complexities of individuals' intrinsic sense of self and diminish identifications that might not be informed by labour and exploitation. On the other hand, scholars (De Angelis, 2016) discussed how tendencies to broadcast sensationalised trafficking cases in the public domain might take away from more complex issues. For example, examinations of human trafficking as a function of neoliberal

values that prioritise profit and govern everyday living (O'Brien, 2018; Cleason, Baker and Maynard, 2018) have added more humanising and sympathetic conceptualisations of trafficking aetiologies that recognise the ways in which profit-led values and industrial benefits of low-cost labour, have tended to objectify and widely normalise migrant exploitation. This chapter, therefore, builds on these critiques in an effort to juxtapose multiple discourses and set the background for respondents' self-identifications.

5.2.1 Figurative representations: Official Selves and Everyday Selves

In articulating their identities and personal meaning-making, participants related to their existential beliefs and embodied representations. Respondents' figurative depictions of their sense of self often reflected gendered, socio-cultural and relational aspects of their identities. In this way, a number of participants' self-images were represented through powerful and authoritative visual signifiers of their heritage and idiosyncrasies (Fig. 1-3). Embodied identity markers included ethnic phenotype characteristics and culturally-specific headpieces and decorative elements that celebrated participants' diverse appearances and awareness of their distinctiveness. Several portrait images, in this way, depicted respondents wearing official attire as if being dressed up for social, religious or culturally significant occasions. These official' representational selves were often highlighted by participants as signifiers of symbolic and ancestral heritage from which they appeared to draw strength.

Figure 1

Figure 2

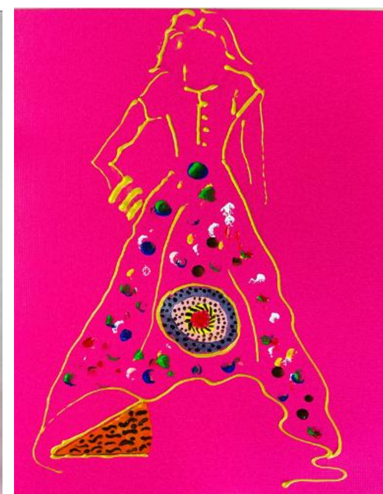

Figure 3

Alongside figurative representations of the 'official' self, routines and mundane activities, reflecting the 'ordinary' self in the world, showed everyday spaces and relationships with

others. Accordingly, interactions, apparent in the mundane and ordinary self-presentation, showed connectedness to the collective and common spheres of respondents' reality (Fig. 4;5).

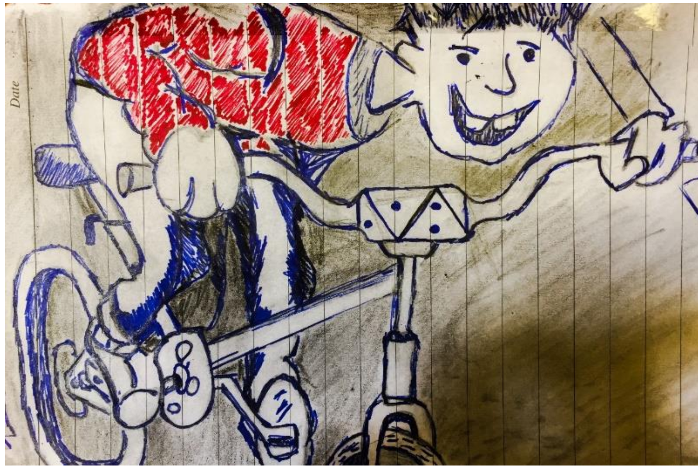

Figure 4

Figure 5

The habitual sphere, in this way, illuminated activities that individuals usually do on a daily basis. Respondents recalled habits, such as exercising, activities, attending group work and educational programs, and recreational activities such as watching TV and spending time with friends. Within these everyday habitual spheres, respondents did not represent themselves as victims of their mundane activities and everyday life. Instead, these seemingly insignificant everyday routines evidenced the ways in which respondents generated cultural elements in the field of their daily customs and experiences:

> ***Makeba:*** *My home is my safe place; I love my home. Wherever I go, I can't wait to finish and come back to peace and quiet. Sometimes when a friend asks me, where are you going? I say I'm busy. But I might not be busy; I just want to go home. In the morning, when I wake up, I make up my mind what to do, where to go. But if something comes in the middle, I decide whether it's important or not. And I need my cup of tea when I come home. I have to sit down; no matter how hot it is or what, I need my cup of tea.*
>
> ***Iosif:*** *I go to the Polish shop every day; I buy food. It's half an hour walking. I buy sausages, bread, fish. I can cook for everyone, no problem. I usually cook for at least four people. I have done a lot of cooking, you know. Sausages, mince, potatoes. I see what is in the fridge and put it all together. Cooperation with everyone.*

These excerpts highlight the everyday body in the comfortable space of the home and familiar environment. Routine activities that evoke everyday lived experiences underline the importance of simple things, such as having the comfort of home, buying food and cooking

with others. From the privacy of their own homes, respondents represent their real selves as community members who follow an everyday structure that affords a perspective of respondents' way of living away from others' looks. Routines within daily living, in this way, appeared to provide rest and recovery and contributed to the continuation of self through reconsolidating known habits and traditions.

5.2.2 Social representations: Relational selves

Alongside themes of everydayness, visual diversity and pride for participants' heritage, explorations of relational and communal selves highlighted how, for some participants, relationships with others were at the core of their sense of self and representation. Familial ties and respondents' relatedness to community members were narratively positioned as underpinning their identity representations. Visual and textual narratives referred to essential connections to family members, parental figures and pets, linking to respondents' sense of belonging and identification. In this way, participants expressed a sense of identity that did not relate to trafficking. Instead, they chose to represent themselves through their relatedness to others, such as being mothers, aunties, nieces and nephews, children and grandchildren. Significant others were called upon to engage in a dialogue, seek guidance or reinstate a sense of connectedness to familial and ancestral roots. The image of the parental figure, as a source of wisdom, protection and nurturing, revealed a significant emotive sphere, evident in Usha's poem and image:

Usha: *I live on Wellton Avenue:*
It's peaceful and cosy,
Fresh linen waves of the washing line;
The smiles of four neighbouring ladies
Enhance our collective habitat.
My mirror, given to me by a dear friend
Catches the light from the window
Every morning.
Like the name of my husband,
This will be with me till the end of my days.
I look forward to Ramadan
when we share biryani and draw lines with henna.
We say, "Peace be on you", on Eid day.

Figure 6

That means, "Hello."

From the seaside and sunshine far away from here

Where I used to climb trees, go fishing

And watch TV with my grandfather.

And the days were full of

Little treasure things,

Sugarcane and rivers:

Very, very, very

Hot and bright.

Like inside a person's heart.

Within the above excerpt, Usha recalled significant memories of her growing up, reflected in her current positionality in the host environment. Links with childhood memories,material and spiritual elements appeared to have formed syntagmatic complexity of spaces that frame identity as woven into nurturing spheres that signified the relationship between mundane practices and other social categories. Approximately a third of her image (Fig.6) is occupied by organic material, which could point to groundedness but also openness and expansion in space where the land, water, and sky elements merge in a harmonious attunement. Usha constructed the figure of the grandfather as a backbone and a source of support. Both figures face the same direction, positioned in parallel, appearing as though standing on a pedestal. It is significant to note that this poem and image formed a conclusion of Usha's more extended narrative in outlining the most emotive highlights of her sense of self and belonging. Through the symbolic territory of individual, relational and spatial aspects, inductive to play and growth epitomised within themes of containment and joy, the nostalgic identification to spatial and relational elements of the past indicates an abundance of natural resources, cohesiveness and alignment in space. This connection between social and spatial self-categorisation is shown in Hadija's poem that illustrates her identity construction in relation to the memory of her ancestral home:

Figure 7

Hadija: *The smell of food*

on a hot summer day

Slowly tiptoes in

To wake me up

Then blossoms like a flower.

I look at my reflection in the mirror:

My mum's love and peace

Looking back at me.

This narrative puzzle positions cultural food and the notions of the maternal figure as a blueprint of a fundamentally socio-cultural understanding of identity that is embedded in a relationship with social and spatial elements. The cooked food incorporates a sensory dimension of the home, and ideal notions of the childhood memories, narrating particular moral qualities of the specific environment. The image of the mother in space is constructed as a locus of self-categorisation, where Hadija defines herself with affirmation, warmth and physicality that is located in the ancestral and embedded in her ethnocultural background. The aesthetics realm is linked to the maternal figure and 'shared knowledge' passed on from the previous generation. Embedded within this understanding is the concept of Hadija's socio-cultural identity as heterogeneous and multi-faceted. Within the complexities of her ethnocultural upbringing, practices and relational ties that were supported in Hadija's home country, constructed her lifeworld through multiple factors that are integral to her identity. These connections highlight the multiplicity of identities, memories and voices that that are collated within respondents' diverse identities.

Alongside locating familial ties as a source of strength, other participants' self-representations related to their occupational roles in the past or their career aspirations for the future. For example, some male participants constructed their sense of identity through meaning derived from occupation and fulfilment of expected social responsibility. In this way, interactions between self, identity and occupation, emphasised meaning-making that also indicated connections to the communal.

Marko: *I find peace when I'm lifting*

No company,

No music,

Just weights.

I don't need anything else.

I used to be a coach before,

Went to the sports academy,

I can give good advice.

You need to have a strong spirit

To build a strong body.

I don't want to sit and wait.

This excerpt shows that exercising labour-power is impactful and brings about individual and social change. Along these lines, the self shaped by the process of labour and personal work history was formulated in an attempt to reconstruct a sense of continuity that was invested with meaning. This excerpt, in this way, exemplifies how labour provides connectivity to former occupational engagement and to others. Conceptualised as closely related to how the individual ideally sees themselves, occupational identity was constructed as not only related to economic production but providing meaning-making, occupational identity and participation in social and occupational spheres.

Alongside labour self-identification, relationships with children, wider family members and communities, occupied a central role in respondents' views of themselves. References to obligations to provide for and support family members were often embedded in respondents' sense of belonging within the realms of their families. This active commitment and responsibility to serve familial needs were further evidenced in participants' commitment to send remittances home, improve the living standards and support the households' sustenance.

> ***Zaynab:*** *I don't have any family here. My sister's children are back home, and I do all I can to help them. I live for them only. When I get money, I always sent it to them. I just like to see them happy. My sister's children say auntie sent us this. It makes me happy. If somebody doesn't have something, I like to help. Even now, my friend said, can you help me do the shopping for me? So I can help.*
>
> ***Yetunde:*** *When I lived back home, a relative paid for me to attend school and get education. She wasn't a close relative, and I didn't know her that much. She didn't even have a bank account, but she paid my school fees. She worked at a hotel near the school, and I've seen girls going there doing prostitution. So, I thought, if somebody paid my way to school, paid so much money, and I didn't really know her, I must give back to society, in the same way, one day. So, that's what I do. If I have any money, I send it home, and this gives my family a lot of joy and a sense of future.*

A sense of authority and pride was relayed in these narratives, referring to respondents' transnational family ties. This indicated a level of relational and economic agency evidenced in participants' constructions of self as playing a critical role in building the foundations of their familial sense of authority. In this way, sending remittances home indicated some respondents' place and responsibility within their home countries' familial networks. The narratives highlight the impact that this support might have had on families and households in offering the potential for education and growth. The importance of this support is not only economical but emotional, life-affirming and sustaining social networks with the extended families. In this way, some respondents represented themselves as caring family members and pillars of the family foundations offering valuable support and goodwill to the family and community.

5.2.3 Pancosmic Selves: Common Identities Relating to Nature

Alongside figurative expressions that communicate an awareness of distinct self-representation, symbols and metaphors that highlight common elements were relayed through respondents' visual and narrative accounts. In particular, the tree of life as a symbol of self that connects identity representations to the natural environment was presented by many participants. Participants often used the intrinsic qualities and characteristics of the tree as a symbolic representation of their own qualities. For example, having strong roots was at times linked to awareness of own heritage, being in touch with instinctual knowledge, and the ability to draw nutrients and nurture self. Similarly, a strong tree trunk growing upwards was associated with resilience and strength to withstand environmental adversities.

Figure 8

In this way, the symbol of the tree tended to link some respondents' identity representations to metacosmic qualities, illuminating connexions to macrocosms and transcendent fields. Such constructions of self as being part of nature by recognising the intrinsic rhythms and regenerative properties of the tree were also evident in Behati's visual exploration. By developing the theme of changing seasons (Fig. 8), Behati linked the tree's transient properties and recurrent circumstances, noting that: 'The tree is still a tree, even without leaves'. Adding

to this symbolic interpretation, Behati reflected that although current times of uncertainties could evoke difficult feelings, this does not take away from her natural strength and character. In sharing her reflexive process following the image-making, Behati noted that 'a lot of things could be missing from my life, but I'm still a strong person.' This analysis highlights Behati's understanding of the transient and temporal nature of vulnerabilities that are intrinsic to life and the natural. In other words, Behati's conceptualisation shows that although difficulties are interweaved within her sense of self, these circumstances do not take away from her intrinsic ways of being and potential. This could be understood as a connective link that highlights shared components and identification between the self and environmental elements. Understanding of representations from this perspective suggest an organic connection and interaction with the physical or imagined environment.

Figure 9

The universal symbol, in this way, connects intercultural meaning and natural elements that are common and are based on connotations that unite interconnected elements that symbolise rootedness and connectivity through the branches, alongside strength and potential for growth. This metaphor of vitality was echoed within Meera's visual representation (Fig.9), where the depth of the tree roots appeared to be almost symmetrical to the treetop. This, according to Meera, contributed to a sense of resilience and the ability to withstand pressure and environmental barriers. Meera further noted the "magical qualities" of this tree and its ability to transform and shift appearance according to the observer's point of view. This property was visually facilitated by Meera's use of graphite on black paper, which appeared to change according to light and observational angle. These transient qualities, roots and aerial torsos, seemed to indicate elements that are hidden and multi-layered. This was further developed by Meera's reference to her having a transient life and being able to offer herself flexibility in adjusting to and adapting to circumstances outside of her control. Further links illustrating connectivity to nature that link both common and individual qualities as a symbol of growth and a container of self are present in Laila's poem:

Figure 10

Laila: *To be in harmony with Nature is*

Diving in the deep blues and golden sands,

Resting in the peaceful green

Then rising to the mountain tops -

A sacred refuge,

Just like the garden I left behind.

"Your lemon trees are blossoming", my father said.

Their scent is dancing in the air.

Figure 20

Set against the backdrop of the natural environment, this poem and image (Fig. 10) illustrate the natural as a locus of rehabilitation and a mirror of self. Identification with nature, in this way, indicated acknowledgement for participating in universal living that provided a reassurance that similarity to a sense of strength and rhythm in nature, temporary ailments could be sustained. The compositional movement from the base to the top and outwards indicates growth and expansion within the rich symbolic content of the clay imagery.

Respondents' self-representation through visual and narrative means reflected aspects of their identity, including sociocultural, relational and idiosyncratic characteristics that are not informed by trafficking. Participants' effort to represent a more authoritative and dignified outlook through representations of the 'official' body' could be attributed to counteracting negative perception existing in the public domain. Conversely, every day and habitual spheres related to the extent to which respondents felt able to participate in collective and mundane activities. Overall, these identifications included identities informed by histories that accumulated a sense of belonging, rather than trafficking-centred vulnerable selves. This suggests that participants' representations reflect multiple relationalities to self, others and the environment, that are personal, diverse and multifaceted.

The ordinary self in daily activities was represented through established routines and practices. Everyday routine stories illuminated respondents' private spheres of culture and hobbies, as well as their connections to others. Physical appearance characteristics apparent within respondents' imagery showed rooted in ancestral heritage diverse physicality of the body marking tendencies to counteract dominant notions of trafficking. Respondents presented as social actors fulfilling a particular role. References to identification informed by the membership of specific social groups occupational roles revealed representations aimed to

connect to meaningful labour roles, closely linked to self and others. It was also not uncommon for participants to feel responsible for supporting their families or elderly parents back home. These self-representations of proud and respectful individuals, embedded in ancestral heritage, could be indicative of respondents' attempts to counteract dominant trafficking discourses that represent them as vulnerable and lacking agency victims of coercion. Through the lens of manifold connections expressed by participants, visual and narrative identifications appeared to reflect deeply personal resonances and experiences.

5.3 Heroic Characteristics and Qualities

Participants' journey was often expressed through the art materials as a brave, heroic venture into the unknown. Recurrent within the images are fundamental archetypal themes, consistent within the umbrella of the 'Hero on a journey' motif. Visual signifiers and metaphors such as paths, roads and vehicles, related to movement and potential for transition and transgression. References to standing on crossroads of past, the present and the future prompted revisiting historical journeys and exploring questions of future directions and search for meaning. The protagonist is often constructed as overcoming barriers, climbing stairs, mountains, sand dunes and undertaking journeys through aerial trajectories, parklands, bridges and open seas. When referring to their life journeys narratives, participants outlined hindrance factors that tended to be positioned outside of their sense of control. Among other risk factors, 'Home office' often featured as a significant obstacle that inhibited respondents' planning for the future.

Figure 11

Figure 12

Protective factors were often attributed to elements outside of participants' control. Often, environmental conditions, such as the sun, the moon, a favourable wind or current, were expected to bring about more favourable circumstances that enable envisioned future plans. These helpful elements, often depicted as light sources, were in general not specific or identifiable in nature. There was also no clear vision of how these facilitative conditions were going to support future progress. This absence or unpredictability of external helpful elements highlights the personal nature of the heroic journeys. This could indicate that path-making in the process of encountering the unknown was largely determined by the protagonists' inner qualities and resources.

The role of the helper was often not mentioned or was completely missing from these narratives and visual explorations. A sense of aloneness in the participant's journey of overcoming obstacles was often present in the scenes of struggles. This wish for separateness from others was relayed as an attempt to prevent the adverse effect of uncertainties and exposure to undesirable elements on others. For example, Fatemah's image, titled 'A Waiting Boat', reflected a potential to "swim in the open sea" when new opportunities emerge for her in the future. According to her, her "boat" is ready to go, but at this time, there is no captain or a sense of direction. Fatemah clarified that there are no passengers on the boat as the journey is unsafe and she doesn't want to put other's wellbeing in danger. She expressed her wish to include others on this journey when the time is such that she has a stronger sense of direction and predictability. According to Fatemah, the boat is currently stuck in the sand but clearly has the capacity to swim. A sense of optimism is instilled in the potentiality of the open sea and respondent's hidden ability to operate the boat. Echoing previous conceptualisations of the individual nature of the heroic quest, these narrative and visual constructions suggest a sense of responsibility towards other potential companions, expressed in the wish to sacrifice own needs to reduce harm to others. This points to a well-defined ethical stance and awareness of the choice exercised within this metaphorical example.

Figure 13

Alongside this sense of aloneness, many accounts positioned the narrative here as connected to others who might be experiencing similar disadvantage. In this way, normalisation of emotional distress, aided by links with other individuals and communities, featured as a helpful factor in some respondents' narratives. For example, Fig. 14 shows Reem's image, described by herself as "A Person Who Thinks", adding that this is an image of herself when she is not well and doing what she referred to as "bad thinking". The figurative image portrays a person sitting in a curved position, appearing to be protecting themselves from danger or as if wishing to retrieve from their surroundings. According to Reem, this person feels as though they carry a 'big burden', adding that such experiences are very common for people who are undergoing trafficking identification. Reem noted that she makes an effort to leave her surroundings and find a sense of sharedness and normalisation within the community or groups, further reflecting on how connecting to others helped her re-create a supportive organic environment that imbued her with a sense of belonging and meaning. She described how relatedness to others afforded her a sense of purpose and helped her to counteract other experiences 'from the outside', which she described as 'negative'. Being with another, from this perspective, was perceived as facilitating a containing function that could protect from outside intrusion and external adversities. This highlights the significance of relationality, which also helps Reem's embeddedness and sense of belonging and underpins her to re-formulate some of her experiences as natural occurrences that are common amongst group members. In distinguishing between 'inside' and 'outside', identification with the common and the communal related to the protective and containing function of the whole.

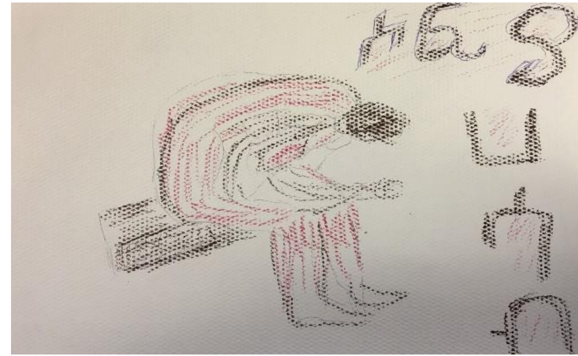

Figure 14

This conceptualisation is important in understanding some respondents' tendencies to deflect from the specific and unusual nature of individual circumstances and focus on the construction of emotional distress as a regular experience that is shared with others. Reem's reflection in this way acknowledged the impact of difficulties that individuals face during transitional experiences. Instead of employing a trauma-based causality to her emotional distress, Reem drew on common characteristics of humanity that unite, rather than separate, to recognise the impact of complex difficulties on her emotional wellbeing. In her understanding of emotional

distress in this way, Reem encouraged normalisation and connectivity to others rather than focus on distinctive characteristics inherent to vulnerability. Through the lens of emphasising the 'sameness to others' rather than the difference, this conceptualisation highlights a view of wellbeing and experiencing as deeply rooted in the collective.

Beside group connectivity and normalisation of emotional distress that is primarily influenced by a complexity of disadvantages, respondents identified helpful factors that were linked to personal characteristics, enabling them to sustain a constructive outlook and withstand adversities. In this way, developing strength of character following the continuous need to respond to disadvantages and challenges was referred to as an acquired quality that enabled some participants to withstand difficulties and extend their appreciation for life. A number of these narratives showed resilience and courageous attitudes towards imagined difficulties. This is exemplified in the following I-poem by Mila:

> ***Mila:*** *I picked my character from my mum:*
>
> *Patient,*
>
> *Disciplined,*
>
> *Courageous.*
>
> *I remember her saying,*
>
> *'Don't be afraid of the unexpected.*
>
> *Just focus on the way.*
>
> *Follow your direction'.*

In portraying herself as a strong and courageous individual, Mila's identification frames her personal qualities as assets whilst acknowledging a sense of heritage and continuity in performing these characteristics. In this way, Mila represents making sense of the world through the lens of interactions, relationships and reflexive engagement that indicate significant meaning invested in her social world. Inherent in this narrative is a strong sense of pride and directionality of her journey, where her individual self-image and personal characteristics show a continuation of inherited social roles and personality traits embedded in her socio-cultural heritage. Alongside a sense of belonging in following these role models, the act of selecting these characteristics, rather than their mundane acceptance, indicates exercising agency and an active construction of identity rooted in the familial. The choice in collating identifiers through reflexive engagement and connecting to familial heritage reflects the deeply personal nature of self-representations. The heroic characteristics indicate capacity to follow a direction despite

difficulties and unexpected circumstances. This highlights determination and rootedness in the familial sources of wisdom that allows continuation of the journey, regardless of environmental barriers.

Along with references to specific personal qualities and protective characteristics, several respondents highlighted the impact of more general protective factors. For example, through signifiers of "hope", reflected as green leaves, Saranda reflected on the ways in which green leaves and branches symbolised "new life, new season, new dreams and new hope". Reflecting further on the tree's potential to support new life, Saranda noted that similarly to the tree changing colour with the seasons, 'positive' and 'negative' experiences could also interchange. This interpretation links the idea of seasons as being governed by a natural rhythm and cyclicity to human experiences and states of being. The transient nature of emotional states, from this perspective, is constructed as an inseparable part of lived experiences that bears routinised and normalised qualities. In emphasising the tree's potentiality to grow and bear fruit despite the current absence of life, Saranda makes a distinction between temporal 'lifelessness' and potential for life following adversities, before concluding that even though the tree may not be productive at this stage, it still has the potential to grow and bear fruit. This construct steers away from binaries, to acknowledge the way in which the cycle as an inevitable natural rhythm incorporates diverse states and experiences of tension, release, activity and rest. Noting the changing nature of organic cycles between activities, rest and renewal, Saranda's understanding of emotional distress aligns with the law of nature and of the universe. Similarly to previous narratives, difficult experiences are acknowledged and embraced as a natural part of life cycle, rather than as fixed conceptualisation of self that are linked to traumatic circumstances.

Figure 15

Likewise, Ayla referred to 'hope' as a protective factor that, according to her, could uplift her in difficult times to facilitate her transition to a "different place". She started her visual exploration with conceptualisations of 'hope' as having dandelion-like fragility and transient qualities. In the execution of her image, M. used inks and pencils, pouring out some of the background materials and leaving the inks to 'bleed' to abstract the transient qualities of the dandelion that she referred to. This symbolic impression of 'hope' bore cosmic, outworldly characteristics of fluidity and unpredictability, where a constellation of dandelion seeds being blown away by the wind could relate to transition to other locations. This aerial fluidity, expressed through the artistic medium, relayed the absence of borders or groundedness, allowing the image to float, disperse and germinate within other locations. In this way, the symbolic representation of dandelion seeds could be understood as a symbol of growth, regrowth and transition. In this process-led exploration with the artistic medium, the fragility and tenderness of this understanding of hope mirrored the uncertainty and unpredictability of working with the materials.

Figure 16

In her narrative and image-making, Soraya connected the idea of hope to that of a 'new dawn'. During the process of creating her image, Soraya used materials and tools that were previously not known to her. She felt unsure if this could support her in actualising her envisioned image and kept adding new layers, in this way painting and repainting over the image, following the transient nature of the process.

Figure 17

After completing the image, Soraya said she was pleased that it was somehow indistinct and unclear. This fading image was, in her words, a 'Twilight zone', an in-between day and night space that was only suggestive of hope and a possibility for alteration when "things go wrong". This reclaimed and repaired image, according to her, was like a new dawn, new hope and symbol of a new life that she had constructed for herself. Like the previous images, meaning

and understanding evoked from this work related to cyclicity in conceptualising inner life experiences. The temporal nature of difficulties from this perspective was highlighted as an inseparable and valuable part of life that doesn't take away from the potential for growth and possibility for repair. Soraya further commented on the process of image-making and staying with uncertainties, that corresponded on a minimised scale to her resilient attitude and determination to withstand difficulties. In highlighting elements of uncertainty that are malleable and repairable, Soraya conveyed agency that was embedded within the creative process. The method of deconstructing and constructing from this perspective reflected a meaningful engagement, situated within the experiential context.

5.4 Narrating the Heroic Journey

Respondents' identity constructions included specific characteristics and heroic qualities alongside reflecting their own interpretations, self-awareness and habitual engagement with the world. By reflecting a personal philosophy in response to transition, many narratives referred to facing unknown circumstances and persevering through difficulties that might be outside of respondents' sense of control in a way that reflects a process-experiential approach that shows mature outlook and meaning-making. Participants 'interpretative reflections often tended to indicate that a life journey could bring 'negative', as well as 'positive' experiences. Contrasts, contradictions and a sense of cyclicity, were communicated through the visual representations. This multi-layered quality of the journey was reflected within Zala's landscape image, in which she collated light and dark layers that form 'mountains' and 'valleys'. In this way, Zala referred to her image as a 'tapestry' or a 'landscape made of different layers – some bright and some very dark', linking these signs to interchanging feelings, experiences and circumstances. Her understanding of making this image was relayed as 'the importance of attending to beautiful things in life regardless of difficulties'. This philosophical stance was indicative of Zala's appreciation of life as it is whilst acknowledging the complexities of experiences. Her narrative reiterated her

Figure 18

understanding that distressing experiences do not inform her outlook on life or her future expectations.

Similarly to the intricate landscape of the mountains, valleys and plateaus within her visual metaphor lived experiences could offer a diversity that is intrinsic to being part of nature and of the earth's ecosystem; a sense of stillness and stability in this image evokes completeness, centredness and unmoveable presence. This landscape and surface invite a connection to the planet and natural environment resembles and links to previous images of self-represented as parts of nature that are a perfect, whole and balanced living creation and despite variations of shape, form, colours, life and intensity, retains identity through changing seasons and environmental conditions. This evokes understanding that similarly to the changing frequencies in nature, experiencing a wide range of emotions changing nature of feelings and experiences does not take from individuals' inner peace, strength and stability.

Figure 19

With a view of reflecting a personal philosophy in response to transition, some narratives referred to life experiences as a vehicle of transformation that incorporates difficult terrains and passages that include subjective viewpoints and allows a link between respondents' journey, inner growth and development. Challenges to habitual thinking that permit alternative perceptions to be negotiated and incorporated within the individuals' consciousness showed new viewpoints that tend to broaden understanding and appreciation for life. For example, in highlighting the transformative potential of her pathway, Alia reflected on her journey through the risks and difficulties she experienced and the effect this has had on her outlook and understanding. Although this image appeared to resemble an ornate flower pattern, Alia highlighted the symbolism and 'hidden meaning' of the pathways that her psychological meandering created:

> ***Alia:*** *My journey was marked by many hurdles, some leading me to go up and others, letting me go down. Some pathways have not been able to be completed and have stopped because there was no way of going further. I have had to then start from the beginning and again into the ups and downs of the life journey…When I was married, my husband wouldn't allow me to do what was important for me. Today, there are other restrictions that stand in the way. But what I've learned is, if I need to grow, I must*

always look for new pathways; I must make a way where there is no way. And I know that even in times of struggles, I could still have the strength to find that other path.

Despite the hurdles that she has encountered, Alia recognises that in experiencing her journey of meandering up and down, her unfinished and prematurely ended pathways have formed distinct connections and patterns. From this perspective, Alia's narrative constructs her barriers not as restricting her growth but as instigating potential to create new pathways and ways of being. This analysis indicates an appreciation of diverse experiences that show a mature outlook on experiencing and transforming Alia's consciousness. Cyclicity, diversity and a sense of wholeness within this narrative indicate the ways in which Alia has made sense of her personal growth and experiences. Appreciation of life, and new opportunities in the future show personal strength, ability to change and determination to appreciate life. Likewise, Gulten's meaning-making communicated through her narrative indicated appreciation for life and affirmation that part of her is whole and healthy, regardless of the difficulties encountered.

Gulten: *Arhambdullelah, I am alive. I have my hands; I have my eyes; I say, "Thank you, God." Money can come and go. I just want to leave everything behind. I want to be able to open a new page every day. I don't want to hold a grudge and hold into the past.*

This excerpt suggests a shift in consciousness and understanding of the world that enables renewed appreciation for simple things and optimism for the future. In this way, despite the difficulties during the post-trafficking period, Gulten indicated an awareness of growth into a more authentic self and re-evaluation of what is meaningful and appreciated. Along similar lines, Dara's image, depicting what she referred to as "The Blood Moon", reflected a simultaneous coming down of the sun and rising of the moon. In relaying the cyclicity of rising and going down of heavenly light sources, Dara comments:

Figure 20

Dara: *There have been many explosions, volcanoes and disasters in my life. They are bigger than me, and I cannot control them, but there have also been places of stillness. Volcanoes are natural elements, just like forests and seas: these could bring destruction, but also life. Like in a Blood Moon, the light and darkness are one.*

Within this metaphoric image, the Blood moon represents a total lunar eclipse accompanied by radiance, symbolising the interchanging fluidity of two opposing globular matters. This alignment of earth, moon and sun, could be understood in relation to cosmic forces that could encompass beginning, ending, peak, zenith, rise and fall. Within this cyclical pattern, the Eclipse could symbolise the ending of a story and a new start at the same time. In thinking through her image, Dara conceptualised her journey as a process offering a new beginning, a new lunar cycle and unity of diverse elements. Similarly to previous conceptualisations shared by Zala and Alia, Dara denotes that just like a full moon could move into the shadow of the earth cast by the sun, experiences could be interchangeable and illuminated by new understanding. This insight positions Dara as appreciative of light and darkness through her life journey and circumstances that are 'larger' than her and outside of her control. A sense of existential awareness constructs her as being part of nature and natural processes of cyclicity and transience. Through her metaphor of the 'Blood Moon', Dara not only captures the magnitude of her experiences but also draws on the wisdom that aligns with nature itself that is affirmative to life. This alignment of outside and inside worlds highlights the ways in which individual experiences could be identified as corresponding to universal principles and processes in nature. Reinforcing previous participants' interpretations of emotional distress as the seasonal part of life, this metaphorical construction highlights an appreciation for the natural cycles as they are experienced.

Alongside their authoritative narrative accounts, some participants demonstrated agency through taking creative risks. By means of using unfamiliar materials and tools, a number of respondents demonstrated comfort with the unexpected visual outcome and ability to stay with uncertain and unknown aspects in their process of image-making, indicating courageousness and openness to the unknown. Along with engaging in process-based exploration with the creative materials, at times, the image-making process involved attention to the expressive qualities of mark-making in producing images for aesthetic and recreational purposes (Fig. 21-23). Likewise, some participants reflected on what they felt worked particularly well in their visual explorations. Deliberations on the visual aesthetics and technical aspects of creating the image linked some emotive qualities to authenticity communicated through the images. A sense of pride, accomplishment and fulfilment that the image represented what participants feel was often shared after completing this process. In many ways, this facilitated participants' re-storying and adopting a preferred self-narrative of acknowledging difficulties alongside beauty

through their visual findings. This opportunity for re-constructing allowed respondents to explore alternative versions of their narrative.

Figure 21

Figure 22

Figure 33

For example, Talisha spoke about using art materials to make beautiful images as a source of joy and peace. Described as a “Summer Garden”, her image (Fig. 21) represented cut out fabric materials glued onto a background of blue and white acrylic paint. She reflected on aesthetics as a way of maintaining her motivation and sustaining her emotional wellbeing. Similarly, Nina reflected on how she tries to surround herself with aesthetically pleasing natural elements that take away the focus from unpleasant events and offer her a sense of peace and contentment. Her narrative referred to the ways in which her appreciation of beauty extended to teaching embroidery in a women’s group setting and encouraging others to access this space of creativity and contentment. Some respondents, in this way, connected to their creative centre of experiencing the joy of exercising agency in a way that also fulfilled aesthetic purposes and encouraged sharedness with others.

In constructing their narrative myths, participants referred to being on a journey of becoming and transforming. Visual signifiers of paths, roads and overcoming barriers have reflected respondents interpretations of their experiences. A sense of the diversity of life events relayed through storied and embodied understanding constructed narrative protagonists as participating in life’s wonders, extraordinary events and transformations, relayed through life symbols, beginnings, endings and new becomings. Deep connectedness to nature and identification with

natural phenomena indicated respondents' sense of active engagement with their experiences, rather than being recipients of events and circumstances outside of their control.

5.5 Discussion

This chapter focussed on trafficked people's identities and representations through analysis of participants narratives and image-related findings. Instead of focussing on distinct elements of respondents' circumstances, data collection within this study centred on facilitating a process lead by participants' creativity and experiential agency. This exploration included using art materials without pre-conceived ideas in an experiential approach that allows for experimentation and unplanned processing using artistic materials. Creative expression offered participants an opportunity to re-evaluate their story, imbue new awareness and meaning, add detail, focus on the most memorable moments, and bring the narrative to a close. In alignment with theoretical approaches highlighting the value of the artistic process as enabling communication and meaning-making relating to identity (Rubin, 2016; Linesch et al., 2012; Cavasinni, 2017), findings from this study showed how this method facilitated the exploration of themes and issues, relating to participants' beliefs, origin, identification and societal roles, relayed through the image-making process and further reflections. In this way, more holistic representations of self were relayed through narrative and textual means.

Analysis of participants' narratives revealed an abundance of roles and identities, not directly informed by their trafficking experiences. As part of correcting stereotypical trafficking portrayals and generating empathic connections, participants-produced images and narratives connected to the broader collective and communal issues. Overall, participant-generated representations tended to draw on common characteristics of humanity, opposing trauma-centred, trafficking-induced or immigration-status-informed depictions. This is contrary to dominant representations that tend to depict trafficked individuals in light of their trafficking-informed identities (Ravi et al., 2017, Doychak and Raghavan, 2020). Respondents' narratives and visual imagery in this chapter constructed their self-identification with particular focus on their understanding of their official self, everyday self, relational self, and pancosmic self. This showed a connection to shared knowledge and experience rather than a specific trafficking-informed sense of self.

Existing research with this population has often been based on trauma-informed conceptualisations of trafficking identities (Hopper, 2017; Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). It was,

therefore, important to provide a platform where trafficked people could relay their understanding, perceptions and narratives of their circumstances to provide counter-narratives based on real experiences. Such a storied way of relaying experiences within this chapter provided a type of knowledge that might not have been considered valuable for trafficking identification and support services. This could contribute to what is already known, in addition to adding new perspectives from marginalised knowledge. Within this chapter, participants have revealed identifications that have not been informed by trafficking. Specifically, respondents referred to relational aspects as well as to their ethnocultural characteristics, which in their view, informed their sense of self, identity and belonging. Participants have represented themselves through their relational identities – as mothers, sisters, sons and daughter, as well as in terms of their individual and familial histories, characteristics and experiences. This collation of participants' narratives contributes to a holistic understanding of individuals' experiences, featured within a common story based on humanity, to encourage a connection through shared human values whilst also communicating themes and issues that are more idiosyncratic and remain valid for individual participants.

In contrast to dominant trafficking discourses that have been found to habitually link trafficking identities to a diminished agency (Andrijasevic et al., 2012; Andrijasevic and Mai, 2016; Peach, 2005), participants in this study mainly represented themselves as active agents through the lens of their relational and spatial agency, ancestral links and life journeys. The temporality of respondents' understanding of emotional distress highlighted the interchanging nature of so called 'negative' and 'positive' experiences, indicating a level of resilience and maturity in responding to adversities (Meili, Heim and Maercker, 2009; Papadopoulos, 2007; Gray, Luna and Seegobin, 2012). The ways in which respondents defined themselves through visual and textual means in relation to others, their feelings, journeys, and meaning-making, indicate a substantial degree of agency and reflexivity. Both official and everyday identity representations captured what individuals stood for and how they wish to be perceived. Relational agency of being with others occupied a significant part within respondents' narratives, indicating a holding space of interpersonal support. Individual re-consideration of existential issues following transition and change showed a sense of personal strength and transformative agency.

Deficiencies-based approaches fail to consider other types of agency that individuals could exercise, such as aspects of relational, socio-cultural and symbolic spheres. For example, Sen's (1985; 1992; 1999) examination of agency distinguishes between the capacity to ensure

economic and physical independence and the opportunity to make choices and instigate change. This model offers a more fluent understanding of agency that could be exercised within circumstances of oppression and constrains. Moving away from a dichotomised 'coerced' versus 'active' agent classifications that bear associations with either being a victim or an immigration offender, this more flexible continuum between polarities affords the opportunity for individuals to assume a position of control over some parts of their lives and contributes to a better understanding of respondents' agency.

In this chapter, I analysed participants' constructions of self in relation to the heroic journey of homecoming. Through the "Hero on a journey" monomyth conceptualisation, I examined respondents' pluralistic sense of self and helpful and hindering factors within the umbrella of the Heroic journey. Respondents have indicated that they wished to be represented as proud people with ancestral histories who are pursuing journeys of becoming. The venture to the unknown within participants' experiential journeys is imbued with personal symbols, metaphors and paradoxes, that relate to common human values that position the person in the centre of the story, in full alignment with their consciousness. The concept of self on a journey of transition was expressed through participants' visual and reflective contributions. A sense of aloneness and separateness from others is reflected within participants' narratives. Campbell (1999) also refers to the Heroic quest as a personal rite of passage, tracing wellbeing, identity transformation and agency within individuals' subjective domains. This highlights the subjective nature of experiences and contrasts stereotypical understanding based on victim typologies.

5.6 Summary

Within an exploration of identities and representations, participants-generated narratives and images counterpoint oppressive narrative schemes that tend to attribute inherent characteristics of innocence and vulnerability to trafficked people. Opposing an extensive focus on trafficking-specific issues, participants' narratives construct their experiences within the heroic journey narrative arc, where the venture to the unknown is imbued in personal symbols, metaphors and paradoxes, that relate to common human values and position the person in the centre of the story, in full alignment with their consciousness. As a counterpoint of the image of the sensationalised other, this study illuminates participants' daily routines, nuanced domesticities,

social relations and individual idiosyncrasies in their own words and creative expression. The metaphor of the heroic journey as an overarching concept for respondents' representations of their experiences incorporates mythological elements linked to the common human story, outlining a tendency to frame experiences and circumstances within non-medicalised and empathetic terms. This collation of trafficked people's narratives adds to unrepresented discourses to address the current knowledge gap and contribute to correcting trafficking misrepresentations.

Respondents' portraits were presented through a synthesis of their artwork, narratives and I-poems that highlight participants' intrinsic humanity and relational being. The narratives and I poems, relayed in participants' words, included parts that were deemed unusable from an immigration perspective but evoked a sense of deeply personal moments of significance. Within synthesised "I statements", inspired by respondents' engagement in self-reflection, participants' imaginative and tacit way of knowing evokes an empathic connection to audiences and facilitate an exploration of deeply personal meaning and experiences. Personally significant symbols and imagery, such as being a driver in own life, being a river that unites two separate banks and having a concrete building block to enable creating a safe space, allowed a profound connection to individuals' experiences through their metaphors and reflections. A small proportion of the work was produced for aesthetic purposes. Similarly to process-orientated work, these explorations aligned with a playful spirit, wish to connect to own creative potential and exercise agency within the immediate process-based research activities. These experiential explorations supported a sense of self-validation and awareness of individuals' potential. This understanding of respondents' agency transgresses previous conceptualisations of trafficked people as passive victims, as well as more sympathetic representations that link this group of people to being motivated to migrate by economic factors.

Following this introduction of participants in their own images, words and aesthetic evocation, the next chapters will continue to trace the first half of the mythic journey, incorporating the stages of Departure and Initiation, (including the exploration of factors influencing participants' decisions to migrate within Chapter 5) and their process of trafficking identification, relayed within Chapter 6. The theme of Return home, or homecoming, reflecting participants' integration of experiential knowledge that leads to a shift of consciousness and a new understanding of self and others, will be explored in Chapter 7.

6

Departures: Pre-trafficking Helplessness or Active Agency in Response to Oppressive Circumstances?

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I analyse the factors that preluded the trafficking experiences and that contributed to participants' vulnerability to trafficking. Before examining respondents' accounts of their pre-trafficking context, it is important to note that participants were not directly asked to refer to these circumstances and not every participant chose to provide a chronological reflection of their circumstances. Still, those who did referred to the pre-trafficking events as significant factors that contributed to their motivation to migrate. In other words, I consider how a large number of participants identify a direct relationship between their pre-trafficking circumstances and their initial motivation to transfer through international borders. I, therefore, contend that exploration of pre-trafficking experiences is relevant in outlining the factors influencing respondents' sense of identification, belonging or separation from their homeland. I argue that push factors have had an overwhelming significance in propelling trafficked people to seek the transfer of international borders.

By elucidating participants' narratives of the circumstances which led them to depart their home countries, I show that participants refer to complex push and pull factors to contextualise their pre-trafficking circumstances. The narratives suggest that many participants had a strong

degree of agency during the period of pre-trafficking. I contend that initial migration motivation and increased trafficking vulnerability could be influenced by complex circumstances, including extreme poverty, participants' attempts to fulfil their familial responsibilities and attempting to escape an unsafe environment. In particular, I add focus on cultural and gendered issues presented within participants' accounts of their everyday routines and practices, which have received little recognition and have been largely downplayed in the trafficking discourses. This chapter will conclude that for the majority of the participants, pre-migration disadvantages in many circumstances surpassed the severity of the trafficking conditions. From this perspective, I will argue that trafficking circumstances described by participants tend to be constructed as the lesser of the two evils, indicating a stark contrast with mainstream trafficking-induced trauma discourses.

This findings chapter is constructed within xx sections all focussed on participants' pre-trafficked contexts. Each section includes a brief introduction and background, findings and discussion section and juxtapose separate voices into the broader theme of trafficking inequalities. It is important to note that due to the complexities of the experiences and inequalities explored, the narratives in this chapter could be perceived as particularly distressing.

6.2 Trafficking in the Context of Migration Discourses: Structural, Gendered, and Human Rights-related Push Factors

Since the primary trafficking definition presupposes the use of coercion, force or intimidation (UN General Assembly, 2003), a level of passivity, naivety or complete lack of agency is habitually presupposed on behalf of the trafficked person. Such stereotypical constructions of trafficking issued through the lens of criminality suggest a binarized understanding of trafficked people as either victimised individuals or immigration offenders (Adams, 2003; Shimmel, 2006). Within this crime-vulnerability nexus, dominant antitrafficking discourses have tended to construct people at risk of being trafficked as either inclined to succumb to attractive and unrealistic employment options or coerced by traffickers. From this standpoint, activists (Andrijasevic and Anderson, 2009; Sharma, 2005; Davidson, 2006) have claimed that such victimhood representations imbue unjust responsibility to trafficking victims that prioritise immigration and border control state needs and cause further harm to disadvantaged individuals (Rivers-Moore, 2014; Hill, 2016). In this way, dominant trafficking discourses

could represent all trafficking victims who might be perceived as exercising agency as immigration offenders (Berman, 2010). On the other hand, examining trafficking as a function of coercion and passivity highlights a lack of agency or strong pull factors as main motivation drivers (Brennan, 2008). Both suppositions of trafficked people's inability to withstand manipulation on one end of the spectrum, as well as associations with immigration offending on the other, focus exclusively on the trafficking circumstances and obscure the disadvantages that might have propelled individuals to migrate.

Despite this diminished attention to the impact of structural factors in increasing vulnerability to trafficking, findings from reintegration research indicate that return to trafficked people's familial environment is often linked to reinstating oppressive pre-trafficking conditions (Plambech, 2014; Donger and Bhabha, 2018; McCarthy, 2018). In addition to the inability to repay debts and contribute to their families' economic resources, trafficking returnees have reported difficulties with family and community reunification, risk of social stigma and reintegration difficulties upon return to their familial environments (Donger and Bhabha, 2018; Rousseau 2018; McCarthy, 2018). This level of disadvantage upon return is indicative of trafficked people's unwillingness to return to their home countries and highlights individuals' daily home-based inequalities that may have propelled them to seek ways of crossing international borders to escape daily oppression.

This indirect recognition of trafficked people's pre-migration difficulties was echoed by more direct links between pre-trafficking economic disadvantage, patriarchal cultural values and personal autonomy (Crawford and Kaufman, 2008; Roopan and Stewart, 2001; Mahendra at al, 2001). For example, Shahrokhi's (2010) work draws attention to poverty as an influencing factor in forming cultural norms and stereotypes that precipitate human trafficking. Her examination of the cultural and historical context of sexual servitude links extreme poverty, hierarchical social structures, and vast social disparities to slavery-like practices and attitudes towards human trafficking. This analysis of inequalities and cultural prerequisites to exploitation ties in with findings from a small number of qualitative studies (Vijeyarasa, 2012; Peled and Parker, 2013; Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012), documenting the complexity of trafficked people's caring responsibilities, alongside gender discrimination and unequal access to the domestic labour market in the respondents' country of origin. This body of knowledge, examining trafficking through the gender inequality lens, highlights the polarity between the pressure to care and provide on one side and barriers to accessing the labour market from the other. Accordingly, scholars have addressed the need for constructions of gender, sexuality,

race and class as well as cultural, political and economic contexts to be included in trafficking representations (Andrijasevic, 2014). With this in mind, findings from this research highlight participants' narratives embedded in their life histories, cultural background and socio-political context. In particular, the structural factors that have influenced/ individuals to seek alternative options abroad through planning a migration project will be presented within participants' accounts in this chapter.

Alongside examining trafficking through migration and gender equality lens, trafficking could, under certain conditions, be considered in relation to Asylum provision and protection, directed by international legislation. According to the Geneva convention, international protection is provided in circumstances when the individual seeking protection has experienced threat of persecution. In other words, refugee identification for trafficked people is considered in circumstances of serious human rights violations and threat to life, when individuals are not able to return to their home countries due to risk of persecution, statelessness or fear of serious harm in their own country. Therefore, to qualify as persecutory, trafficking circumstances would have to be considered in relation to the threat of persecution upon return and the perceived ability of the home country to provide adequate protection (Schoenholtz, 2015; Musalo, 2006). In this way, under UNHCR guidelines, trafficking in the sex industry is more likely to be found to fulfil the prosecution criteria than other types of trafficking, such as labour exploitation and domestic servitude (Piotrowicz, 2008; Cockbain and Bowers, 2019). This indicates that the narrow focus on persecution could exclude a number of individuals.

Alongside these problems, scholars have claimed that the Geneva convention fails to capture some contemporary issues, such as gender disparity, sexual violence and female genital mutilation, which could leave women particularly vulnerable and excluded from international protection (Emmenegger and Stigwall, 2019; Callamard, 2002; Conneely, 1999). These restrictions to what is considered a risk of persecution could entail failure to acknowledge gender-based discrimination as a basis for asylum application, further indicating that asylum-seeking women are likely to endure a number of unacknowledged disadvantages and health risks that may not warrant successful international protection. This section will, therefore, present narratives of participants' accounts of pre-migration circumstances that rendered them in need of international protection.

6.3 Function of Pre-trafficking Narratives

It is difficult to establish the impact of exploitation and inequalities suffered in the period of pre-trafficking, as this theme presented as an unexpected finding. However, some participants referred to their pre-migration circumstances to seek meaning and contextualise their narratives, whilst others went further to reflect on these events as being on a continuum of disadvantages embedded within the pre-trafficking conditions. Hence, the purpose of these pre-trafficking narratives seemed to be to provide a background to participants' exploitation and highlight the importance of the pre-migratory events to the trafficking experiences. These pre-trafficking accounts contributed to participants' re-storying, re-visiting, and meaning-making processes. When attempting to summarise their most prominent difficulties, explore preventative measures and ways to reduce trafficking, participants consistently made direct links with their pre-trafficking circumstances. Respondents' references to the severity of the conditions they experienced prior to being trafficked included difficulties of opposing cultural and gender-based oppressive factors within circumstances of extreme poverty. In most circumstances, these adverse conditions impacted all areas of life and contributed to economic and social dependence, which acted as a motivating factor for individuals to search for ways to flee to safety abroad.

Analysis of respondent's accounts revealed a complexity of push factors that related to economic and gender-based inequalities, political instability and cultural factors. The push factors influenced their reasons to seek border crossing as a way of instigating change to their circumstances and as a response to oppressive conditions in their homeland. Participants' references to push factors in contextualising their pre-trafficking circumstances suggested a degree of agency during the period of pre-trafficking. This was completed either by contacting a smuggler, a relative or an employment agency to assist with border-crossing and securing envisioned work opportunities abroad. Contrary to assumptions that anticipated attractive employment opportunities would influence trafficked people's motivation to migrate, an overview of participants' narratives suggests a strong motivation by negative push factors.

6.3.1 Structural Factors: Agency in Striving towards Assuring Sustainable Living Conditions

A number of participants referred to economic disadvantage and limited access to education and work opportunities within their countries of origin. These narratives did not merely relay the impact of unfavourable economic conditions but evidenced individuals' inability to provide for their basic living needs due to extreme poverty and lack of employment opportunities. Within a background of scarcity of basic living conditions, many participants situated inequalities in their daily routines 'at home', in the unavoidable reality of the habitual:

> ***Chinyere:*** *In my country, you struggle with everything: to afford shoes, to get sanitary materials, to find money for a pen, even …. Everything is a struggle; life is a struggle. Then, everywhere you go, you need money… If you want to buy one of these [points to a sofa], you need to work for two years … It's difficult to travel; it's very expensive. People who want to go abroad and work will have to pay a lot of money to buy the ticket. And when you reach there you have to work very hard to pay back; work for years.*

This narrative depicting daily struggles and extreme poverty relays the extent to which lack of safety in the home environment could be infiltrated in daily routines, such as walking, writing, or maintaining basic hygiene. From this position of inability to meetbasic needs and sanitation, life at home is constructed as a daily struggle with everything. Within this context of extreme deprivation, other needs such as furnishing a home or travelling, seem distant and unachievable. Within such conditions of life-threatening poverty, Chinyere notes how the scarcity of resources and an inability to satisfy basic human needs could drive individuals to cross borders in search of economic means, even though in doing so, this might put pressure on individuals to work and repay debts for years.

6.3.2 Gendered and Cultural Push Factors and Inequalities

For many participants, inequalities were often reflected in familial and social relationships where inequalities were performed between dominating and subjugated actors. In this way, alongside economic difficulties, some participants referred to cultural and gender-based factors that positioned them in unequal relationships. Adding further to adversities, such factors were outlined by both male and female participants. Most participants were accustomed to additional familial responsibilities and assumed obligatory sustenance or caring roles that over time contributed to an accumulation of factors that negatively affected participants' wellbeing. Although women seem to be predominantly influenced by this, men also reported the adverse

effects of gendered poverty specific to members of their group. According to a number of male respondents, fixed gender expectations placed additional pressure on men to perform breadwinning roles and support entire family's livelihoods. The following narrative excerpt reflects the ways in which such expectations, alongside a lack of employment opportunities, play a role in social relationships and performing a sense of self.

> ***Luca:*** *We are [lists countries]; less important countries. Our situation at home is difficult; we cannot get a wage; that's why we are here. Even if we get £20 a week, that is a lot of money for us, because we compare it to what we can make in [Country]. The job market is bad in [Country]. It's impossible to say to people that I haven't been able to earn money for several months. They will laugh at my face if I have no money to show. Not even money for food. Zero. Zero money, zero citizen, that's the way things are. No value; not normal…People don't understand it is so difficult to make money in my country. There's no excuse for not working; there's blame, almost, like. My mum won't understand. How can I explain this to her? How can I justify this? I feel ashamed. There's an expectation that you have to demonstrate that you can buy this and that. This is the education we got from our parents. It is a consumerist philosophy; it is not enough just to be. We are seen as money power, and I think that the world is going in that direction. You are seen as the value of how much you can produce, of how many cars you are going to wash, of how many dishes you are going to cook; it is the product and function that is important. It's not just in my family; it's not just here; there's a lot of expectation. And based on that, I think I have done really badly with my life because my family can only see me as a worker, and I am now not working.*

These internalised cultural expectations often transpired through participants' presented self-concept that was closely linked to gender-based roles and expectations. Apart from a function to secure individual and familial sustenance, this self-concept was closely linked to individual dignity and fulfilling a supporting function within the family. Some respondents, in this way, expressed ambivalence or regret for not having attained the perceived expectations of being 'good enough' parents, sons or daughters, an identification that was often closely linked to participants' ability to serve familial needs. In this way, male breadwinning expectations and female's assumed caring roles and responsibilities on one side, alongside limited resources and opportunities, on the other, positioned many respondents as being pressured to search for alternative life-sustaining options abroad.

Within a background of strong patriarchal values and high-power distance, some participants reported experiencing an internalised sense of inferiority, brought about by authority figures and affirmed by the oppressive culture of patriarchal dependency. In this way, female esteem was often linked with the ability to undertake unpaid caring roles and domestic labour. Limited access to resources and paid employment opportunities and inability to contribute to the family's income rendered respondents becoming dependent on male figures for support. In this

way, extreme poverty was often linked with inequalities and gendered violence which placed women in subservient positions to men in the family realm. Reflecting diminished value and rights of girls and women, such practices often influenced tendencies to endorse slavery-like conditions in the home environment.

> ***Dara:*** *The most important thing about trafficking is that, er… people in my country don't treat the others, er…the women, right. Women are treated so badly. That makes you quiet… This is the most important thing. I was…. exploited... When I got married, I had to do all the work in the new house. I had to look after all the children, eight children, from my In-laws and neighbours. They went to school, came home at lunchtime and went back to school; I picked them up from school and washed the school uniforms. Because ...I know how to cook, clean and care for the children. I don't know anything else. So, that's what I did, and I was badly used. Because you don't know anywhere… At the end of the day, when my husband came back from work, my mother-in-law would tell him that his sister had done all the work. And then he will say, what about my wife? And they will say, oh, she does help sometimes, but your sister has to do everything. If we iron the clothes, she will count how many dresses, how many T-shirts, how many children's clothes she has done. When the men came from work, she will say, "I have ironed these many clothes". But I never count the work that I have done.*

Within this private sphere of the familial, Dara's narrative recalls the oppression she had faced while living within an extended family household. Through the lens of legitimised power structure established within the family, she portrays male figures at the top of the familial hierarchy, whilst women, occupying lower echelons of serving domestic needs, also show tendencies to subjugate and reproduce power disparity between themselves. In this way, Dara's status within her intimate home sphere identifies her as occupying the very bottom of the familial echelons, where exploitation, inequality and absence of voice are normalised. Being accountable to all higher echelons of power, Dara's positionality within the established familial structure leaves her extremely vulnerable to subordination. Notable in this account are the constructions of women in the household, perceived as a function of their domestic labour. Habitual tendencies in attempting to account for their labour function and productivity indicate adding to objectification and disparities even amongst those suffering injustices. In this way, Dara accounts how inequalities and cultural prerequisites to exploitation were further intensified within the context of high-power distance between men and women, where girls were often socialised to assume all domestic and caring responsibilities. Within the servitude domain, quantifying and accounting for labour productivity also shows internalised oppression. Adding to this backdrop of inequalities and extreme poverty, other participants' accounts indicated experiencing severe neglect and abuse at the hands of family and relatives.

> ***Behati:*** *Growing up, I always lived with fear. When I was six, my uncle did things I couldn't tell anyone about. I couldn't put it in words; I had to be quiet... My father was beating us. I needed a book to go to school to pass my exams. He always said I needed to be good in school, but he never bought the books. And he wanted me to go and have tuition after school, and then the teacher will come and tell him I hadn't done homework, and he will beat me with a belt. And when you go to school, the teacher will also beat you… When I was 15, I got forced to get married, and I couldn't say anything. I said " No" in the beginning, but I had to agree at the end. So, you live with fear: you can't ask, you can't speak. You have this fear inside, fear that they are not treating you good, fear that if you don't do what they say, they will say, I can't keep you. Where will you go then? You'll have to keep quiet until you find a way.*

This narrative captures the nuances of oppression in showing how fear is instilled within different social settings to reinforce a culture of obedience. Behati links a plethora of child abuse, maltreatment, physical abuse and sexual abuse within the realms of her family, community, contributing to a culture of fear. The account also identifies oppressive familial dynamics where the economic resources are upheld by the fathers and daughters are married off against their will, or at least without meaningful consent. Within such circumstances of daily oppression, opportunities for voice and meaningful relationships based on equality are scarce.

The customs within the family as a political institution informs principles of social justice, supports the social order and is mirrored within hierarchies of other institutions. From the family structure to spheres of education and pedagogy, the extent to which the rule of fear is enforced contributes to a multi-layered system of oppression and supremacy that subdues the entire individual. In the context of her grand narrative, Behati constructed this excerpt as her understanding of the reasons that precipitated her trafficking circumstances, as stemming from the fear that upholds and reproduces systems of oppression. Within this backdrop of deep-seated patriarchal norms and silencing tendencies supported by societal and cultural norms, the internalisation of subservience and fear seems inevitable.

Similarly, other participants cite the influences of cultural and gender-based expectations to fulfil familial responsibilities and provide for their families as factors contributing to their daily adversities in their home countries. Added to these gendered perspectives of poverty that are informed by wider social structures and power relations, lack of sufficient time and space to rest, constrained prospects to participate in out-of-home labour and educational opportunities. Other aspects, such as gender, ethnicity and age, can also contribute to marginalisation and inequalities. This highlights the vulnerability to poverty that is intensified amongst certain groups. Although women seem to be predominantly affected by this, men have also reported

the adverse effects of gendered poverty specific to members of their group. Within a context of the existing scarcity of employment opportunities, women's overall low status and expectation to care further contributed to accumulating additional pressure on individuals. Partaking full-time parental responsibilities, alongside the pressure to work full-time to fulfil basic living needs, rendered some participants particularly vulnerable. The economic-related hardships of being a single parent were intensified by the lack of social support and particularly unsympathetic moral values imbued in the home countries' political, social, educational and religious framework.

> ***Meera:*** *Before I came here, I was trying to live my life in my country; I kept looking for work; it was very hard. They were no opportunities. I was taking my son to nursery there, from 9 AM to 3 PM. Nobody could give me a job within these times. They normally want you to stay until late, and nobody was there to watch my son…I couldn't leave him at home and go to work. He was very small. So, very limited options. Especially if you are on your own. I tried very, very hard to live there but couldn't with a small child. To take him from place to place and leave him with different people was impossible. So, I gave up. I didn't have any other choice.*

Meera illuminated the impact of being a single parent in becoming more susceptible to poverty and oppression. Absence of time and options to find flexible working arrangements that fit within the caring responsibilities severely limit Meera's opportunities to work and sustain herself. Feelings of inferiority as a response to social ostracism frequently accompanied such narratives. Often, participants who were mothers reported that whilst they were undertaking the care of an infant and securing basic living expenses they were also attempting to escape abusive (ex) partners or family members.

Gender inequality and cultural factors were often referred to by respondents as determinants that contribute to poverty. For participants who referred to cultural and gender-based inequalities as pushing them to migrate, three leading causes emerged: diminished opportunities to secure livelihood due to fixed gender expectations and gender disparities, social ostracization due to deviating from social norms through separation from partner or becoming a single parent, and gender-based violence. These accounts show a close link between extreme poverty and the pressure to compromise individual rights and safety to ensure survival needs at the backdrop of daily oppression. Lack of voice and rights in the home countries often left respondents no alternative but to seek desperate measures to secure their safety and existence. Participants' narratives account for employing survival strategies to sustain their livelihoods and prospects of securing their livelihoods. A number of respondents cite difficulties, particularly when this entailed societal stigma, ostracization and withdrawal

of familial support. Maintaining a ‘face’ representation with their cultural and familial context added to some respondents’ adversities and feminised poverty.

6.3.3 Human Trafficking in Relation to Threats to Human Rights and Individual Safety

Several participants referred to unfavourable events that caused psychological instability and placed considerable pressure on them to outsource ways to cross international borders to avoid these conditions. Some respondents gave an account of having suffered particularly severe gender-based violence at the hands of family members. These adverse conditions were paired with cultural expectations for women to adapt to adversity and act in submissive ways, perceived to be of wider familial and social benefit. These participants reported a complete lack of support or any other alternative arrangement that would have been available in their home countries. Within a very fixed framework, the only possible alternatives were either to stay in an abusive relationship or take a risk and attempt to flee to perceived safety abroad. The following narratives in this section outline particularly distressing systemic gender-based violence.

> ***Nahla:*** *In my country you are nothing as a woman. I have suffered a lot of violence ever since I was little. My dad, after - my brother, and after – my husband. All my life, I have been around violent men. I suffered in their hands. It was not possible to fight for my rights. My mum was very sick, very sick. She also suffered. She was paranoid; schizophrenia. She couldn’t protect me. The mum is a lioness, protecting the children, but when you don’t have a mum, it’s like growing up alone, in the wild, in between animals. If a woman makes a mistake – it is a big problem. If men make a mistake – it is between them, it’s OK. I can now fight for my rights because everyone is equal; women and men. But before, I didn’t know how to fight. I didn’t have the tools.*

> ***Sevda:*** *My brother-in-law was the most powerful person in the family. He had convinced everyone that he is able to connect to some spirit that spoke in Urdu. He was sleeping with all the women in the house, and all the men agreed with him. My brother-in-law, my husband, his nephew: everybody sent their wives to him. He said I had to go to his room to do a prayer. He made my niece pregnant very, very young. The little boy looks just like him, but if you ever mention this, you will get beaten. That’s what happened when I became pregnant; I didn’t know whose child I was carrying. And I said to them; you will see when the child is born. That’s why they forced me to do an abortion. At four months, the doctor said I couldn’t do it in the clinic. So, they took me to another doctor’s house. He didn’t put you to sleep or anything...*

When discussing the most significant priorities that society needs to undertake in relation to trafficking, Sevda’s analysis makes a direct link between the systemic oppression she suffered and motivation to seek ways of escaping injustice. In detailing the many acts of physical, sexual

and emotional violence perpetrated against her, she highlights the social norms and expectations that place blame and responsibility on the victim, who then suffer punitive measures as a result of resistance to the violent acts and crimes suffered. Following the exhaustion of all viable opportunities, participants would often find themselves pressurised to seek ways to cross international borders to secure their safety. Within such extreme circumstances that threatened their sense of safety, leaving the home country was often considered as the only survival option available to participants.

When referring to oppressive circumstances in their home countries, some participants stated political instability as a push factor that influenced their transfer across international borders. Paired with poverty, marginalisation and gender oppression, threats to individual safety could be further exacerbated at times of political conflict. In this way, experiences of extreme violence and persecution bear adverse effects, impacting on relational aspects, sense of belongingness, self-worth and potential to grow. Alongside narratives outlining the influence of gender inequality on respondents' motivation to seek transnational movement, other accounts showed how political instability could further intensify gender inequality and exposure to risk. The complexities of oppressive circumstances and inequalities apparent within some respondents' accounts appeared to accumulate to pose an imminent threat to their safety that could justify seeking humanitarian protection. According to respondents' narratives, decisions to leave their home country were made in response to immediate threats to personal safety, which meant that remaining in the home country would be incompatible with life. Some participants, in this way, reflected on daily living routines that communicate the level of risk ingrained in every aspect of life:

> ***Makeba:*** *My daughter asked me how many wars I have lived through; I counted eight. And you don't ever normalise it or get used to it… Each war is different … Some fights happen in the frontlines, but not all. Sometimes, the worst comes after the war has finished … [when] people turn against each other… You could get a bullet straight into your head just because of how your name sounds. I remember walking to school [as a child] and seeing bodies on the side of the road, no heads…And if you ever try to collect the bodies of your loved ones to bury them, you will also get shot…*

This quotation reflects the disturbing signature of conflict and unrest that lasted for most of Makeba's life. This narrative depicts scenes of normalised violence and deeply ingrained fear within everyday life. The extreme risks and intimidation that encompassed daily living led to atrocities infiltrating individual and communal ways of being in such a hostile environment. Such intensely adverse conditions often posed an urgent threat to participants' safety and pushed them to resort to extreme measures, seek protection abroad, and secure their immediate

escape from danger. Similarly to Makeba's experiences, Halimah's narrative relates to escaping circumstances of political unrest, reflected within her surroundings and habituated disadvantage. Although not directly referring to her own experiences, these narratives provide an account of the everyday brutality and political context of Ann's pre-migration realities.

> ***Halimah:*** *The situation was so bad that parents used to go to this place where passing trains slow down and throw their children on it, not knowing where their children will be taken. The children then will arrive in the new city and fend for themselves… To live with the terror of not knowing where your child is, or for the child to manage to survive, alone and homeless, with no parents, that is one of the hardest things...But they [Home office] will say, there's peace in [country]. [Shakes her head].*

Halima's narrative illuminates the extreme risks that individuals would take to facilitate their children's escape from growing political unrest in her home country. This account reflects particularly traumatic circumstances when pressurised by war and political unrest; parents would resort to enabling their own children's escape from unsafe circumstances by transferring them onto trains, with the hope that they would find a way to safer areas and enable better living prospects. Although participants in this study are adults, these narratives indicate that children seem to be particularly vulnerable in circumstances of war and becoming orphaned. Alongside less immediate accounts that reflect their surroundings, some narratives refer to participants' own childhood circumstances of disadvantages experienced due to the loss of one or both parents in times of war.

Political unrest, paired with participants' becoming orphans at a young age, increased their vulnerability, often leaving respondents in the care of family members and neighbours to fend for them. Within the background of having suffered multiple levels of disadvantages and oppression, this group of participants often endured exploitative conditions where they had to work extensive hours in exchange for securing their basic needs of food and shelter. According to participants, these adversities, often lasting for over several years and even decades were frequently referred to as the lowest points of their journeys. The following account documents Makda's circumstances of facing a multitude of disadvantages that increased her vulnerability to trafficking following the loss of her home and parents as a child:

> ***Makda:*** *I lived with my auntie; I worked since I was little; since my mum died. I was six years old. If you are living in another person's house, you have to work; work for everyone. Wake up very early and work; then walk to school a loooooong way, because that's the cheapest school, and work again after school… And to come back late is a problem. Because you will have to wash, clean and cook for the whole family… When they are eating, you have to be outside. After they finish eating, you have to wash all the plates, clean everywhere, do this, do that, with abuse and slaps, asking me all the*

time, "Did your mother buy this food?", "Is your mother going to raise from the grave and pay for this jug you broke?" to remind me that I'm not at home. And when they finish eating, you had to go down to the sink and see if there are any left overs on the plates. If they have eaten something and left it aside, only then you can eat it. You eat after everyone has eaten, and they might have left food for you; they might not be any food. Eat once – at night, if you could find anything…

Before school and after school, you have to fetch water, 20 buckets, every day, from far, from a distance, then you have to clean the house, do the kitchen and the bathroom, everywhere. And then, wash. Everything had to be hand-washed. I had to do that. From school, I will not eat; I'll do all this work on an empty stomach.

And if they find you sitting on a chair – it's a problem.

And if she wakes up before you – it's a problem…

In the night, I had to wash outside. You work until it is very late and everyone has gone to sleep. Sometimes, when there is a lot of work, you might not be able to sleep until after 4 am. I used to feel my mom's presence, then, standing beside me...

Adding to the circumstances of political unrest, this disconcerting narrative refers to inequalities that permeated Makda's everyday existence since a very early age, when she became an orphan and was fostered by relatives in her home country. This account positions 'home' as a place of danger and vulnerability, with limited alternative options. Within such an exceptionally hostile environment, Makda assumes an 'othered' perspective, more akin to being a foreigner in her home country. In this way, daily injustices suffered while growing up surpass the level of domesticity to permeate Makda's sense of belonging and entitlement to basic living conditions. Within this narrative construction, the self is separated and ostracised from others, obligated into a position of total subjugation and servitude. The absence of parental protection and income contribute to the loss of a sense of home and safety. Access to a minimal food supply, according to Makda, is acquired only through extensive and strenuous labour that surpasses realms of what is physically possible. The daily labour demands seem to overwhelm and engulf all available time and energy, consuming Makda into complete exhaustion, lack of entitlement to inhabiting their own space, and denial of necessary conditions for growth and development.

As with previous narratives of pre-trafficking mistreatment, this account refers to extreme exploitation, deprivation, and inequality that Makda suffered prior to succumbing to trafficking. Makda's account draws conclusions that link trafficking vulnerability to the lack of protection and alternatives that were available to vulnerable children like herself. Several participants made similar references to child exploitation and extreme slavery-like circumstances during the pre-migratory phase.

> ***Reem:*** *It's not easy when you lose your parents and go to live in someone else's house. And there were many children who were even worse than me. Especially children who were sent to live with their relatives, it is very common that they are badly used. And in [place], it is not like here; you cannot just go to the police when you think people mistreat you; no human rights will help you. You will get beaten for running away from home. They will not listen to the child, no! Even if you are covered in bruises, no! And you don't even have the mindset to even think of taking your family to the police. That is a big crime! This never even occurred to me.*

This narrative illuminates numerous shortfalls of human rights protection measures, indicating perception of a complete lack of support from authorities and family members. Despite the severity of the health consequences following these circumstances, support was unavailable, and these crimes were not recognised within the context of participants' home environment. Within this social context, relationships to familial and state figures of authority demand unquestionable obedience, where prioritising individual self-preservation could be criminalised.

Respondents' journeys often involved transit between many countries, over a prolonged period of time, before their arrival in the UK. Similarly to Reem's account, Fatemah's narrative links trafficking vulnerability to becoming orphaned following war and political unrest. Fatemah's accounts of inequalities have been deeply embedded in personal experiences of a prolonged period of exploitation that started in her early childhood:

> ***Fatemah:*** *My dad, I don't remember. He passed away when I was little. Then it was my mum. There were problems in my country… An auntie took me to Sudan; I worked in a house. It wasn't good. That's why I left. I was eleven then. Eritrea-Ethiopia-Sudan-Turkey-Greece-UK. A lot of things have happened… Twenty-seven but old… My best times were in Kalymnos. I didn't have a place to stay, but the weather was warm; I could sleep outside, and no one ever touched me… And it is hard I'm waiting, but – no mother, no father, no sister, no brother…I'm waiting, but – whatever happens…*

In an exceedingly distressing classification, Fatemah rates the countries she visited according to how she was treated as a rough sleeper; and the level of safety experienced in each country. The journey to perceived safety often included illegality and border crossing, transfer between different countries and systemic exploitation. Owing to prolonged periods of transfer between international borders, there was uncertainty about which country participants considered as their country of origin. Due to loss of nationality or inability to return to their country of origin, participants often feared deportation to one of the transfer countries. Fear of compulsory military service has also been intertwined with narratives of return hesitation. These inequalities, severe oppression and persecution in the home country, echoed by many participants, exemplify the extreme inequalities experienced in the pre-migratory period.

Conversely, many other narratives construct the trafficking circumstances as a significant improvement to pre-migration experiences of exploitation, oppression and life-threatening events. In general, compared to pre-trafficking circumstances, trafficking conditions were often described as less upsetting and at least involved some access to resources and agency. The decision to cross international borders was usually preluded by hesitation, ambiguity, uncertainty and tension. Participants often made several attempts to seek help or secure alternative living arrangements before their departure from the homeland. Analysis of participants narratives reveals that the influence of complexity of motivations and emergent circumstances pushed respondents to consider immediate border-crossing to escape physical safety. Accumulation of significant life events and factors often led to a crisis point, and after exhaustion of all viable opportunities to secure conditions of self-preservation, escape to immediate safety was needed. The final decision to migrate was often precipitated by a build-up or accumulation of difficulties or an urgent need to respond to unexpected factors. In this way, a complexity of push factors determined participants' final decision to seek safety aboard and undertake their migration journey. The following narrative shows how an accumulation of factors informed Rashida's decision to flee abroad, motivated by a complex sentiment of self-preservation.

> ***Rashida:*** *I tried to escape three times. The first time I left the house, they paid people a lot of money to look for me. So, they came after me, 10 – 15 men, and dragged me, to take me back home. Next time, I tried to run away in the night; I jumped over the fence. They sent the dogs to chase me; I broke one of my slippers, I ran, I ran… When the day broke, they started taking bicycles out; that's how they caught me and brought me home again. And the third time they caught me, they put me on fire. They threw petrol over me from a plastic bottle, then lit it, then they ran away from the back door. It came all the way [she points to deep scars]. It's not only the hands. It's my tummy, my feet, everything burned…*
>
> *My husband came to the hospital before the police and told me to say it was an accident. He said, if I spoke, they'll pour acid on me next time. And, he said, if I leave the house again, they will kill me and will tell everybody that have escaped, and they don't know where I am. He said they will drown me at the waterfall where no one will find me. So, I was scared... When my mum came to see me, she said to me, "Tell the police what he told you, but I will try and do something to take you out of the house". That's when she called my grandmother's brother who lives in London. He paid for my ticket and everything.*

This narrative relays the multiple violent scenes over a period of time that Rashida faced in trying to escape to safety. Her three attempts to flee oppression at home positioned her as actively exercising agency despite the disproportionality of her access to resources. Rashida relays the ways in which her struggle to survive is encountered with militarized violence aimed

at her capture and physical punishment for her attempts to flee sites of violence. Apparent in this narrative is the deliberate use of submissiveness that assures Rashida's safety until she is able to secure a border crossing.

According to participants' narratives, the pre-migration conditions were marked with the complexity of disadvantage, oppression and persecution, which in many circumstances surpassed the severity and adverse outcomes of trafficking. Within the larger narrative of the migratory journey, the trafficking experience was largely perceived as part of the participants' work history. In this way, participants' narratives indicated that they identify with being migrant workers rather than trafficked people. In comparison to pre-migration circumstances, the trafficking periods were, in general, described in less emotive terms. In many ways, the pre-trafficking circumstances were constructed as having more severe psychological consequences for individuals in the homeland than the health outcomes following trafficking. In some circumstances, the pre-trafficking conditions were perceived to be analogous to the oppression experienced in the host country. For those participants who discussed adverse conditions in their home countries as a principal basis for considering a migration project, three leading causes emerge: severe poverty and lack of employment opportunities that threatened respondents' existence and livelihoods; cultural and gender-based factors that put pressure on individuals to ascribe to specific roles within the family and community, and political instability, requiring immediate action to flee oppressive conditions and seek safety.

Findings from this study capture a sense of the uncertainties, insecurities and imminent danger that individuals were subjected to before their transnational movement. Pre-trafficking violence against the whole person was constructed as impacting all areas of the everyday lived experiences, including domestic, legal and institutional spheres. Respondents' narrative accounts highlighted many scenes of violence against women, including forced marriage, marital rape and sexual abuse, forced pregnancy and abortion. Participants' statements indicate that they sought to protect themselves from significant harm by leaving their pre-trafficking situation. Such considerations of pre-trafficking agency within hostile conditions forced by gendered, cultural, economic or political factors have remained previously unacknowledged.

6.4 Discussion

This chapter has captured pre-trafficking conditions that have prompted respondents to seek transnational movement abroad before succumbing to trafficking in the UK. The findings

suggest that inequalities and gendered oppression are closely linked to the circumstances surrounding respondents' decision to leave their original countries. Analysis of participants' narratives indicates oppressive tendencies that render participants' home environments unsafe, drawing attention to the structural drivers of inequalities and recognising complexities that might contribute to trafficking vulnerabilities. This aligns with work examining the impact of poverty and gendered factors that increase vulnerability to trafficking (Truong, 2005; Fayomi, 2009; Kligman and Limoncelli, 2005; Duong, 2012). While previous studies suggest the likelihood between trafficked people's early experiences of poverty and disadvantages, findings from this research make a stronger claim in highlighting the potential causative value of structural factors linked to trafficking. Unlike other work examining pre-trafficking conditions in the context of migration (Cho, 2005; Wheaton, Schauer and Galli, 2010; Datta, 2005), this study highlights the impact of strong push factors that influence an individual's transnational movement.

Contrary to dominant anti-trafficking discourses, analysis of participants' narratives in this study did not appear to evidence participants' motivation by pull factors. When referring to pull factors, participants in this study stated personal reasons, such as imagined visions for gender and cultural freedom, human rights and fulfilling most basic needs, such as food, shelter and safety. Issues relating to self-actualisation, authentic identity and belonging have also been explicitly denoted. Conversely, findings from this study primarily refer to decisive push factors that force participants to seek migration prospects as a response to an immediate threat to their wellbeing or safety. Whilst economic factors have been recognised by the participants of this research; these did not relate to motivation to achieve higher earning power. Instead, these considerations were motivated by a drive for self-preservation and attempts to escape severe poverty conditions, where staying in the home country would mean an inability to meet individuals' most basic needs. In this way, these findings support recent studies that acknowledge the impact of pre-trafficking conditions as push factors that contribute to vulnerability to trafficking (Bales, 2007; Hankivsky, 2011; Boyd, 2006). Although a minimal number of narratives show awareness of envisioned better employment opportunities abroad, participants in the context of this research have referred to non-economic factors as the most prominent drive for pre-trafficking migration. When referring to economic pull factors, participants in the study emphasised the desire to secure a basic level of financial security that could allow them to sustain their day-to-day living. Participants' narratives evidenced multiple attempts and inability to secure necessary income sources that could ensure their safety and

sustenance. In this way, the large majority of participants have referred to negative push factors as principal motivations for considering the initiation of a migration project. While previous studies have indicated that experiences of disparities and traumatisation are common before trafficking (Brunovskis and Surtees, 2012; Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012; Vijeyarasa, 2012), findings from this study suggest a direct link between earlier disadvantage and subsequent exploitation.

Participants in this study conveyed a number of ways they had attempted to establish a degree of autonomy over their day-to-day pre-migration conditions. This data suggests the temporal and contextual nature of agency that is apparent even within circumstances of high levels of oppression, where awareness of danger and survival strategies are of key significance. In relaying the extreme disadvantages and adverse conditions of the home countries, respondents' accounts demonstrate that seeking ways to avoid abusive circumstances through border-crossing is an autonomous decision, evidencing agency in itself. In support of Black's (2003) claim that it is common for trafficked people to exercise agency in the initial stages of their exploitation by getting in touch with a smuggler or employment agent and seeking help to cross international borders, this study further suggests a substantial degree of agency including self-preservation whilst enduring inequalities, and exceptional courage and strength in securing escape from oppressive conditions. Whilst participants may have described themselves as victims of exploitation in their home countries; this reflected the level of inequalities and disparities they experienced but did not indicate passivity and absence of agency. Conversely, respondents' resilience and ability to withstand extreme adversities and oppression was apparent in these narratives. This is also in line with research (Alpes, 2010; Gjermeni et al., 2008; Vijeyarasa, 2010; Williams, 1999) suggesting that trafficked people tend to be active agents and play a pivotal role in supporting their families and communities in their home countries. Current findings support this understanding suggesting that it is common for trafficked people to be influenced by sociocultural and gendered role expectations that, on many occasions, would place caring and breadwinning expectations upon individuals.

The chapter indicates that respondents have demonstrated active agency in terms of their decision to leave their home countries. Within the trafficking rehabilitation discourses, this understanding relates to Zakaryan's (2005) supposition that returning trafficked people to their home countries is oppressive and damaging to individuals' autonomy. Similarly, Davis and Davis (2010) refer to repatriation strategies as rarely providing a solution to trafficked people

and compared these interventions to the oppressive forces of trafficking due to exercising power over the trafficked person.

These findings are important in highlighting that structural inequalities and limited employment opportunities, along with gender discrimination during participants' pre-trafficking experiences, could add to the severity of their disadvantage and propel individuals to cross international borders and migrate. Analysis of these findings examined trafficked people's circumstances through a gender discrimination and inequality lens, highlighting cultural aetiologies as factors influencing excessive expectations on individuals to enact fixed gender roles that include outsourcing the financial sustenance of the family, as well as carrying out caring responsibilities. Accordingly, the weight of caring responsibilities, mostly attributed to women, alongside limited access to employment opportunities, contributed to further perpetuating disadvantage and vulnerability to trafficking.

Findings from this chapter show the extent to which the gender-based, political and human rights pre-migration factors are of primary importance for understanding trafficking issues. According to Zheng's (2010) scholarly work that links trafficking to issues of poverty, inequality and lack of employment opportunities could avoid the core issues precipitating trafficking and could take away from complexities that individuals face, such as lack of available work alternatives in addition to familial and caring responsibilities. Contrary to the dominant antitrafficking discourses based on the dichotomy of victimhood and agency (Briones, 2008; Zheng, 2010; Sahghera, 2005; Warren, 2012), respondents in this study have represented themselves as active and responsible agents who very often support families in their country of origin.

Participants' personal experiences and circumstances that prompted them to leave their countries have varied according to gender, sociopolitical background and subjective frame of reference. It is therefore important to acknowledge the diversity and marked contrast between participants' gendered, ethnic and culturally-embedded identities, circumstances and decision-making. Gender differences were reflected between male and female respondents' tendencies to view their pre-trafficking conditions. Male participants related more closely to economic pull factors that influenced their initial decisions to migrate, such as lack of employment opportunities in the home country, linked to socio-cultural ostracization and inability to sustain basic living needs. The most common migration motivator for male participants in the study was the desire to secure a basic level of financial security that could allow them to sustain their

day-to-day living. Similar economic pressures have been reported by participants who were single mothers. These accounts relayed insufficient employment opportunities in their home countries alongside imminent caring responsibilities and childcare costs. In addition to these economic barriers, women who attempted to leave abusive relationships faced extremely difficult circumstances. Patriarchal values, imbued in the social, political, legal system of home countries, often legitimised inequalities and rendered living conditions incompatible with life. In such circumstances, securing basic living conditions for themselves and their children was not deemed feasible within the context of pre-trafficking home circumstances.

Children who were orphaned within circumstances of war and political unrest faced multiple levels of oppression and disadvantages due to extreme poverty, lack of support and education. Recent scholars have focussed more closely on child labour exploitation and the structural conditions that precipitated this (Van Hear, Bakewell and Long, 2018; Digidiki and Bhabha, 2018). Respondents' narratives within this section indicated that within conditions of severe underdevelopment and disadvantage, prospects for migrating abroad are aimed at self-preservation. Whether this was linked to extreme poverty conditions or other factors that prevented individuals from securing livelihoods, these decisions seemed to be more strongly influenced by negative push factors. Positive pull factors existed, but these were mostly associated with ensuring safety and necessary living conditions. Symbolic pull factors, associated with a sense of authenticity and self-actualisation, have also been recognised by participants in this study.

Dominant trafficking paradigms assume the construct of 'home' as a place of safety and 'host' as exploitative (Sanghera, 2005; Chuang, 2014). However, findings from this research highlight the severity of oppressive and often life-threatening circumstances that challenge mainstream associations of 'home' as facilitative of growth and comfort. According to participants in this study, 'home' was often linked to established practices and beliefs that could have a harmful effect on individual autonomy. Within a background of such fixed ideologies, respondents largely perceived seeking police protection as futile. In this way, forced labour and the absence of choice were also reportedly influenced by the failure of state agencies to provide appropriate assistance. This unprotected status, combined with limited skills due to insufficient education, often led to decreased earning power and potential to secure employment and livelihood. Similarly to research of feminised vulnerability within other settings, such as circumstances of asylum-seeking women (Conlon, 2011; Seeking, 2013; Borges and Faria, 2020), findings from this study show participants' perception of complete lack of support from

authorities and family members. These findings correspond to a small number of qualitative studies (e.g. Locke, 2010; Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012; Vijeyarasa, 2012), highlighting that patriarchal values, poverty, gender disparity, and cultural attitudes tend to precipitate trafficking and contribute to trafficking vulnerabilities.

6.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have analysed participants' pre-trafficking circumstances and motivation for migrating. Respondents' accounts within this study reflected complex aetiologies that led to their transnational movement and subsequent succumbing to trafficking in the UK. Participants identified a number of push factors such as poverty and gender inequality, vulnerability following the loss of parents and primary caregivers, as well as political instability. Cultural and gender-based outlooks, patriarchal oppression and expectations to prioritise familial and communal needs intensified a sense of inequalities inherent within respondents' pre-trafficking conditions. The reasons attached to participants' decisions to cross international borders antagonise more stereotypical aetiologies of trafficking and propose a new understanding of trafficked people's circumstances. Contrary to dominant representations portraying trafficked people as naive individuals who are vulnerable to being coerced, funding from this study recognises more complex structural factors that act as drivers for trafficked people's decisions to cross international borders.

In exploring trafficked people's pre-trafficking realities, an apparent tension was observed between dominant, derived from agency trafficking representations and respondents' accounts of withstanding adversities and oppression. In direct opposition to the stereotypical image of trafficked individuals as coerced and vulnerable victims, findings from this study consider trafficked people as effectively employing survival strategies in the process of taking control over unfavourable circumstances. Exercising a degree of agency in the initial stages of migration is, from this perspective, predominantly motivated by survival needs and not inductive to criminality. Narratives from the standpoint of trafficked people reveal that respondents make authoritative decisions, opposing stereotypical victim notions, taking risks, and facing unknown circumstances in their attempts to flee to imagined safety.

The examination of pre-trafficking conditions_discussed in this chapter is significant in highlighting participants' own analysis of the aetiologies and causations of trafficking. Various interpretations and circumstances accounted by the respondents in this study point towards

primary causes for their decisions to migrate and succumb to trafficking, as structural conditions and inequalities are often enacted within a background of political unrest. This is important in outlining trafficked people-led formulation of trafficking causality based on their direct knowledge and experience. Similarly, analysis of conditions precipitating migration and trafficking are closely attached to participants' views of trafficking prevention and rehabilitation. Respondents in this study, for example, make a direct link between pre-migratory gender disparities and vulnerability to trafficking.

Overall, participants' perceptions of the host environment were marked by expectations for security and stability that could facilitate their more authentic being in the world. Participants' narratives suggest an imagined model of 'home' in the host country, based on securing basic needs and authentic living, countered to their associations of 'home' as not belonging and foreignness. This suggests that homecoming presupposes a safe environment where individuals can feel accepted for who they are. Recounting to physical and emotional safety, visions of achieving a more balanced state where compromising individual values would not require self-denial and sacrifice, were rehearsed and relayed.

The next chapter will continue to develop the themes of agency and inequalities through presenting aspects of respondents' daily living routines post-trafficking identification, tensions between anticipated and actual rehabilitation, and power issues within the support provisions in the host environment, by_examining the ways in which respondents_in this research experienced trafficking_identification and support, alongside outlining the risk and protective factors that influence their wellbeing. The chapter will analyse some of the pulls between main expectations apprehended by participants and practical provisions of post trafficking support. Particular attention will emphasise power differentiation between participants and others, and how it opposes respondents' views of wellbeing.

7

Inequalities during Trafficking Identification: Post-trafficking Rehabilitation or Compulsory victimhood?

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of respondents' experiences of trafficking identification and rehabilitation, with a specific focus on post-trafficking intervention and support. Beginning this examination by outlining the process of VoT (Victim of Trafficking) identification, this chapter will continue with an emphasis on post-trafficking rehabilitation, reflected through participants' daily routines, practices and lived experiences in the host community. I will further argue that for some participants, the expectation to provide narratives that fit in with their trafficking claims influence respondents' trafficking identification, access to services and relational interactions. In other words, I consider how participants' accounts indicate a tendency to perform trauma-induced narratives that fit in within the stereotypical representations of themselves as trafficked people. Particular attention will be drawn to outlining the risk and protective factors post trafficking identification, focussing on strengths and areas in need of development for these programs. In this way, the impact on trafficked people's wellbeing and integration in the host country, will be examined by addressing the first research question:

What are the post-trafficking experiences and perceptions of wellbeing, integration and rehabilitation in the UK from the perspectives of trafficked men and women?

Under the umbrella theme of inequalities, emergent sub-themes were organised into three categories that represented participants' experiences of identification and rehabilitation: 1. inequalities during Trafficking Identification, 2) The waiting place and 3) helpful and hindering factors to post-trafficking rehabilitation. Alongside this, re-occurring reflections shared by trafficked people throughout the research study will include consideration of participants daily routines and domesticities within the framework of the 'waiting place' theme. Advancing the argument of Chapter 5, I show how participants' sense of agency transpires through the settings and circumstances in the host environment. It is significant to note that participants reflected on these circumstances following a passage of time after the trafficking circumstances, allowing temporal distance from their experiences for reflexive and critical purposes. In an attempt to unite different 'voices' within the research puzzles, the chapter will start with introducing the context of the theme, to continue with findings and followed by discussion and summary sections.

7.2 Overview of Post-trafficking Identification and Support

Inequalities inherent in the trafficking identification process continue to play a role in the period of post-trafficking identification and support. Established classifications of deserving and undeserving victims that inform trafficking identification could influence the construction of trafficked people's reintegration as a function of need and vulnerability-focussed interventions (Ravi et al., 2017; Hopper, 2017). In this way, trafficked peoples' rehabilitation discourses could exhibit tension between trauma-informed approaches and more radical positions, highlighting the inherently oppressive nature of more directive interventions. Structural analysis of how state power invested in rehabilitation institutions could be indicative of attempting to subjugate underprivileged populations, exhibited in the work of Goffman (1961) and Foucault (1980). This work points to oppressive tendencies to systematically segregate and subdue individuals perceived as disagreeable into conformity. Within a similar line of argument, feminist scholars (Musto, 2009; Ticktin, 2011) critique the way in which rescuing and rehabilitation industries have reproduced rather than challenged social disparities and oppression under the umbrella of facilitating empowerment and individual autonomy.

Instead of recognising the detrimental effect of structural barriers as factors contributing to inequalities and vulnerability to trafficking, rescue and intervention discourses have been criticised as reproducing vulnerability and disempowering trafficked individuals by indirectly linking social status to socialisation and rehabilitation. For example, studies (Bose, 2018; Mukesh, 2018; Ikuteyijo, 2018) show how rehabilitation programs aim to reinforce reintegration through moralising and retraining trafficked people to assume labour roles that are considered socially acceptable and appropriate for their racialised, gendered and class-based characteristics. This analysis highlights how trafficked people's constructions as passive recipients of services justifies tendencies on behalf of high-status third parties, such as NGO staff, government officials and agents of the state, to assume a more directive and power-driven approach to trafficking rehabilitation. Further to recognising the othering propensities that tend to segregate individuals under the pretext of humanitarian rehabilitation, this work highlights a direct link between trafficking intervention discourses and tendencies to further consolidate trafficked individuals' position of inferiority within the established social hierarchy.

Alongside awareness raising of how imposing a prescribed racialised and class-based pathway of post-trafficking rehabilitation could contribute to inequalities, a number of scholars (i.e.Hu, 2019; Kotiswaran, 2021; O'Brien, 2018; Jennings, 2019) have drawn attention to the way in which dominant trafficking legislation indirectly exercises pressure on migrant workers to present their narratives within recognisable trafficking-induced discourses. For example, Sharma (2005) maintains that immigration legislation could prompt migrant workers to represent trafficked narratives in order to gain access to support and secure immigration permanence. Apart from undermining individuals' complexities, this analysis highlights how polarised trafficking narratives validate rescue discourses and intervention efforts aimed at individuals who present as 'deserving' victims. In this sense, the post-trafficking support measures, built on dominant antitrafficking discourses, have been found to contribute to reproducing vulnerability by reinforcing the performing of victimhood. In other words, apart from imbuing individuals with responsibility for their vulnerabilities, this line of argument claims that such tendencies could pressurise trafficked people to perform identities of the ideal victim and rehabilitated survivor.

Further to reinforcing victimhood representations, trafficked people's access to already pre-selected trauma-focused support and rehabilitation has also been informed by funding pressures and professionalisation. Studies have shown how anti-trafficking professionalisation could further contribute to the widening of power differentials between trafficked people and NGOs.

According to Musto (2010), the inherent conflict between prioritising the state needs and protecting trafficked people continues to present as an area of ambiguity. More precisely, Brennan (2005) locates this tension between state legislation and individual needs within funding influences that have primarily determined NGOs approach to trafficking support and rehabilitation. Alongside limited collaboration opportunities within an already predetermined approach to post-trafficking support, this leaves minimal collaborative space for input in support services, antitrafficking movements and legislation. This highlights the inherent power inequality between professionals, who have access to opportunities, resources and authority, and trafficked people, who are required to follow professional advice of what is considered helpful for their well-being. Alongside such disparities, a profound lack of necessary evidence of the efficiency and applicability of post-trafficking interventions has been noted (Cockbain, Bowers and Dimitrova, 2018; Hemmings et al., 2016; Kiss and Zimmerman, 2019; Le et al., 2017). This indicates a need to explore post-trafficking support provisions from the perspectives of those who are the intended beneficiaries of these services. Therefore, in this chapter, I will examine how power differentials and inequalities might encourage individuals to present narratives consistent with the dominant notions of trafficking whilst examining power disparities between trafficked people and third actors.

7.3 Inequalities During Trafficking Identification

In general, respondents' access to support, employment, and training opportunities are conditional upon completing trafficking identification. Therefore, VoT identification was one of the most significant rehabilitation factors outlined by respondents. This was not only linked to enabling connections within the community but was also perceived as making steps towards securing semi-permanent housing and attaining a sense of stability. Alongside a small number of individuals who had confirmed their trafficking status, the study included those who had submitted their trafficking identification application through the NRM and were awaiting the decision, as well as a small number of participants whose trafficking claims were rejected and faced the prospect of deportation or assisted return.

Although narrative accounts during this post-trafficking phase varied in content, it was overall not uncommon for respondents to report having faced difficulties or barriers to accessing trafficking identification assistance. In particular, participants' narratives indicated that access to legal advice and support was one of the most decisive factors in making a successful

trafficking identification claim. Often, respondents' circumstances were complex, forming layers of inequalities and disadvantages when assessing eligibility and criteria for identification and support. According to some participants, the decision about how each strand of their circumstances might or might not deem them eligible for protection was dependent on detailed knowledge of the UK asylum and immigration system. Some respondents, in this way, highlighted that it was very unlikely that they could draw on such specialised legal knowledge, to develop a coherent and robust argument and succeed in gaining humanitarian protection.

> ***Misha:*** *You are expected to go to court to justify all of what happened. At the same time, we need to come ourselves, to know the story. I need to have a free lawyer. That's needed. I didn't have that. Because otherwise, it takes a long time, you know. You are a victim of a crime. If you were battered, you will get a lawyer, but the law doesn't recognise this situation enough. When we were escaping from that place, we felt nervous; we didn't know, they didn't tell us, you know, you can reach a lawyer or speak to someone. They didn't tell me about it. And that time, we got nothing, no help. Now we find so many people who tell us it takes six months, ten months, one year, to get your papers. I am worried that this could happen to me. I don't want to be stuck here for that long. I want to go and speak to someone to see if they could help me to speed this up. I don't know the law. We don't have much information of whom to reach and ask to help with the case.*

> ***Hadija:*** *When I came here, I didn't know nothing. I thought, if I was born in [place], I could not legally live in another country. I didn't know I could have the right to live here, so I lived hiding, as they say. I thought the government would not give me paper that I could stay; I didn't even know I could ask…I didn't know there is a law, that if you have a problem, you come in this country, you can talk about it, and they will help you… So, when I came, I didn't know… I didn't know what to do. That's what I explained to my solicitor, and she explained it to the Home Office. Because, they said, they don't think I need the support, because I took so long to come.*

As these narratives indicate, respondents were unaware that there were provisions in the law that would enable them to apply for VoT identification and support. Due to an apparent lack of awareness that such provision existed, Hadija made an application for international protection following a lengthy passage of time. This delay in submitting an asylum application was, according to Hadija, one of the main reasons why her asylum case failed. This highlights a discrepancy that despite the apparent entitlement for support, specialist knowledge of the asylum system in the UK, alongside access to adequate support in submitting a claim for protection, were often cited as barriers to rehabilitation. The unpredictability of the trafficking identification process, according to some respondents, was associated with an increased sense of uncertainty and delayed respondents' access to support.

Further, some narrative accounts indicated that the immigration claims submitted did not always sufficiently reflect the full scale of participants' experiences of exploitation and threat

to their safety. For example, as discussed in Chapter 6, some participants recalled having faced multiple exploitation sources throughout their lives following the loss of primary carers and being orphaned in early childhood. This placed them in the care of close or distant relatives and they often had to fend for their own needs throughout childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Despite the severity of these acutely adverse conditions and experiences, such circumstances usually did not warrant entitlement to support and protection. In this way, alongside barriers to accessing legal support, the multifaceted nature of exploitation suffered, often rendered respondents dependent on third actors to identify and align their circumstances with entitlement provision. For example, after having suffered prolonged exploitation in her home country and the UK, Rashida was alerted by a health professional who was supporting her with her pregnancy that there was a likelihood that her circumstances might fall under UK Asylum and Refugee Protection Legislation. Rashida was initially referred to a lawyer who advised her to submit an asylum claim based on the risk of prosecution in her home country due to her sexuality. However, within the limited available consultation timeframe, her legal advisor failed to include her trafficking experience in support of her asylum claim. Following the failure of this asylum claim and during the pursuit of a fresh claim, Rashida's new caseworker was able to identify that she was likely to have been trafficked and referred her to the NRM and, respectively, to a post-trafficking support organisation. Whilst free legal support was extremely difficult to obtain, access to specialist advice was even more limited after a case was refused. In accounting for the difficulties in the process of arriving at her submission of a fresh claim, Rashida recalls:

> ***Rashida:*** *It's more difficult to get support when your case has been refused, and you need to submit a fresh claim. Because we know what we've been through. We can tell this is the story, but we don't know how to get it ready to go. There are so many obstacles to get to the right place; to get help. But so many things happened, and I had to pick which ones fit in with the law and how you can prove it and what you can expect from there. Sometimes, you don't get good solicitors. They just get your money, and they don't do what they promised to do. That's what happened the first time. Sometimes, if you go to the solicitor to ask about asylum, you will have to pay £70 £90, then they will ask you to come again, and keep taking money, more money, but they won't do things right.*

This passage shows the way in which Rashida struggled to find appropriate legal support that was essential for making a fresh claim. Due to the complexity of her experiences and the specialist legal knowledge required, she found it difficult to get the assistance she needed. Frequently, respondents had to substantiate their trafficking identification claims with professional evidence that reaffirmed their statements. This exercised pressure on participants

to present their narratives in a form that aligns with stereotypical notions of trafficking victimhood to access support and avoid immigration-related difficulties. In addition to legal aid and knowledge required for submitting a claim, such specialist support evidence was also often required during the process of preparing a court case.

> ***Makeba:*** *In any way, if you don't have someone to help you properly, you will not get a fair treatment. Because I can say a lot of things, but that doesn't mean anything. If you don't get proof or a Professional report, they will not accept whatever much you have to say. But if, He or She [professionals] says one thing only, the Home Office will accept it. When I was in London, I could never find someone to help me. There was no one. Everybody, they said they will help you, everybody said, oh, you are like my sister, but it's not true. They just want to use you…*

Makeba's reference to the limitations of accessing legal aid that delayed her application for trafficking identification shows how her access to support was conditional on third actors, whose knowledge and specialist skills informed her VoT applications. Particularly pertinent to her circumstances was her perception of increased vulnerability to falling victim to opportunistic third actors who promised to assist her but instead misinformed her and led to circumstances initiating her trafficking exploitation. Alongside this, Makeba's account of oppressive circumstances during the period of trafficking identification highlights apparent hierarchies of knowledge between trafficked peoples' perspectives on one side and perceived superior judgement on behalf of the state agents on the other. Within this construction, actors whose knowledge and skills tend to be highly appreciated are opposed to the habitually considered as less trustworthy trafficked people's lived experiences. In this way, power differentials apparent within the trafficking identification period continue to perpetuate inequalities and add to individuals' disadvantages during the interview process.

Perceptions of inequalities and power distance between respondents and agents of the state continued after applying to be considered as a VoT and perpetuated following the completion of this requirement. The process of completing the VoT application involved an interview, during which applicants were required to provide evidence of their trafficking experiences. Revisiting these circumstances in order to provide sufficient proof to authorities, often conflicted with participants' efforts to distance themselves from traumatic memories. In this way, some participants referred to the emotional intensity during their trafficking identification interview in a way that was representative of their authentic lived experiences.

> ***Yetunde:*** *My first interview took eight hours. Every second, they were questions, questions, questions. It's not something that I think I could do – to just be giving answers. And I thought I could have the luxury to try to forget, but I had two men in*

front of me, asking questions, and I had to tell them things I could didn't want to think about. Because, they say, if you tell us your story, we will make a decision. But nobody can make a decision, asking me what happened, with words… I can never explain with words what really happened to me. If you hear the story with words, you will say, okay. But if you could get a sense of what it is inside me, boiling hot, you will think, oh, God! How is she managing… Everything came back in those eight hours, and it took me another year to recover. I went to the GP to seek medical help, but it's my son who keeps me sane, helping me get up in the morning, saying, "Let's go and do things".

In accounting for some of the difficulties in disclosing events of personal nature, this excerpt highlights an apparent divide between cognitive knowledge that is esteemed within the trafficking and legal discourses versus empathic reflection based on Yetunde's experiential and heartfelt understanding that is meaningful for her. Yetunde's narrative further relays the tension between an obligation to express 'in words' what had happened and giving an accurate account of the impact that this has had on her. Whilst the textual events-based description that fulfilled the legal requirement and risked causing harm to Yetunde was framed as useful and needed from the legal perspectives, Yetunde's embodied way of expression that honours her experiences was afforded less emphasis. The adverse impact of her disclosure added to a sense of tension arising from the requirement to prioritise the screening interview outcomes over Yetunde's emotional needs. Significant differences between Yetunde's views of rehabilitation and authorities' preferred information- based knowledge were implied in this narrative. These findings relate to competing discourses and notions of what is considered valuable and truthful from the perspectives of participants and state officials.

Following the completion of the trafficking identification interview, the pronouncement of the final trafficking decision could also reinstate feelings of vulnerability. Perceived unfair verdicts often brought about difficult feelings of revictimization and, at times, reinforced perceptions of reoccurring injustice. In this way, some respondents reflected on the ways in which the trafficking decision could replicate and reinforce perceptions of inequalities. In the following excerpt, Zaynab relates the reasons for her refusal, echoing feelings of mistrust that government officials would prioritise her human rights before the state interests.

Zaynab: *At the beginning of February, I got a letter from the Home Office that they had refused me. So, since then, I have not felt well. I have been having appointments with the solicitor, court, preparing myself for this and that… They were asking for more evidence, which I don't have. I have been worried. Because there is a lot going on: I have a court case; I have a child to take care of...*

Now, they told me I had to appeal to the High Court. They are saying that I have to apply the law. The law is saying this; the law is saying that… Which I can't do myself, and I don't have a lawyer to do it for me….The judge said the main reason why they

refused me is that I waited for my visa to expire before applying for asylum. Because it took eight months….But they said that since I have a degree in [subject], I should be knowing the asylum process in this country. But I was not told about this. So, that's why the judge didn't grant me asylum….It takes a lot of strength to go through the system on your own. I am alone, without family. There is no one to help me. I don't know how I could defend myself on my own. They said that they wanted more evidence, and I don't know where I could get evidence from. This is my main issue now; I can't really think beyond that because if that is not resolved, nothing else will make sense…

As this narrative highlights, Zaynab's understanding of her decision reflects authorities' insufficient recognition of her personal circumstances. The 'negative' decision has directly impacted multiple facets of her daily living and future prospects. Added to this uncertainty is the lack of support and specialist knowledge that increases Zaynab's sense of aloneness and otherness. In her attempt to challenge universal concepts, projected by the state apparatus, her sense of powerlessness is apparent.

It was common that major hindrances within participants' journeys were often associated with "Home office". This external factor symbolised the difficulties of obtaining trafficking identification that affected participants' everyday post trafficking experiences. Fear of removals or ceasing of support in case of unsuccessful identification due to a negative trafficking decision caused distress to individuals who were in the process of confirming their trafficking status. This often marked participants' disposition as dependent on others for controlling their major life events. In her 'Interview' image (Fig.24), Genet represented herself sitting face to face with a decision-making authority figure. Hot scene and colours could indicate the intensity of this event. It could be suggested that power imbalance, antagonism and lack of trust could be expressed through this image.

Figure 24

Since being conclusively recognised as VoT under the NRM means that trafficking experiences have been identified, many accounts referred to feelings of vulnerability whilst undergoing trafficking identification. In this way, a pronounced sense of helplessness was apparent in participants' references to the 'Home office' as a barrier. According to respondents' narratives, unless these barriers fall, there was little that the narrative protagonist could do to change their circumstances. Through a narrative image of 'The Giving Hand' (Fig.25), Bhavna relayed her

understanding of her experience of trafficking identification. Bhavna's image outlined three distinct spaces: a place of joy and peace, a decision-making place and a 'seeking' place. The image portrays a figure of a bird on the right that, according to Bhavna, has to overcome many barriers to reach the space on the left side of the sheet. The figure in the middle decides whether or not the bird will be allowed to reach the designated space. Bhavna described the inside circular area as a space of inner love, peace and meditation that helps people find their solutions. The protective space is reached following many barriers and difficulties. The idea is that the 'giving hand' gains noble quality just by giving, and by giving way. The specification here might be significant to Bhavna's understanding of the function of a trafficking identification caseworker in merely allowing access to safety. There is a choice and clear consequences for making a decision. The moral of the story, according to Bhavna, is that giving way ensures justice and safety. Although relayed in abstract terms, the moral and significance of the narrative bore apparent similarities to Bhavna's lived experiences. This story schematically represents the participant's realities of applying for her trafficking status and immigration permanence.

Figure 25

> **Bhavna:** *The 'Giving hand' is more beautiful than a beautiful face, and the figure on the left has to give in order to reach paradise. However, there are beautiful people who can prevent others from joining a safe, protected space because they are afraid that the destination place will be too crowded. They are stopping others from being included. There are many people who don't reach their destination because they haven't been given way. This is not about helping but of simply giving way.*

In contesting reality and deconstructing what is considered just by the state, Zaynab challenges normative decision-making and explores new ways of negotiating access to a life-affirming safe space. This critique signifies elements of hierarchy and distinguishes between actions and moral consequences. The iconic nature of the triptych communicates ethical truths and multiple layers of meaning, where imagined justice aligns with the spiritual realms. Facilitating deconstructive and reconstructive frames that challenge basic assumptions as certain and help identify and reinvent power relations, were evident in several narrative and visual findings. Accordingly, some respondents shared that apart from residency issues, immigration

uncertainty directly affected their emotional wellbeing and prompted feelings of hopelessness and despair. For most participants who were in the process of confirming their immigration status, life circumstances were often perceived as being outside of their control and entirely dependent on Home office decision-makers. For example, Zala rehearsed a dialogue between herself and official 'others' who were envisioned as decision-makers or individuals who influence their wellbeing and future.

> ***Zala:*** *If I had a secret camera, I would have liked to put it in my Home Office case worker's place. I'd like to see how she makes her decision. She probably just sees the papers and says: 'Refuse!'. I'd like to put a camera in the kitchen, so I could connect to her, like two ladies who cook and chat…*

Within such attempts to connect through an official other on a humane level, through an activity embedded in most people's daily living routines, Zala positioned herself as directly addressing her immigration decision-maker. The situatedness of the kitchen, in this way, becomes a site of domesticity that equates and removes othering tendencies to facilitate a dialogical space, where preparation of food enables an atmosphere of simplicity that presupposes stripping away from professional masks and etiquette. Such dialogues with caseworkers from the 'Home office' took place to question decision-making or criticise caseworkers for perceived lack of empathy and objectivity, in an expression of respondents' voice of authority and dialogical agency. Within the stereotypical binaries of 'us' and 'them', enabling a dialogue with the other could indicate an attempt to co-create and resume agency within the scenes of inequality. Within this imaginary engagement space, respondents' voice and engagement were amplified to access the realms of the decision-making other and attempt a connection in a humane and embodied way through daily routines and practices.

Alongside respondents who expressed difficulties in undergoing the victim identification process, a number of participants recalled a sense of release and completion after the opportunity to fully participate in the court proceedings, contribute to the hearing and provide details of their circumstances. These ascending narratives tend to highlight the hybridity of potential identities and openness to forming new connections. Unlike Gulten's narrative, characterised with stillness and separateness from others, these recurrent themes imbue a sense of optimism and curiosity for the future.

> ***Gulten:*** *I am waiting for my decision. I am so much relieved after I gave the evidence. I don't want to have a burden all the time. It's very difficult. I used to think all the time: this happened, this happened, this happened… Whatever happened, I wrote it, and I was relieved. Because I didn't want to think of what happened all the time. And I feel*

that I have been very strong. What happened to me is not that important; I am important.

Meera: *When they said to me, you have a positive decision… I fell down on my knees. I felt something opened in my heart, and I was free. I've had this heavy feeling here, I've had this for two years and, that day, this was just lifted off me. I never realised what I was carrying before.*

But this day, the day my trafficking decision was confirmed, was the best day of my life, happier than the day I gave birth to my son… Because when my son was born, I was worried sick that I am bringing him into a world where I couldn't protect him…

But when The Home Office decision came, it meant that from now on, I became a good mum: I could lead a normal life, I could have good work and take my son to the park without being scared that somebody's after us. I could take good care of him and make him feel that he doesn't miss anybody.

Because we are a small family, just the two of us…

For two years, I could never look at myself in the mirror. The day of the decision, I took a haircut. It's a new life. And when I look at my reflection now, I feel proud.

Meera referred to her positive trafficking decision as a catalyst for growth that enabled her to make plans for the future, attain a sense of peace and fulfilment. This narrative reflects how practical implications of this VoT decision impacted Meera's sense of self, who has now been deemed eligible for state protection and can provide support and stability necessary to raise her child. In this way, trafficking identification provided Meera with necessary conditions for growth and reinforced her identity as a 'good' parent. This account evidences the importance that Meera imbued in her trafficking decision that affected her identity on a deep existential level. Her newly acquired sense of control of her circumstances contrasted with previous feelings of guilt that she could not guarantee stability and a safe environment for her child.

Since most of the participants in this research were waiting for their trafficking status to be confirmed by immigration officials, trafficking identification was one of the most discussed themes by respondents. For many participants, the period of VoT identification was associated with feelings of vulnerability, heightened anxiety and insecurity about the future, further exacerbated by participants' immigration uncertainty. Overall, inequalities were consistently present within the post-trafficking period, pervading all stages of the trafficking identification process, including the stages of securing legal aid, submitting an application, and undergoing screening interviews. Many participants shared their perceptions of heightened inequalities in their access to free legal support. Similarly, respondents who were unsuccessful in confirming their VoT status underwent a lengthy and uncertain process for preparing a fresh claim that presented even more barriers to accessing legal assistance. Power differentiations between

respondents and agents of the state reinforced polarities apparent in the access to knowledge, privileges and status. The requirement to rely on the support of third agents during the trafficking identification process contributed to a sense of disparity, loss of control and inequalities apparent in this stage of the post-trafficking process.

7.4 The 'Waiting Place': Transition and Liminality

The trafficking identification period was often accompanied by a prolonged waiting process, during which government officials completed an investigation to examine the integrity of the accounts submitted and confirm or reject the applicant'' VoT status. Within this liminal period between submitting the claim and obtaining the final VoT decision, cessation of all long-term planning until the victim of trafficking status is finalised, was reported by many participants. Some respondents described coordinating a set of daily routines that focussed on short-term goals, whilst longer-term plans and visions for the future were often paused until this final decision was reached. A number of participants, in this way, expressed a clear split of their imagined life after their trafficking decision and perceived themselves as fully able to participate in living, hoping and dreaming for their future, only after this decision was made by government officials. In this way, disabling future plans and expectations until the final confirmation of VoT status characterised many of the narratives.

> ***Nina:*** *Seven years I have waited, seven. And where am I now? I could have been a nurse, a teacher, if they'd let me study, to show something for this time. Now, I'm sick of worrying, good for nothing.*

Nina's narrative echoes what many respondents expressed as a sense of loss when considering what they could have achieved during this time, had they had the opportunity. As this excerpt indicates, the process of confirming trafficking identification often took a lengthy period of time, during which access to advanced education and employment opportunities was unavailable. Other accounts expressed anger and feelings of being trapped in circumstances perceived as very similar to being trafficked. Due to the length of time that they spent 'waiting' for this decision without the opportunity to engage in employment or full-time education, some respondents referred to 'not doing' as 'not being', in such a way that denial of life, occupation and meaningful education opportunities, preoccupied these narratives. This liminality and in-betweenness of the 'waiting' period infiltrate through the following accounts:

Anton: *This is not slavery but not freedom, either.*

It's an in-between state;

A 'waiting place':

Nothing, nothing, nothing.

I want to make a change. I want to change my life.

I want, I want.

Cause my life is …

I've had enough.

I don't like the compulsory "one to one".

Because this does not help.

Going, signing, "Are you all right,"

and all that bullshit.

I want to work.

I can work hard.

I don't want to have to ask people for permission.

To go to an interview, I have to ask for permission.

To apply for work, I have to ask for permission.

And for the office to reply, you have to wait.

We have five pounds per day. No travel, nothing.

Young people!

We sit in the house all day,

Waiting…

The view from my window?

It's a brick wall.

That's where I'm at.

Figure 26

The in-betweenness of the 'waiting period' within this narrative and image is ascribed a metaphorical meaning compared with the liminal space identified as 'not slavery' and 'not freedom'. The emptiness and meaninglessness of this account indicate suffering and

'stuckness' that prevents Anton from movement and progression in space. This multi-faceted narrative paints a picture of the monotonous daily reality in the waiting period, characterised by claustrophobia and stillness. The sense of subjugation by other discourses is apparent. The portrayed distance between perceived potential and 'stuckness' within a limited space that is not life-affirming bears connotations with imprisonment. Similarly to Anton's narrative of 'stuckness' in space, Ilyana's account positions her as occupying a small 'waiting place', conceptualised as being in a middle ground of a continuum. This account combines optimistic expectations for the future but also uncertainties and doubts that this would happen.

In contrast to Anton's story, Ilyana's account indicates an ascending tendency and hope for the future. However, the 'positive future' is described in vague and stereotypical terms, without exact details of what this might entail or how she would go about instigating a change. Progression is located within the realms of outside forces, constructed mainly as beyond her control as she describes her dependence on waiting for other sources to propel her headway with her application for international protection.

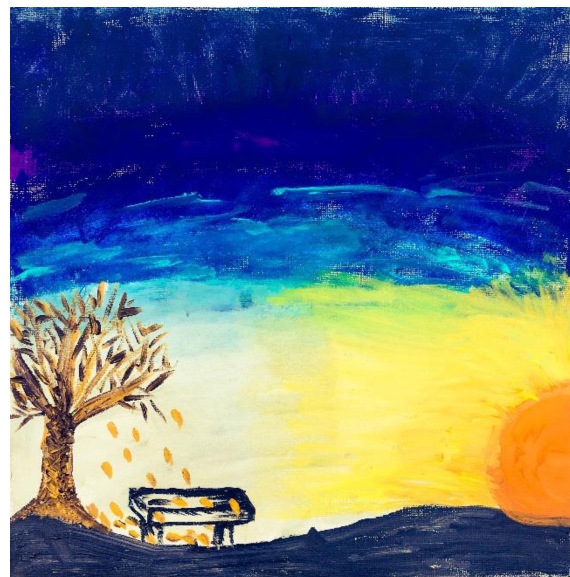

Figure 27

Ilyana: *It is a small place, it's tiny:*

A waiting bench;

A place for waiting.

And I know that there is a bright sun somewhere; somewhere in the distance,

but I haven't reached there yet.

I'm trying hard to keep going;

to be positive;

to be a good mum.

I am trying every day.

In constructing this image, Ilyana highlighted her position as diminished in relation to the environment. Lack of movement and limited variability within the scene permeates this narrative. While this could perhaps suggest constraints and inhibition, there is also a sense of peace and harmony in this narrative and image. In comparison to Anton's self-identification as

subjugated and marginalised by external forces, Ilyana's imagery and account indicate a space of potential that could facilitate her growth and development.

Alongside these accounts of uncertainty during the period of confirming trafficking identification, some participants welcomed the time 'in-between' as an opportunity to adjust to the new environment and add to their skills set and understanding of the host environment. Following the difficulties in accessing and expressing intense emotional experiences, these accounts indicated relief after completing the legal requirements and submitting the necessary evidence. For these individuals, the waiting period associated with this transitional space was perceived as facilitative of their recovery and opportunity to develop new skills and employment agency before the awaited receipt of positive trafficking decision.

> ***Makda:*** *But where I am now, it's a good place….I feel free. I feel complete. Because of the case. If there is any chance the Home Office say, "No", that will be their mistake, their oversight. In that way, I feel relieved. Even if it takes long, I am not worried. I have done everything, and I have given the all of the evidence that Home Office asked me to give. So, they can see the truth. And if they want to take long, let them take long, yeah, I don't care. I have things to do here. My English is getting better. I'm forgetting my own language now (laughs). My cousin says to me on the phone, oh, you forgot to speak [native language]. So I'm a bit stuck now. But I'm very positive about my case.*

This perception highlights the value of the in-between space of the trafficking identification period, expressed through opportunities for developing new knowledge and skills, and accumulating cultural capital that could aid a sense of belonging to the host environment. Within this liminal timeline, a number of participants conveyed the need for services to provide more support to strengthen their perceived hope for the future and forthcoming financial sustainability through access to education, employment and volunteering opportunities. In this way, the in-between period of VoT application and confirmatory identification was also referred to by some participants as facilitating conditions for growth and gaining a sense of preparedness for the perceived future that lies ahead in the host community.

Participants' accounts referred to experiencing long periods of waiting before confirming their trafficking status. The visual signifiers of this period revealed more static and oppressive narratives, lacking in movement and direction. The stillness experienced in the post-transition and post-trafficking period tended to confine the narrative character within a stagnant space and limited potential. From this perspective, the 'in-between' waiting place of trafficking identification was often expressed as inhibiting growth and development. A sense of loss for what could have been a missed opportunity to acquire work experience or qualification whilst waiting for VoT decision was commonly present within these narratives. Although some

participants' narratives of their daily living post-trafficking experiences were primarily shaped by the disadvantages they faced, others have demonstrated relief and a sense of space needed for reflection and recuperation that allowed immersion in the ethos and values of the adopted habitat that instigated a sense of hope and visions for the future. In this way, whilst some narratives have indicated respondents' self-identification as being derived from agency, other accounts offered perceptions of containment in space.

7.5 Daily Routines and Inequalities

Ordinary post-trafficking routines have been largely overlooked by trafficking discourses. These everyday lived experiences differ from sensationalist narratives of trafficking that could provoke audiences' visceral reactions and prompt public engagement. Seemingly unremarkable, participants' accounts of their mundane daily realities illuminate the everyday nature of inequalities and life post trafficking identification. On the other spectrum, daily routines in the host environment reveal another space of the habitual and everyday that could illuminate marginalisation and exclusion.

> ***Chinyere:*** *Monday, Tuesday, I have group classes. After the classes, I always try to do my shopping because the organization gives me a free bus pass [for attending the classes]. So, on the day that I come for my class, I try to use my bus pass to also do my shopping. If I have another group in the afternoon like, we have exercises on Wednesday; then I go home. I'm only free on Thursday. Friday, I volunteer at [organization], I cook. Saturday, I stay at home. Sunday, sometimes I go to church, sometimes I go to the Sikh temple. And then I go home.*
>
> *I try and buy a bus pass for the week, because sometimes, like, when I go to [place]., I have to be there early, by 9, and if I pay on the bus, it costs me more. And if I buy the bus pass on the bus, it also costs me more, and I can only use it with one bus company. But what I do instead is, I walk a long way to come to the shop, it's far from my house. Sometimes when I come to the shop, the machine where you buy the bus pass is not working. It's out of order. Then I have to pay single, now it's come more, £2.10, and then I buy another pass from Queen's square.*
>
> *So that's how I do my day. I always look for something to do.*

This narrative reveals the daily routines that Chinyere established for herself in an attempt to re-instate her own sense of normality and predictability. Apparent in the narrative is the tendency for Chinyere to create a structure that supports her everyday living. Alongside this, daily habitus, relayed by Chinyere, shows practices and rituals indicative of inequalities. The ability to move in-between spaces is determined by limited access to resources. It is noticeable that the struggle to obtain a bus ticket, for example, occupies ample space within this narrative

to indicate a dependency on this provision to enable Chinyere to access the support services and complete her daily living rituals.

Awareness of scarcity and lack of appropriate conditions for growth informed many accounts of participants who were parents. These narratives reflected the respondents' perceived inability to provide suitable conditions for their offspring's growth and development. These reported shortcomings were accompanied by intense feelings of parental guilt and regret that difficult circumstances could have affected their children's wellbeing and future. Not having access to familial support and facing practical difficulties of living within a constraint environment, rendered participants even more vulnerable to doubt and self-criticism. Intense emotional accounts relayed a rift between the expected 'all providing' maternal figure, and practical limitations imposed by daily living challenges. A number of participants highlighted parenting as having an overarching significance that influenced their sense of identity. Some participants who were mothers shared difficulties in meeting the expectations of being a good parent amidst economic and social barriers. Attempts to provide their offspring with necessary conditions to learn, grow and develop, often proved difficult within conditions of economic scarcity.

> ***Laila:*** *It's hard being a single parent. My house is far away; I have to change two buses to come to City Centre. Living alone is hard. No links to anyone. It's difficult when I'm sick. It's really stressful. John takes really long to fall asleep at night. I feel so stressed. I have no appetite. I am worrying a lot. I have to wait for him to sleep to do my homework, but we only have one room, and he cannot sleep with the lights on. It's not easy to keep a baby in such a small space. I know this must affect him as well, and I worry about it a lot. It is the most difficult thing to do this on your own when you have nobody. It's difficult for me to come to these sessions because sometimes, when I feel lonely, it's difficult for me to go anywhere. I make sure I go out because staying in is not good for you, especially for the baby.*

Feelings of loneliness, intensified by limited access to childcare provision and inadequate accommodation conditions, were particularly pronounced within this group of participants who were mothers. Respondents' access to educational, social and recreational resources was significantly restricted by barriers relating to childcare responsibilities. Some of these participants were provided with short-term accommodation within the NRM context. Although this was deemed necessary, a number of practical factors inhibited the full use of these resources. Often , anxieties associated with disruptions and recurrent moves were conveyed through participants' narratives. This was particularly pertinent to single parents who had limited access to social and emotional support. Through the dispersal programmes, some respondents were assigned temporary accommodation and were later asked to move to a

different area, thus severing established social connections and support networks. In this way, a number of participants reported losing both communal links as well as informal support with childcare that could enable them to access support services and organisations.

> ***Nahla:*** *Your neighbours are very important, you develop that strong relationship, and when you move, it's different, things change. The day when I had good news, my solicitor called me, and I opened the door to tell everyone. They all cried with me. They were like family. And I hope everything goes well with their applications as well and they receive good news… If I had to go somewhere, and I didn't want to take my son with me because it's very important to talk and I don't want him to be affected by this, I used to just send him to flat-six knowing that of course, they would watch him for me. Or, if I am late, I could just give a ring and say, please, go and take him from school, and they will. Now, it's different. It's almost like going out into the open. Nobody to watch out for you.*

This account exemplifies the way in which disruption of the known environment could bring about feelings of disorientation and aloneness. Strong emotional identification and respect for the communal are apparent in this narrative. Participants' accounts of cohabitation referred to the re-creation of supportive familial environments that contributed to extended support networks and a sense of belonging. Close-knit relational ties were often expressed within daily rituals that negotiated multi-cultural living. Akin to family members, cohabiting formerly trafficked people often reported assuming collective caring responsibilities for children, assisting in shopping and providing mutual support and advocacy. However, following positive trafficking identification, participants often faced the prospect of separation from these cohesive networks and relational links. Despite marking the successful completion of the trafficking confirmation process, this was also the time when official NRM support was withdrawn. A number of participants, in this way, reported feelings of intense anxiety following confirmation of their trafficking status. On one side, this ensured respondents' relative immigration permanency, whilst on the other, the lack of support during this transitory period provoked feelings of uncertainty and disorientation.

Alongside access to support networks, some participants' narratives indicated that processing difficult experiences within a warm and accepting environment amongst individuals who might have undergone similar circumstances could help respondents contribute to a sense of comfort and solidarity. Respondents who jointly inhabited accommodation with other trafficked people often undertook the responsibility to support newly joined individuals with their daily routines within the safehouse, alongside practical assistance and support.

> ***Usha:*** *We are a community. I think that having gone through difficulties, we can feel other people's pain. And this is very good. We are able to help. Sometimes, when we*

go through pain, this sensitises us to others' pain. Yes, I have been through a lot. But sometimes, I feel it is a gift in a way to helps us feel others' pain. That is the most important thing. Yesterday, I wrote this in my diary. To give somebody a piece of my mind, to think with another person, to do something for her. To give something for somebody who is not from here and doesn't have anybody else. I spent a lot of time with ladies who need help. First, they gave me one lady to take care of. In six, seven, eight months, she was stable. Then they gave me another lady. She had a small child. Then I helped an old lady. I spent a lot of time with her. She was where I was myself, and now she is recovering slowly-slowly. You have to have sat in the same chair to be able to understand.

This narrative examination of daily routines positioned fellow cohabitants as a source of compassion and peer support. The previous suffering, presented as a gift of accompanying others who might have experienced similar difficulties, has brought empathic tenderness to contribute experiential knowledge to the service of others. The importance of this role of a helper and offering a gift of empathy, compassion and understanding to others contains restorying of own narrative of suffering to support the transition into a new role of a helper. A sense of solidarity with others' pain and loneliness frames this as an honourable and meaningful role.

Beside such accounts of close, supportive cohabitating networks, many respondents commented on difficulties inherent in their cohabitation with others. According to some respondents, processing intense emotional material could provoke defensive reactions or reluctance to engage in forming relationships with others. In this way, a number of respondents considered the appropriateness of placing together individuals who are likely to be facing difficulties and processing distressing experiences. Some narrative accounts, in this way, referred to instances when expressing and enacting difficult thoughts could contribute to the accumulation of distress amongst cohabitants. This included accusations of theft, self-harming and suicide attempts on behalf of cohabiting or neighbouring individuals. Disagreements due to lack of space, personality differences and high levels of anxiety were some of the factors, according to participants, that intensified existing difficulties and often led to incidents of verbal or physical altercations. Interpersonal difficulties and tensions following shared living with others were very often reported by male participants.

Victor: *It's a small place where I live and cannot fit different people. You cannot agree with everybody. Six people where I live – three problem people, three ok. Almost killed my fish, maybe a mistake. Goldfish, five of them… We argue a lot in the house. It's a little like being in the army. Compulsory Army Service. Old soldiers. Preparation for life. That's what it is. Resilience is power. It gives you strength. You think you have freedom, but you haven't got freedom. It's a medium ground. It's in the middle. Like, you have these places on the motorway, you stop and recharge, then continue.*

Something happened, maybe a tyre was flat, that's why you don't want to give this too much time; the road is waiting. This is time for driving; time for reaching new places.

This narrative affords a sense of how the lack of personal space and safety could heighten feelings of vulnerabilities during the in-between period of trafficking identification. The practical obstacles of sharing domesticities with other adults were compared with military service. This conceptualisation highlights the ways in which Victor attributes meaning to the daily difficulties experienced in life post-trafficking. According to him, this temporary lack of space could bring about character strength and learning to endure discomfort. The temporality of Victor's narrative indicates his perception of these events as a momentary discomfort that does not take away from his future plans and trajectories.

A polarity of presenting post-trafficking lived experiences regarding the extent to which participants felt able to exercise autonomy during this period of their rehabilitation has been highlighted. These experiences ranged from indications suggesting an inability to exercise control over their rehabilitation, to assertions that life post-trafficking marks an improvement to pre-trafficking conditions. Accordingly, the everyday post-trafficking experiences revealed aspects of respondents' domesticities that appear ordinary and unremarkable but could highlight post-trafficking inequalities. Participants have shown the ways in which marginalisation and exclusion are reflected within their everyday routines and practices. Barriers to inclusion within the communal structures of support included prioritising caring responsibilities and lack of general recognition of respondents' difficulties and economic scarcity. Accommodation difficulties and recurrent moves affected connectedness to communal links and support. Likewise, inhabiting common spaces with similarly disadvantaged individuals was related to interpersonal difficulties and general lack of space, which tended to heighten feelings of vulnerability and lack of control over respondents' circumstances.

On the other hand, alongside many disadvantages expressed through respondents' accounts, the post-trafficking period was characterised by some agency. Attempts to establish predictable structures and relational connectivity have illuminated tendencies to allow for movement in space that supports individual wellbeing. This related to participation in group activities and providing support to other similarly disadvantaged individuals. In this way, participants' understanding of wellbeing indicated a link between opportunities to engage in altruistic and supportive activities, to affirming an individual sense of self and meaning-making. These

opportunities helped respondents identify with being providers of support and valued members of the community.

7.6. The 'good' and the 'dissident service user

The need to represent victim narratives that fit within the dominant anti-trafficking discourses was apparent in some participants' accounts of their relationships with third actors. Accordingly, some respondents positioned themselves as 'good' service users in relation to post-trafficking service interventions. Distinctions were drawn between 'us and them' to reflect a deeply seated power imbalance, apparent in some respondents' narratives. Extensive use of the passive voice exemplified actions performed on participants instead of being positioned as active agents within these settings. While some respondents felt that there was overt pressure to conform to victimhood representations, the image of the good service user was often re-enacted within respondents' interpretations of what is expected of them.

> ***Anu:*** *We have lost everything, and now we are here, trying to rebuild our lives. We've left our countries; we can't go back. But Jesus has saved me, and you, people, are trying to save me. You, people, are trying to save our lives. As if I was a plant, and you, people, are trying to revive that plant, with light and nutrition, trying to encourage progress; to let life inside again. So, it's difficult. It's very difficult to do this step, but one day, we'll have to take a step like a child that takes a first step. It is frightening, there is a risk you can fall down, and that's why you, people, are here. And I am here; whatever work or assignment I will be given, I will try to complete. I am grateful that you, people, have taught us and have given us this time. Like a big boat, you are pulling us to safety, pulling us to sail in the right direction.*

Within this narrative, Anu displayed excessive gratitude and referred to 'others' within idealised notions of 'saviours', whose knowledge and expertise surpasses hers. Although well-meaning, the language contributes to feelings of otherness and separation. In this way, the relationships with those who support Anu with her rehabilitation were positioned within the binaries of victims and saviours. Similarly, other accounts indicated tendencies to construct third agents as holders of special knowledge that could enhance participants' wellbeing.

Alongside this attention to the disparities between recipients and providers of services, another group of participants perceived their engagement in group activities through the lens of strengthening their communal links and connectedness to others. In this way, some participants reported that the support services helped consolidate interpersonal networks. Alongside this, it was not uncommon for participants to enrol in entry-level educational courses, contribute to

their skills base, and institute a sense of hope for the future. Saranda related to such opportunities as the accumulation of cultural capital, or 'little capitals', that allow for broader learning and resourcefulness. This feeling of connectedness between the group and community members contributed to a sense of belonging and stabilisation.

> ***Saranda:*** *Some organisations are not for trafficking, not for asylum, it is for everyone, and that's much better for me. Sometimes, you don't want to talk about your stress and your problems. But if you manage to get yourself out of the house, to come here and meet 3 or 4 women, you might forget about it. They'll say, "How was your day? What were you doing?" Then we'll make plans to do this or that, or we can just talk and treat each other like a family. In some places I go, It makes you happy to come; you are not just going for a little day trip or to get your travel expenses paid to you. But what you are taking from here is a lot. It is the way people talk to you… People will say things to you about the future. That's what I like. A lot of people don't think properly about the future when they are in an uncertain place. Our big worry is Home Office. If you are waiting for Home Office, it's very easy to say, "Oh, I'm waiting now, but when I get my papers, I'll make plans, I'll know what to do then". But that decision is not in our hands; we can't do anything to change this. We can tell them what we can, but that's it. We can't worry too much about it because when we worry, we make ourselves ill. And sometimes it happens, you get very ill, and when the time comes for you to call someone or have to go for your Home Office interview, we are not ready to go. You need to get ready so that when you get the papers, you can go and do what you have planned. Like, I have training next Thursday for anxiety and dementia. All of this training and knowledge is for my future. I don't just want to sit and wait; I want to do something that will help me build my future. My friend, she always says to me, I don't have money for travel, I can't go to any groups. Or, I don't go; it's a waste of time. But I always go. Even if I could learn only one good thing that can help me. When you go out, you might make friends; you might meet someone who speaks your own language; they might take you to another group to meet new people, and that can lead you to another place. When you hear other people talking, you forget your own thing. Everyone brings something different. And even if you have only learned a little bit, or if you haven't learned at all, at least when you meet nice ladies and talk, you feel much better. And that gives you the strength to go out again and again, to see the seasons changing, the trees growing, the children playing outside...*

This excerpt indicates the way in which participation in group activities could contribute to consolidating social networks. Community groups are described as facilitating an organic space, where Saranda could make connections, receive support and exchange cultural capital. Accumulation of knowledge and skills obtained through group activities could help prepare for life after receiving the concluding ground trafficking decision. A sense of hope and clear visions for the future were associated with useful approaches based on empathy and supporting communal links.

Alongside narrative recognitions that the rehabilitation system could create conditions for meaningful change, some participants clearly positioned themselves as victims of a securitised

support system and identified as being under surveillance within their outside and inside spaces. Support services from these perspectives were perceived by some respondents as tending to prioritise the state needs by employing surveillance techniques and managing irregular migrants. Within this context, some participants living in safe housing shared experiences of being under surveillance by post-trafficking support agency staff and government officials.

> ***Halimah:*** *Trafficking means that you are being controlled without your permission, against your choice. So, what the system is doing, they are doing the same thing; they are controlling you in the same way. The actual care you need is aftercare but what they give you is a house like a prison, it's like a detention centre. You're not allowed to have a phone and you're not allowed your own space there.*
> *You don't have the right to choose a place; you don't have the right to choose where you live, you don't have the right to work. You can't do anything, it's like slavery. Anything you do, you get letters sent to you, that's how the law is, and you are liable to be detained, to torture and scare you. The law says that the housing officers have the right to search your house. They could judge how you dress, how you live and what you eat, and this can affect your case. Some housing officers could say, "Oh, you're wearing makeup and your hairs up, so you don't look like a victim. How can you afford to dress like this?" That's why there is so much pressure to look desperate, otherwise people think you are faking it. So, obviously, if people are judging how vulnerable you are, you are going to have to convince them that you are in need. But I really don't like to gain sympathy, that's what I don't like. I feel bad that someone is feeling bad for me and I don't want to look like I'm helpless. It doesn't help and sometimes makes me feel worse. And I have seen people with worse mental health issues than mine, and they still haven't been believed. So even people who have appeared as vulnerable haven't been believed so why should I? I don't know why people can be sympathetic towards some issues and not towards others, but this is how it all works. Maybe it's lack of understanding or reluctance to try to learn about other people's issues.*

> ***Vlado:*** *Four years younger than me, but he is my boss; commando! And he can come and search my room at any time without any notice. Because he has keys. Always checking the room, this and that. To control the room. I said, "You won't find anything". But they searched the wardrobes, and they searched in the clothes and under the floors, even. Staff are like police. Every time they want, they can open the door and checks what is in the room. I have nothing because of control.*

In this way, some participants showed awareness of dominant trafficking representations and expressed discontent with the way in which their identities were reduced to their immigration status or the trafficking circumstances that they have overcome. These narratives highlight the disparities between participants and third agents. Respondents reflected on tension between their personal ethos and pressure to conform to fixed expectations. This often marked a distance between the dominant notions of wellbeing and what participants considered valuable. In other

words, post-trafficking support and interventions were constructed as further reinforcing the performance of vulnerability in order for individuals to evidence entitlement to qualify for support and services. Similarly, apparent in her description of the relationship between herself and the support organisation was Behati's sense of inequity and alienation:

> ***Behati:*** *In some places, they will not even talk to you. The workers will not want to know you. They will sometimes even make the lunch for you but will just sit down separately from you; they will not sit with you. They will not make an effort to know you or to introduce you to others …If you wanna sit there and you don't know anyone, you will be just sitting. If two people know each other, they will be talking. That way, I don't go to many places because I feel even more alone.*
> *Last time I went to this place, they had tuna cans. So, I took two. Because that's what we used to do. But she said, you know, we go to another drop-in, we'll have to take food there. So, take one. I said, okay. But from that day, I don't go to that place anymore. That is a small thing, but for me – it's a big thing, especially when it comes to food. If you reach out to take food and somebody stops you, it could be very hurtful. Things like this will stay in my mind for the whole day… Why did I do that? Why did I take two? I should have taken one. So, that's why I am very careful to not do something that will worry my mind… I understand why she did that. But I don't want to take something and be told off. So, it doesn't make sense to go there anymore. I used to only take sugar and tea bags, anyway. I am hoping the Home Office will give me my documents and I won't need any of this 'help' anymore.*

This excerpt indicates the ways in which support systems could function to define, classify and regulate individuals. Behati's description of how support staff related to her indicated tendencies to diminish her sense of agency and dignity. From this perspective, Behati's sarcastic references to 'help' illustrate a sense of the inequalities perceived by her, indicating the distance between Behati's own views of wellbeing and what was in practice offered by the organisation. By highlighting patronising tendencies experienced when accessing post-trafficking support services, Behati expressed the extent to which such disparities could cause her distress. In this way, provisions for post-trafficking support, according to Behati's narrative, tended to be formulaic and did not appear to prioritise her autonomy and sense of self. Diverse value systems were apparent in these interactions where universally accepted ways of supporting others were produced and reinforced. Similar tension between individual value systems and practices imposed by others is highlighted in Marko's account of his experience of attending a compulsory drop-in service at the post-trafficking support organisation.

> ***Marko:*** *Listen, if you go to one place, yeah, they tell you that they try to help you, yeah, that's bullshit. They just keep asking questions. So, I talk, my name is this, these are my children, I live my life like this… it's not going anywhere. It's like, I'm talking for them,*

> *yeah… This no help. Only listen, listen, listen, listen. This guy talking, this woman talking, this talking, this…I sit two hours, yeah….and the world around is moving, but I'm not moving. We come here, play ping-pong and then take the money, that's all. I get bus tickets; then I can go around the city. Wednesday money. I only come for the money. I'm being honest with you. Because it's true.*

This excerpt suggests that post-trafficking assistance was deemed inappropriate, often adding to respondents' vulnerability. For those whose support was linked to NRM, monetary aid was distributed during the drop-in hours, which necessitated individuals to travel to the organisation and attend a drop-in session. Although this was beneficial for some participants, others felt that the obligatory nature of the drop-in sessions to access the monetary support they need was unnecessary and added to their sense of 'wasting time' and livelihoods. In this way, the necessity to attend support provisions was often perceived as a barrier to rehabilitation. The need for an empathic approach was reflected within some participants' recommendations that professionals value respondents' autonomous choices and are able to acknowledge their perceptions and lived experiences:

> ***Ayla:*** *It is all very good when people sit in front of a computer in their comfortable offices, just so that you let people know you are professional. But it is more important to do grassroots, to be a servant. That's one thing that I think professionals can do, yes. Give yourselves three days in a month and disguise, pretend that you are that person, that the same thing has happened to you, so people can be able to appreciate. Because if you come and travel in a Lamborghini, for instance, you cannot reach people. There is a big gap between us; there's a big gap, I can tell you that. Those masks that they keep wearing draw us apart. In order to understand, people need to walk in your shoes. In order to better understand how you feel. Because I tell you, you know, if you have never been hungry before, if you've had everything at your tip finger if you do that, (clicks finger) and you just bring in a new dress, you got a ticket to fly abroad, and I'm telling you, that I don't even know how to get a bus pass to come here, we are not gonna get any closer.*

The need for an empathic approach and professionals being able to walk in other's shoes to get an experiential sense of their difficulties was highlighted by this excerpt. This account reflected the vast distance between service users and the so-called professionals, calling for the need to reduce these disparities. This illustrates an overall tendency for mistrust towards authority figures which continued to be apparent within the post-trafficking rehabilitation period. Generally, respondents' narratives highlighted their understanding of autonomy, agency and social justice. On one side, the in-between trafficking reintegration period was described as a safe and individualised space that offers opportunities for rehabilitation and relational agency. On the other side, this in-between phase was referred to as inducing feelings of being under the control of authorities and third actors. Respondents reflected on how externally led

interventions could contribute to further reinforcing inequalities. Several participants, in this way, noted tension between attending to their needs and pressure to conform to bureaucratic practices that might not prioritise their rights, sense of dignity and autonomy.

Some accounts referred to participants' spaces as being subject to varying levels of control, invasion, and interventions. Accordingly, several respondents reported perceptions of being under surveillance in their safe housing, where staff could document irregularities and report to 'Home Office' any perceived suspicious events or discrepancies that could inform their case and VoT decision. Some respondents' accounts indicated perceptions of pressure to surrender their agency during the post-trafficking rehabilitation period. This compulsory helplessness, on one side, could ensure their access to support and survival, whilst on the other, complying with external conditions and stereotypes in order to be accepted could risk alienating respondents from their own experiences and understanding of wellbeing. Participants' accounts further outlined bureaucratic obstacles and insufficient support. Alongside the dependence on access to legal aid, requirements to rely on third agents could exhibit tension with respondents' ability to make autonomous decisions about their future wellbeing. In this way, it appeared that the absence of some elements of collaboration with support services was perceived by some participants as becoming once again dependent on authorities. These narratives show that rehearsing overly simplified narratives and portrayals of trafficked people as submissive, powerless victims in need of protection, influenced by dominant constructions of the typical trafficking victims, could adversely affect trafficked people's self-identification.

7.7 Discussion

In general, inequalities were consistently present in the period of trafficking identification. One of the most critical issues outlined by participants in this research was having control over their decision-making during the post-trafficking phase. This included attaining immigration permanence that would allow them to make plans for their future, being able to make independent decisions and secure economic sustainability. Many participants stated that they did not have sufficient knowledge of the UK asylum system, required to assess their eligibility for state identification and support. Findings from this study indicate that state interventions during the period of confirming participants' final trafficking decision were often perceived as prioritising immigration regulation over ensuring respondents' interests. These findings add to existing research (Zimmerman, Hossain and Watts, 2011; Hemmings et al., 2016; Walby et al.,

2016), highlighting the risk of re-traumatisation during the process of trafficking identification and court proceedings. While existing studies have focussed more extensively on re-traumatisation due to the re-processing of trafficking events, findings from this study highlight the impact of inequalities during this process, and how that could reinstate feelings of recurrent injustices and loss of hope. In particular, this study shows that trafficking identification was usually among the main reasons behind participants' feelings of vulnerability and heightened anxieties and loss of control during the period of trafficking identification.

Findings from this study indicate that alongside experiencing inequalities, insufficient post-trafficking support provision tended to heighten adversities following trafficking. This corresponds to earlier studies that call intervention programs to thoroughly consider the need to engage with inequalities (McCarthy, 2018; Paasche, Skilbrei and Plambech, 2018). Recognition of disparities, according to participants in this research, does not always entail provision of monetary assistance and ensuring basic needs, but required effort on behalf of practitioners, to fully consider the multifaceted nature of structural drivers that participants have experienced, and offer an empathic recognition to human suffering that is based on shared human values. Specifically, findings have highlighted the importance of facilitating an empathic relationship that takes into account respondents' structured barriers and inequalities suffered.

Participants' narratives in this research showed how biased conceptualisations of trafficking that favour victimhood hierarchy might impact the trafficking identification and support process. Findings from this study show that stereotypical victim typologies could influence trafficked people to represent themselves as 'legitimate victims' in order to access support and rehabilitation. This corresponds to Musto's (2010) analysis of NGO's attempts to balance the conflicting needs of the state and trafficked individuals, which further contributes to the separation of deserving and undeserving victims of trafficking. According to such victimhood classifications, individuals who are clearly coerced are considered worthy of support, whilst those who had exercised agency in the initial stages of international mobility, are treated as immigration offenders and returned home. Analysis of participants' narratives in this study highlights the way in which such representations would impose conditionality of gaining access to support and services. Notions of the 'perfect victim' role, was perceived to permeate immigration, legal and rehabilitation spheres, adding to the pressure on formerly trafficked people to perform vulnerability.

On the whole, post-trafficking intervention programs have not consistently been found to adopt sensitivity to issues of power, privileges and inequalities. Analysis of participants' narratives within this chapter has interrogated hegemonic power differentials and inequalities between providers and recipients of services. Previous research has noted the link between trafficked people's dominant representations as differing from the norm and incitement of rescue efforts that could increase the risk of further reinforcing power imbalance (Barnett, 2016; Preble, 2016; Warren, 2012). For example, Brennan's analysis highlights the way in which the term "illegality" reproduced within the migration discourses, marks an opposition to what is perceived as "regular" and "normative", to distance from complexities of individual circumstances. Findings from this study support this work, whilst adding that post-trafficking support services could be viewed as contributing to the wider reinforcement of power differentials and hegemonies within the antitrafficking victim ideologies. This work further indicates that post-trafficking support has tended to reinforce power imbalances that could further risk trafficked people's marginalisation.

Findings from this study suggest that dominant trafficking representations exercise overt pressure on trafficked people to perform victim roles. Analysis of respondents' narratives indicates the ways in which the pressure to fit the stereotypical victim role interlinks with the way respondents tended to convey their identity to others. The literature does not offer any investigations as to how this might affect the lived experiences and daily routines of trafficked people. However, findings from this study suggest that such stereotypical trafficking representations could have a profound influence on trafficking identification, victim support and post-trafficking rehabilitation. Overt pressure to fit within the dominant trafficking victim roles, reflected within participants' narratives, relates to suppositions that such stereotypical trafficking representations could impose assumed socially accepted values, activities and personal characteristics on trafficked people that exercise pressure to perform victimhood representations.

Respondents' narratives showed how post-trafficking intervention approaches could focus on needs defined by professionals and suggest solutions that follow from these definitions. Ensuing the needs and deficiencies-based trafficking representations, earlier studies have primarily assumed the appropriateness of trauma-informed rehabilitation models (Ravi et al., 2017; Hopper, 2017). In addition to enforcing pre-defined trauma-focussed solutions to trafficking, such approaches have been found to have imposed Western understanding of suffering that reinforces stereotypical representations that could risk subduing rather than

empowering trafficked people (Serughetti, 2018; Hu, 2019; Gagnon, 2020; Rodríguez-López, 2018). Findings from this study, informed by trafficked people's perspectives, move away from such needs-based discourses, calling for person-centred and community-based rehabilitation alternatives.

Overall, this chapter suggests that rehabilitation needs to be led by the knowledge and experience of trafficked people themselves. Findings from this chapter show that collaboration with trafficked people in an equal dialogue is required in order to plan, deliver and evaluate interventions and support. Scholars (e.g. Musto, 2010; Brennan, 2005) have drawn attention to the extent to which trafficked people are afforded the space to voice their opinions within the platforms intended to support their rehabilitation and wellbeing, highlights the need to facilitate conditions for long-term reintegration and support that is led by trafficked people themselves (McCarthy, 2018; Paasche, Skilbrei and Plambech, 2018). Correspondingly, assertions that trafficked people need to be included in decision-making that affects their own support and rehabilitation were supported by this study. Respondents have indicated the value of receiving support within generic support provision centres where they could preserve their confidentiality, avoid victimhood and trauma-informed representations and exercise the right to make choices and autonomous decision-making.

Apart from being closely connected to immigration permanence, participants' understanding of wellbeing was often linked to access to education and collection of skills that could accelerate economic potential and future opportunities. Respondents highlighted the need to make future plans and ensure stability and predictability of their everyday living. Participants expressed strong beliefs that access to work and education opportunities could aid their rehabilitation, integration and economic independence. Securing employment opportunities was one of the most significant reintegration factors outlined by respondents. This included preparatory measures, such as access to education opportunities, developing employment skills and securing career opportunities. In this way, many participants shared aspirations to complete educational qualifications and accessing employment opportunities.

Although masculinity is less often linked to vulnerability (Surtees, 2008; Yea, 2015), findings from this study reveal that male participants in this research have indicated possible detrimental effects following their post-trafficking experiences. Respondents in this research reported adverse impacts of socio-cultural expectations on their sense of self and wellbeing. This links in with Paasche, Skilbrei and Plambech's (2018) supposition that trafficked men's

vulnerability, considered within the temporary realms of the trafficking circumstances, often presupposes the provision of short-term assistance due to perceived needs located within the trafficking circumstances only. Findings from this study add further to this understanding by highlighting the extent to which male respondents have reported long-term difficulties and disadvantages faced, often being located within inequalities and relationships with state actors. Although exploration of gender issues often prioritise disadvantages encountered by women, this work shows heightened awareness of inequalities emphasised by notions of masculinity.

Power differences have been highlighted by participants in the period of post-trafficking identification and support. Respondents in this study indicated that financial assistance was often presented as conditional upon participants' attendance of support sessions. Although this was experienced as beneficial for some participants, others perceived this compulsory rehabilitation as exercising overt pressure and diminishing individuals' sense of agency. This relates to findings from previous studies suggesting that mandatory interventions and inadequate post-trafficking support could add to trafficked people's vulnerability (Paasche, Skilbrei and Plambech, 2018). Other studies have explored how third actors could seemingly assume an active role in humanitarian work where they become part of a provision of a solution, but in effect, could further reinforce inequalities (Musto et al., 2021; Hoefinger et al., 2020; Hayon, 2020). Findings from this study add to this by outlining approaches to rehabilitation and intervention that have been deemed to encourage the dependence on third parties, rather than support the independence of formerly trafficked individuals.

7.8 Summary

This chapter explored trafficked people's accounts of their lived experiences following the period of applying for trafficking identification. Participant's post-trafficking circumstances and everyday routines challenge widespread assumptions that once freed from exploitation; trafficked people will automatically resume control over their lives. Through notions such as the 'waiting space' and 'good service user', findings from this Chapter continued to develop the themes of inequalities and agency. Young mothers reported additional barriers to rehabilitation, including access to adequate housing and experience of marginalization in accessing service settings due to limited childcare provision. Overall, participants' narratives in this section indicate that they did not feel sufficient protection during the recovery and reflection period might present a number of barriers. Many of the respondents' accounts

suggested that life after trafficking was very much dependent on aid and the benevolence of third actors. Several challenges and limitations relating to access to legal aid have been outlined by respondents. Respondents stated the need for securing their rights in gaining access to employment and education opportunities, perceived as a means of attaining new skills, economic security and long-term sustainability.

Recommendations following this study suggest that professionals should develop new perspectives by fully considering trafficking people's views and opinions in designing services that are also gender- and culturally-responsive. Alternative options for formerly trafficked people to engage with non-specialised support agencies have also been recommended by participants in this research. Findings do not confirm the overwhelming assumptions that trafficked people require specialised trafficking interventions and support. Whilst some respondents reported benefits of receiving specialist services, other post-trafficking rehabilitation narratives moved away from the fixed dichotomies of consumers and providers of services, but relay their need for an empathetic approach and connectedness with broader communal issues and services. Participants expressed their need to facilitate a feeling of solidarity and connectedness to the supportive environment as an alternative to specialised trafficking services.

The following section will present and discuss participants' experiences of 'homecoming' through an analysis of respondents' images and narrative excerpts. Presentation of home and host contrasts will reveal participants' constructions of identification and expressions of agency through a marked transgression of ethnocultural boundaries, hybridisation and identity negotiation. Finally, this chapter will present a synthesis of experiences of before and after the trafficking circumstances as narrated by respondents who locate their transformation and hybridised selves within the Heroic Journey of Homecoming. These Narrative Cartographies will reflect processing a kaleidoscope of experiences that relate not only to trafficking-related conditions, but to relational aspects and circumstances that held specific meaning to participants.

8

Homecoming in the Host: The Hero's Existential Journey of Transformation, Acculturation and Identity Re-negotiation

8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents home and host constructs from study respondents' perspectives. Through juxtapositions of 'ordinary home' and the heroes' 'special worlds', I will identify the participants' transitions and development in negotiating the space between 'home' and 'not home'. Subsequent analysis will show that respondents' multifaceted heroic journeys relate to the search for personal truths in response to the myth of homecoming. The cyclical journey, marked by departure, initiation and return home from this perspective, refers to themes of transformation, acculturation and integration of experiences. I further analyse contradictions between participants' identifications as foreigners in the home country, drawing on sites of struggle and complexities related to belonging to both home and host settings. Alongside anticipation of safety in the host community, I will examine how the significance of non-material and symbolic factors relate to respondents' aim of achieving a deeper connection and a sense of self akin to that envisioned in the host community.

This analysis of homecoming builds on Chapter 5 in developing a counterpoint to stereotypically represented binaries of safe original homelands and unsafe and exploitative host

environment constructed within antitrafficking discourses. Accordingly, participants' narratives within the current chapter reflect a clear transgression of the idea of home as a physical and geographical place bounded in time. Within opposing leitmotivs of 'otherness' in the home and home in the 'other', analysis of respondents' narratives of belonging will show tension between their sense of self and somewhat 'fixed' expectations within their original environments. On the other hand, a more harmonious 'being in the host country' will be shown as similar to being in a state of closer alignment with respondents' deeper sense of self. From this perspective, the homecoming monomyth relates to an eclectic and hybridised space that connects symbolic elements of the ancestral and new trajectories facilitated and developed in the host environment. This section will, therefore, highlight the narrative heroes' growth and transformation in relation to earlier stages. Within the theme of 'return with the elixir', contrasting notions between home and host negotiations and returning to the centre will continue to develop. This self-contained chapter will facilitate connections with the broader literature, to juxtapose and unite separate voices and discourses. Starting with a concise overview of the literature, each theme will be illuminated by respondents' narratives. Finally, all themes will be discussed in relation to relevant literature.

8.2 Existential Perspectives of Migration: Homecoming as a Representation of the Heroic Journey

In addressing the tension between the protagonist's ordinary home and special worlds, deconstructions of natural attitudes and life assumptions necessitate negotiation of multiple meanings of 'home' (Brah, 1996; Madison, 2006).'Home', according to this perspective, is a relational concept that unites complexities of nostalgic elements alongside new understandings and composites as a basis for re-conceptualising respondents' acculturation and negotiation of habits, roles and identities. Whilst normative constructions of home are usually associated with a private space, saturated with emotion, memory and affects (Saunders 1990), more metaphorical understanding of the ideal home could assume emotive connotations and links to individuals' deeper sense of self (Bennett, 2004) via which home is constructed as a locus of personality (Brickell, 2012; Belk, 1988). From this standpoint, home as a relational and existential concept transgresses materiality and relays more abstract, metaphorical and romanticised notions associated with belonging, safety, and relationality.

In this sense, existential perspectives on migration offer an analogy of conceptions of home that symbolizes the development of the self (Heidegger, 1996), self-awareness (Rapport and Dawson 1998), and individual ability to live in harmony with the environment (Vycinas, 1961). In this way, the meaning of 'home' is interpreted more as an interaction and negotiation, rather than as a place (Madison, 2006); 'being at home' is linked to transgressing the comfort of having definitive answers, to a fixed in time place and identity, to creating new individual concepts, actions and meaning-making (Hayes, 2007). The 'existential hero' in his/her quest for self-development, in this way, is presented as stepping out of 'entangled absorption in the world' (Heidegger, 1996:176) to pursue their freedom and individuality, express their deeper sense of self and offer the possibility of being at home, through clarification of their life purpose and gaining a better awareness of their agency. In this sense, 'home' is no longer a place of origin or a point of departure, but rather, it is an expression of becoming. Similarly, freedom is defined as the choice to become oneself, define boundaries between self, family and cultural expectations, and decide the purpose and sense of one's life (Maddison, 2006). These metaphorical conceptualisations thereby encompass defining the boundaries of 'home' and differentiating between self and other.

Along the same lines, in addressing the tension between alienation, freedom and belonging, Kierkegaard's conceptualisation of the meaning of 'home' through the lens of the migratory journey outlines three existence-spheres: the aesthetic, the ethical and the religious (Kierkegaard, 1940). According to this perspective, in the aesthetic sphere, the individual is motivated by immediacy and a desire to search for new experience, often expressed as a search for freedom and opportunities to experience and explore aspects of the self (Kierkegaard, 1940). The transition into the ethical sphere requires a conscious commitment to the development of oneself and to the values by which one intends to live, illustrated by the process of settlement (Kierkegaard, 2000). In this sphere, home becomes a more complex concept, where ambiguity is accepted, and the self can live in harmony with others (Vycinas, 1961). In the final religious sphere, 'home' becomes defined as an acknowledgement of self-ownership, where an inner sense of personal authenticity and purpose is achieved (Kierkegaard, 2000). Following Kierkegaard, the experiences of homelessness within cross-cultural contact could require self-examination and self-knowledge (Kateb, 1991), where experiencing homelessness could be "striving towards home" (Pictet, 2001:45). These interpretations relay a broader understanding of the concepts of home, homecoming and the existential tension that lies at the core of all human experience (Hayes, 2007) and highlight individuals' struggle to attain a sense

of being at home amidst the uncertainties of displacement. With the above theoretical concepts in mind, I will now examine respondents' existential perspectives on personal meaning-making under the umbrella theme of 'homecoming in the host' to afford a particular orientation towards respondents' lived experiences.

8.3 Home and Host Contrasts and Oppositions

The myth of homecoming imaginary within respondents' accounts varied in complexity, invested drive, meaning and motivation. Home and host contrasts reflected ways of being and exhibited tension between the original and the adoptive cultures, apparent in respondents' process of negotiating polarities of individual and societal values within the umbrella theme of the hero's quest for authenticity. Often, 'homecoming' expectations in the host country related to safety and security where participants would be able to exercise autonomy, human rights and choice. Along these lines, the host country was perceived as a facilitative environment and a container that could hold participants' intimate thoughts and experiences. Everyday practices in the host environment, including simple arrangements such as living independently as a single parent or exercising rights to voice opinions and complain, tended to be constructed as antidotes to being 'silenced'. As follows, habitual being in the host contrasted with pressure to fit within fixed socio-cultural expectations in the home environment.

> ***Meera:*** *I have a normal life now. I can take care of my son; I can take him to the park without being scared that somebody's after us. And if he wants something, even though I have little money, I can still provide for him. That is very important for me. To live in a way that makes him happy, to make him feel that he doesn't miss anybody. Because we are a small family, just the two of us.*

As illustrated in this excerpt, participants' narratives relate to the concept of 'home' as being adopted in the foreign host community. From this perspective, the host country habitat becomes an imagined sanctuary, both a catalyst for rehabilitation and a nurturing environment, where participants could exercise agency. This security, however, was accessible only to respondents who could confirm their victim of trafficking status and achieve immigration permanence. In such a way, the victim of trafficking status or the juxtaposing 'positive decision', as participants refer to this, equated to the opportunity of 'being' in the host country, and, in a way, becoming a catalyst for growth and homecoming. This link between acquiring a positive decision and permission to life is evident in the following narrative, where attaining immigration status has been constructed as authorisation of 'being'.

Rashida: *Immigration is a big factor when it comes to getting better. Everything depends on whether my claim is successful. Without this, I have limited access to healthcare, education and other services. What I can access is just emergency treatment. It is difficult to hope for the future when I don't know what my decision will be. I'm thinking to the point of the decision and not further.*

Chinyere: *If one day I wake up and get my case, I will be so happy; I would want my son to go to school so I can have my time to look after my son and study at the same time so I can have a good job. I just want to see him happy after all of this. He's happier now than what he used to be, and I want to keep him happy like this. When I get my paper, I can choose where I want to live.*

Alongside tensions exhibited between home and host ethos and values, several participants in the study voiced assertions that if they had stayed in their home environment, this would have equated to their spiritual and even physical death. The home environment, in this way, was primarily characterised in terms of denial of emotional connectedness to self and lack of essential needs, such as sleep, food, rest and safety. Accordingly, participants referred to those individuals who stayed behind in similar situations as having sacrificed their rights and wishes. Within the binaries of 'voiceless - assertive', 'frightened - brave', 'oppressed - empowered', 'excluded- included', 'no rights – rights', identification with the host country was clear and distinct.

Conversely, the host country was perceived as a holding space and a site of alchemy where diverse elements could be combined to contribute to forging a new identity and chosen sense of self. This apparent abundance of opportunities and philosophies, including access to diverse viewpoints, a sense of self-actualisation, and autonomy to collate what is perceived to be in alignment with individual values, is opposed to the fixed idea of home as a site of imprisonment of the self. A sense of belonging was anchored in participants' ability to employ critical skills, question established norms, and oppose religious beliefs, contributing, in this way, to a kaleidoscopic site of eclecticism that allows participants to engage in what previously might have been construed as controversial practices.

Despite such oppositions to original socialisation within the home setting, affirmative symbolic identification with the original environment was present within respondents' visual and narrative accounts. In this way, analysis of participants' visual and narrative accounts revealed nostalgic grief for the communal of the homeland and seeking connection to familiar cultural signifiers. Often, abstractions of aesthetic and emotional elements of ancestral wisdom of the home community were enacted and shared as cultural practices and extended within the host community.

As follows, maintaining symbolic links with the ancestral occupied a prominent space within respondents' imagery. Participants' rituals and symbolic signifiers of the ancestral reflected the multi-dimensional nature of experiences and events. Within a complexity of experiences and perspectives, references to cultural myths, ancestral wisdom and traditional sayings were constructed as sources of valuable insight. Several participants, in this way, represented themselves through their ancestral heritage and wisdom that they wished to share with others and integrate within the host environment.

Figure 28

Along these lines, Yetunde, for example, was connecting to and honouring her ancestral customs and philosophy in a way that considered her life history. Through an embodied image of a traditional coffee pot used for mixing and brewing of substances (Fig. 28), Yetunde discussed the importance of the ritual in connecting to others and emphasised how this ancestral vessel, made of earth and natural clay, can hold and contain warmth and experiences. At home, the morning coffee-making ritual would involve fetching water, setting up the fire, baking, grinding and stirring the coffee in an embodied collective ceremony that marks the start of every day. In England, Yetunde adopted to a much quicker coffee-making ritual that she tended to share with a neighbour.

Alongside rituals and practices that connected to the ancestral, participants shared significant cultural stories that tended to mark their identification with their diverse heritage and family history. In this way, through national signifiers such as patterns, flags and animals, belongingness in the symbolic cultural identifiers was constructed as a significant protective factor, linking to the 'roots' of one's heritage. For example, Fig. 29 shows traditional festive patterns that communicated pride in Zeynab's home culture. Noting the importance that her culture plays for her, Zeynab spoke of her tendency to adapt her family traditions to the host environment, alongside adopting new habits, influenced by the host country. Adaptations to praying, eating and celebrating to fit new ways of daily living in the adoptive

Figure 29

habitat, were commonly referred to within respondents' explorations.

The simplicity, wholeness and nurturing of ancestral 'ingredients' were often enacted through stories, rituals and practices that exemplified both a connection to space and to communal links. References were made to family traditions, stories and beliefs, stemming from childhood memories, religious themes and sharing practices. For example, Nahla referred to the narrative symbolism of a feather, associated with creative writing, but also with the transient quality of the feather, that bears characteristics of physicality, as well as resonating with aerial and spiritual denotations. In exploring further her metaphor of the feather, Nahla reflected on the integration of the wild and civilised and how individuals, having come from the 'wilderness', or so-called 'less developed' countries, are negotiating adaptations within their new environment. This duality and ability to hold polarities was perceived by Nahla as a personal characteristic of the self that bears earthy and otherworldly qualities. The intense emotionality and evocative nature of these sources of ancestral wisdom connected to a sense of belongingness to the traditional roots. This indicated a depth of reflection and significance that participants invested in their symbolic images.

8.4 Home as a Nostalgic Container of the Past and Reviving Ancestral Connections to Historical Safety

Alongside nostalgic rootedness within the ancestral heritage, other visual and narrative findings conceptualised the idea of home within spatial and localised characteristics. Palindromic tendencies instigated some participants' retrospective glance at the home of the past that could be selectively recalled and examined. This re-evaluation of historical experiences of psychological safety and fulfilment in the past was often inspired by a more idealised image of home, associated with childhood, play and affectionate relational interactions associated with the past. These were usually spaces that participants had lost or could not return to. Within their narrative and visual explorations, participants, in this research, often returned to places of historical safety to re-connect to sources of strength and feelings of being nurtured and contained. In this way, respondents' creative exploration located through the 'nostalgic home' theme was connected to a sense of self that was characterised with: 1. Spatial agency; 2. Ability to play, and 3. Relational connectivity to others. The images tended to have a metaphorical quality that transcended materiality and straightforward, prosaic denotation. This symbolic recall of imagined and romanticised safe places seemed to have affirmative qualities, as

participants indicated that such reconnection strengthened their sense of belonging. ‘Home’, in this sense, transgressed physicality to assume the role of a container of emotions that could re-link, re-story and nurture.

A number of participants represented nostalgic sentiments towards their homeland, often accompanied by re-living a sense of joy of inhabiting outside spaces of the home environment on one side and awareness of current distancing from such experiencing. These images and narratives were instilled with joy and emotive connotations with warm and nurturing undertones, signifying how some respondents had experienced their original environment. For example, Makeba’s image of “Home” (Fig. 30) reflected a peaceful image of palm trees and foliage enveloping a riverbank, where children play outside, climb trees and boats sail down the river. In the process of making this image, Makeba referred to experiencing a connection to the homeland of her childhood, alongside a sense of loss stemming from the present awareness that this peaceful atmosphere had long been irreversibly lost following political instability in her homeland. These images and interpretations marked respondents’ attempts to connect to previous sources and spatial agency, to note awareness of significant loss that

Figure 30

Figure 31

Figure 42

respondents expressed through their representations of their daily routines in the host environment. Likewise, the following two mixed-media collage images (Fig. 30; 31; 32), relayed to home as an outside place of playfulness, creativity and connectedness to the open natural environment, linking the concept of self to developing deep connections and meaningful relationships with the outside, in seeming opposition to current positionality within the built indoors spaces and more limited meaningful encounters with others.

The site of play and exploration within Fig. 31 is clearly positioned at the forefront of Yeta’s narrative, appearing to be larger than the structured inside space. The size of the butterfly and the outside area seems to be larger than other elements of the scene. The proportionality, focal point and size of these elements could indicate the significance and relational aspects that Yeta imbued in the outside aspects of this composition, suggesting an I-Thou aspect of this

relationship with the outdoor space and natural elements. Similar attention to spatial expressions of agency was expressed in Alina's image in reflecting conceptualisation of home outside a physical structure in the garden space surrounding the house. Within a relatively larger outside area, the fluidity of the built space and natural environment yields connotations to an otherworldly, magical space. The round shape of a multi-coloured Moon overlooking this scene could be associated with a symbol of completion and growth.

Figure 33

Within similar lines, Yana's narrative and palindromic image expressed her nostalgia for becoming distanced from her agency to play that, according to her, has since diminished in the host environment. Within a symbolic representation illuminating a childhood memory of 'stealing a flower', Yana positioned herself as a mischievous and wild-spirited youngster within her narrative. The symbol of picking a flower from this perspective could be associated with lively and playful characteristics that are supported by conditions of safety within the holding environment of the home. Conversely, from a 'here and now' perspective of being in the host community and still waiting for confirmation of her trafficked status, the absence of play and feeling of being under surveillance during the trafficking identification period was apparent in her account. Similar to the previous narratives and image, connectivity to the inner child revealed a historical sense of safety and agency constructions in being able to play and connect to space.

Figure 34

Beside the rootedness in the connection to the outside that offers a holding space and capacity to play and create, some narratives and images showed the integration of the inherited aesthetics and the imagined future ideations of home, in a way that linked these nostalgic explorations of home with potentiality in the future. Along this continuum of articulated belonging and identification between home and host, sites of alchemic significance allowed hybridisation and containment of diverse elements. The idea of envisioned home within a physical structure was commonly expressed within participants' imagery and narratives. This was often conveyed through a traditional stable structure, including a rectangular space, roof, and windows. The constructions of home, from these

perspectives, bore connotations of the home as a place of comfort, groundedness and stability, alongside opportunities to provide for others. In this sense, home related to a physical sense of comfort, as well as a place of stability and routine. For example, Anu's image, described as an 'African house' (Fig. 34), similar to the one in which she grew up in, was positioned almost vertically on the top of a mountain, following a mud type of organic road going upwards. In her words, it is important for her house to be able to contain many visitors and guests she wished to be able to welcome and host. The ample white space that took about two-thirds of the image, described by Anu as 'a huge sky', indicated the potential to grow and space to develop. The making of this image, according to Anu, evoked feelings of calmness and peace. Orderly flowers to the front garden added a sense of rhythm, groundedness and predictability.

Figure 35

In a similar exploration of connectedness to home as a sacred place of belonging and identification, Amla shared an ancient tradition of climbing to the top of a mountain and building a miniature house to honour the wild spirits. She used clay to make a solid building block (Fig. 35), which, in her words, relayed her longing for simplicity and safety. Further reflections explored the significance of developing a dual attachment to the 'rural' home environment, as well as the longing to create a home in the new host environment. Alongside connecting to nostalgic spaces that are imbued in emotionality, these constructions of home often contained a desire to retain this sense of containment, and in a more literal sense, a wish to move forward to an increased feeling of belongingness and rootedness in space. Associations of home and simplicity were also evident in Igor's representations of 'home'. Having spent significant time as being homeless, Igor drew attention to how obtaining a tent was one of the most significant improvement to his wellbeing and quality of living. Referring to the sense of joy that this brought to him, Igor offered further reflections:

Figure 36

> ***Igor:*** *I bought it for a fiver From the Saturday Market; I'm much better now. I sleep well. I can wear a T-shirt inside. If it rains- No problem…*
>
> *I used to build homes for people; now — this…*
>
> *It's not very good, but it's not as bad as it was before…*

I take a shower at Oli's. We cook and talk; We lift each other up…

I want to change my life, Get my passport, Birth certificate, Biometrics card, Become a citizen.

This narrative and creative engagement relayed appreciation for securing a sense of, albeit temporary, home and evidenced progression in Igor's sense of belonging. Starting from a symbolic sense of rootedness in the ground space, identification progressed to relational connections and legitimisation within the host environment. Apparent in this narrative is an appreciation for simplicity and relational being with others. This narrative and imagery, in this way, incorporates the ordinary and relational self alongside the official self in the host environment. The symbolic rootedness in the grounded and social identity of being at home with others extends to future trajectories of ascertaining immigration stability and citizenship in the host environment.

In general, a number of participants expressed deep appreciation of symbolic cultural elements, alongside finding ways of integrating aspects of the ancestral heritage within the host environment. A nostalgic sense of joy of connecting to the spacious and expansive elements of the homeland was expressed in such a way that a deep sense of connectivity, attitudinal relationality with space and significant others was apparent. From the perspective of 'here and now', where many respondents were bound to the inside of a built physical environment, with scarce opportunities to connect to others and the outside, the self of the past within the natural environment was often constructed as exercising spatial agency.

While some narratives reflected disparities between constraints and barriers within original homes and a sense of fluidity and space within the host environment, other accounts linked familial symbolic sources of authority to a safe space that integrated poignant emotive spheres alongside concrete memories and sources of familial wisdom. Participants relayed the significance of re-creating activities characteristic of their pre-trafficking realities, such as performing rituals and practices that helped them feel connected to symbolic ancestral spaces. These palindromic tendencies could serve the need to connect to identities that were not informed by trafficking. These practices were framed as helping bridge and re-nurture the connection to previous selves, culture, traditions and memories. By keeping the original customs and abiding by aspects of ancestral customs, links to the historical sense of home and identity were revived and integrated into the host community.

8. 5 Eclectic Home: Acculturation and Identity Transformation

Participants' narratives evidenced continuous re-choreographing of their daily living and re-negotiating their identities as protagonists and drivers of change. Whilst life pre-trafficking conditions might have positioned participants as a function of their labour, living post-trafficking, in some respects, offered opportunities for a more idiosyncratic and authentic way of being. Diverse relational ties and participation in belonging and membership of a variety of social groups, in this way, offered abundant prospects for performing and rehearsing diverse identities. Within an atmosphere of fluidity, there were opportunities for non-commitment and freedom to integrate or not, of new qualities and characteristics.

From this lens of establishing and performing new identity characteristics, negotiating individual and communal values has appeared as a theme that reflected the essence of home and host contrasts. This alchemy of the personal and collective elements was explored through conceptualising the host environment as a facilitative and inclusive space that offered a holding environment where the inclusion of symbols of religious or ancestral significance supported diversity. Respondents often described this hybridisation of the traditional and the host identity as a process of coming closer to their authentic self that holds individual and communal values in mutual respect. This identification of being a 'refuge' in 'another temple' included constructing new over-arching concepts of a higher being and social order that highlighted solidarity with like-minded individuals.

Participants' narratives reflected a deep respect for the values of the host community, both evidenced in relating to the ethos and philosophies of the host environment, and at the same time, tendencies to identify with the traditions, culture and spaces of their home country. Homecoming for these narrative protagonists who have transgressed borders and challenged deep-seated beliefs and practices was not conceptualised as returning to their physical country of origin, but as being embedded in establishing a sense of safety regarding freedom to connect to and 'select' cultural identifiers. This eclectic approach was particularly evident in participants' attitude to religion.

> ***Usha:*** *I go to church as well as to the Sikh Temple. I just like to take good things; any temple I go to has something good. I don't believe in one religion. Going to the mosque is rights; going to the Sikh temple is right; going to Church is right. But I only go and pick the good things, and I keep this to myself, I don't tell everybody what I'm doing. Some people think, "I have everything, I don't need to talk to him, I don't need to talk to her, I don't have to be involved". But one day, you will need the help of those people. Even big companies cannot do big work if they don't have the small workers. So,*

everything is important, all is good. My grandfather used to say, if you are walking, and you see a small stone, don't just leave it on the road, no. Pick it up and leave it on the side, or someone else can trip over it. Also, one day, if a dog chases you, you can pick up that small stone and throw it against the dog; it will help you. Don't just see it as a small thing. When you go somewhere, you always get something, no matter how small it seems. One small thing can lead you to another and then to another. That's the way I look at things. That's why my grandfather said, "A small stone, you might think you don't need it today, but you might need it tomorrow. Don't underestimate it".

A tendency to seek deity and destiny in the personal marked a shift from previous propensities to subjugate subjective elements for the purposes of the common good. Participants' existential journeys prompted them to pose questions relating to the relevance of deity in their new everyday living.

> ***Ayla:*** *I have a loving relationship with God now. I can speak to him directly. In my culture, my relationship with God was very different. There was a lot of fear; I always felt like… as if he was a Godzilla. Especially as a woman: you are never, ever forgiven. They say because you are a woman, He will have no mercy on you. And who wants to listen to all of this? I have no such fear now; fear is not such a large force anymore. There are strict rules in our culture... Men who are considered worthy are promised 70 wives, but what do I get from this? Am I the prise for others? An object of reward for the righteous men? What will I get as a woman? Am I supposed to be pure and virgin at all times? But what will I get for this? Where is God in me? Where is God for me? It is forbidden even to ask these questions.*

This quote indicates Ayla's perceived security and comfort in making choices and being led by intrinsic values rather than externally imposed imperatives. This newly found space, which allowed mixing and co-creating identity signifiers that do not require subduing individual needs for the harmony of others often extended to aesthetic and religious spheres of everyday living. Increased awareness of other ways of being and facilitating the development of different selves included a re-birth into a religion that was perceived as more accommodating and accepting of the individual self. In this way, some respondents' narratives indicated becoming closer to their preferred self despite not sharing the same language and original culture in the host environment. In this respect, respondents' language and culture could be considered as a less significant identifier than their constructed sense of self.

According to these narratives, freedom is oxygen, bread, and an essential element of life. Many participants indicated that they could not feel fulfilled in their home environment without opportunities to express, create and achieve wholeness. Now that respondents had experienced living in the host environment, this disparity was even more apparent. References to the organic nature of belonging and clear identification of the need for rootedness in authenticity and self-actualisation from this perspective equated living in the host community and having access to

essential elements needed for growth and development. Some narratives, as such, indicated that prospects of being true to themselves could only be attained by an opportunity to live in the host environment. Attaching to the roots, in this sense, marked the overwhelming significance of coming closer to a deeper sense of self rather than home-coming to a geographical space.

8.5.1 Visions for the Future

As opposed to returning to a place of birth, homecoming was conceptualised as connecting to a site of alchemy that allowed more fluid identification of 'home' as a way of being. Attitudes towards equality, such as women's equal opportunities to engage in education and work prospects in the host environment, were found to be in stark contrast to oppressive conditions seen to characterise home countries. In accounting for their visions for the future, participants often spoke about 'happiness' and wellbeing which were habitually described in very simple terms. Access to employment in order to secure basic human needs was an element included within many respondents' narratives of their envisioned future. This was described more as a means rather than as a goal in itself. Within respondents' narratives, opportunities to exercise basic human rights were perceived as facilitating conditions for self-actualisation. In this way, respondents constructed prospects of living in the host environment as visions to secure basic needs and a sense of contentment located within opportunities to exercise basic human rights and liberties.

> ***Makda:*** *I would like to work; any kind of work, not just staying in the home. You are always just thinking, what is happening, what is going to happen, you are always locked in yourself because it's the studio flat, you can clean and tidy in a few minutes, there is to distract yourself. So, I think it is the first thing I will do – go to work and meet new people, new friends.*

> ***Hadijah:*** *Me, in my life, I just want a small house. And then, a job. Not a job that I have to work 24 hours, a job that gives me enough to live with, and then try to help people and volunteer. Any, helping old people, homeless people, cook for them, there are small children needing help in hospitals, there are people who don't have visitors, if you go and talk with them they feel much better, I want to help many. I don't just want to work to get money, no. I want to make myself happy and do something important. It's important to do something meaningful that makes sense. That's what I want to do.*

These quotes illuminate a desire to have access to free time and contribute to society in a way that respondents deem significant, outlining the necessity of space for developing interests, as well as opportunities to create and relate to others. This resonated with other participants' narratives, outlining a specific focus on altruistic and relational needs, and constructing opportunities for attaining and expanding emotive and symbolic spaces. According to

respondents' accounts, being in the host environment facilitated greater insight into their individual needs, strengths and potential. Awareness of the dangers of being entirely consumed by work and a wish to have the freedom to facilitate a stronger connection to relational identities was voiced by a number of participants. Some respondents, in this way, saw their future economic relations as a means of securing basic needs to facilitate the creation of, and open, relational spaces that fulfil higher needs and purposes. In this sense, the participants' migratory journey represents a quest for connecting to a freer sense of self rather than a decision solely informed by economic incentives.

8.5.2 Wellbeing as Economic Power

Although a drive towards coming closer to a preferred sense of self was a common characteristic in respondents' narratives, male participants tended to perceive their strive for independence and autonomy mostly through economic and consumerist power and the ability to provide for their families. In this way, men's identity as migrant workers appeared less flexible and did not show noticeable changes over time.

> ***Marko:*** *I hope I can work when I get my papers. I go to school - English. I need to speak good English to find a good job. I'm investing in myself. So, when the document comes, I'm ready to go.*
>
> ***Victor****: It's difficult to get a good job now; it's difficult. You can only have a normal life if you have a job. I am a very active person. I don't have to watch TV all day. So, I go walking around the city. Sometimes, I speak to people walking their dogs. You have to help yourself, or nobody is going to help you. Maybe some people would like to sit and wait, but it kills me. I want to work, but I'm waiting now. These three months, I have been waiting to finish my documents, so I can get a job. And now I am waiting for a bank account. I came to this country to better my life. Because here I have more opportunity for changes. It's more evolution here. Different minds. I want to be free and not to be living with people who I don't know.*

Compared to women's self-identification, male respondents' perspectives of their sense of self and reintegration following post-trafficking identification was closely related to the need to access employment. Participants' accounts indicated that male role socialisation and expectations originating from the familial environment positioned them as a source of strength and familial support that also added to their sense of responsibility. A strong tendency for identification with perceived male role models as labourers and breadwinners dominated these narratives. Scarce employment opportunities undermined these internalised social and familial expectations.

8.5.3 Return with the Elixir

Alongside physical protective characteristics, the concept of home can be understood both as a locus of personality and as a means of expressing identity characteristics. An alchemic side of integration of symbolic characteristics of the ancestral, alongside rootedness in a more authentic sense of self in the host community. Relationships with the self and others were presented through imagery and storied trajectories that show a sense of personal transformation and deepening of personal and social consciousness. Respondents' accounts convey connotations of personal and social construction, connecting to intercultural and collective themes and issues that maintain focus on human experiences, overcoming barriers and gaining new understandings during this process. As such, the narratives and imagery draw on common intercultural symbols that unite and include rather than focus on distinctive features. This re-structuring of self, informed by life experiences, border crossings and migratory living, evolved as a theme which represents participants' desire to be perceived as resourceful individuals and active community members. From this perspective, the self is conceptualised as a potential site of continuous negotiations and contracts.

Figure 37

Transformative tendencies evidencing integration and expression of cultural values from the host environment have been outlined. These included negotiating individualistic values, establishing firmer boundaries and exercising rights that protect individuals. These newly acquired characteristics contributed to a sense of pride and achievement. Respondents' narratives thus highlighted exercising their citizenship rights, implemented in legal, immigration, interpersonal and home spaces. For example, Bhavna's visual exploration of her 'ideal self' portrayed a Westernised silhouette of a feminine figure, making a firm 'No' gesture. Within the narrative accompanying her image, Bhavna further highlighted her wish to develop assertive qualities that would enable her to draw boundaries and protect herself without feelings of guilt. Growing up with collective values, Bhavna felt that her family often expected her to serve communal needs, which, in her view, had rendered her vulnerable to exploitation. From this perspective, Bhavna expressed a wish to assume more individualistic values and fully exercise her agency. This glamorisation of the westernised body and image of the self, relayed Bhavna's

wish to allow herself to say ‘No’ and to draw boundaries and make choices. In her mind, developing and integrating more assertive qualities would support her to protect herself from harm and exploitation. Similarly, the following narrative conveyed adopting and integrating more individualistic values within a new sense of identity in the host environment:

> ***Shami:*** *Now I have learned to say, “No”. When I was at home, I was always quiet; I never said anything. But ever since I put in my asylum claim and got an ID, I stopped being scared. In this country, even if you don’t have paper, you still have some power; you still can talk; you still can call the police if you need to. I will not be scared to do that now. Then, if I go to the doctor, and if I have something I am not happy about, I say it. ....If something doesn’t work in the house, I’ll tell the girls, I’ll tell them to keep the house clean and do what we have to do. If something doesn’t get sorted, I talk to the manager. So, now I don’t keep quiet. For some of the things, I do, but obviously, not for everything. This is important for my health, for being with people and for my future.*
>
> *When I was living at home, I was living for my parents. Whatever they said, I listened. I couldn’t say anything. When I married, I was living for my husband, for my daughter, and for his family. But when I came here, I finished and washed my hands, I said, now I will live for me. What is good for me, I will take it. What is not right - I will leave. I read it somewhere that life is like a camera: when you like something, you take a picture. If you love it so much, you can rewind it and watch it again and again. If you don’t want it, you delete it and take another shot. So, I’ve taken that. If I’m happy with something, I’m happy. If I’m not happy with it, I will tell you my mind. Now, I’m the boss. [Laughs]. But I always try to say everything in a way that does not hurt anybody, in a nice way. And I tell my friends, when they talk to me, think about how you are saying it.*

This excerpt affords a sense of Shami’s newly negotiated sense of relational boundaries and living for herself instead of ascribing to traditional gender roles and serving familial and communal needs. This narrative exhibits negotiating new agreements for relationships where Shami would be able to indicate if something upsets her and regulate how she would like to be addressed. In this way, Shami exhibits a way of taking care of her needs by establishing boundaries where she feels contained and protected. Like a 'boss’ of her own life, she feels able to make decisions without prioritising others' needs while displaying care and sensitivity to others by being respectful to her own and to others’ needs. Within the polarities of the self in her home country being a function of the household organisation, where she had to submit to assimilative practices, being in the host country marks her transformation to a more boundaried self, re-affirming a stronger sense of assertiveness and relational agency.

Shami’s attention and sensitivity to others’ needs, alongside re-negotiating other boundaried ways of relating to others, in this way, do not undermine or ignore her own needs and sense of well-being. This marks a stark contrast between the all-giving-and-forgiving familial function,

an identity that she was socialised into. Her metaphor of the camera is a powerful signifier of the simplicity of being able to adjust the material she allows to become part of her daily experiences. Similar to the ease of taking and erasing photographs, Shami relays her newly established effortlessness of making choices and editing out material or experiences that might be upsetting in an attempt to compose her living in way that is authoritative and more closely aligned with her current values.

While some of the narratives evidence transformation of character and development from a collective to a more individualised self, other tendencies marked a shift beyond the self to extend attention to awareness of communal and altruistic needs. In this way, Nadine placed specific importance on the ways in which she had re-constructed and re-evaluated her identity following the trafficking events. This creative exploration offers a glimpse of how Nadine made sense of her identity negotiation and transformation.

According to this narrative, the experience of trafficking initiated post-traumatic growth that would not have happened prior to her experience of overcoming challenging circumstances. Through her re-construction of her professional identity as a chef, she had been able to impact her community and find meaning in shared learning and experiences. In this way, the purpose of her narrative could be understood as attributing meaning to adversities as encouraging transformation and personal growth:

> ***Nadine:*** *I came here looking for my own happiness. But I am now in the position of a helper, through my food and through my love for people. I can now make a difference to others. This is a privilege. Giving is a privilege. Giving is Godly. And I know God has a plan for me. That's why I never ever worry that my decision has not come. Sometimes, I think that I should write a letter of thanks to the Home Office for delaying my decision for these two years. I have taken this journey very positively; I have not wasted my time. I have used the skills I had already, and I have built on them, to change lives. If we think selfishly, for ourselves only - me, me, me first; me first; my daughter; my wife; my husband, what will happen to the world? So, it is important to think, and to think big! I am serving in the community now, and the happiness which I am getting…Oh! It's better than anything that I have done before! This is actual happiness! This is what gives me meaning!...*
>
> *This country has been a part of my life. We are more than just cases within the paperwork. We don't have to stay only within the documentation - Nadine is so and so… Nadine is an individual! She is part of this group; she is part of that group; she is a living, breathing part of us! …*
>
> *The church gave me an opportunity to cook for the people every week. Everybody loves my food! It takes me about four hours to prepare; I soak and pre-boil the dhal and chicken at home and then bring all the pots and pans to the big kitchen. When I finish the day and sit at the reception, everybody comes, chanting my name and telling me*

how grateful they were for my food. That's what I want. That people know me. I don't want to be treated differently; it doesn't matter that I have been through a lot. And it doesn't mean that they are British, and they don't have any worries. I have come to know how people live and how they think. They also have crises in their lives. We are all needy; we all need love…But we can come together to talk, share food and offer each other support; we can come together in love and friendship… And I am not waiting for someone to come and save me from this. For a prince, to tell me that I'm beautiful, then take away my freedom … And if the Home Office refuse my case, no problem. I will still be able to enjoy life as long as I can share something of myself with people…

Nadine's narrative referred to her increased self-awareness and maturity following the events of her trafficking. She reflected on how the unfortunate events have led her to contemplate her circumstances in ways through which she could re-establish a more altruistic and empathetic attitude and reconsider her wish to use her knowledge to contribute to the community. This shift in her consciousness directed her efforts to serve the needs of others and to not primarily focus on her own circumstances. Having suffered adversities, Nadine feels that she is now more able to empathise with others' struggles and appreciate a more altruistic way of being. She is, in this way, exercising agency in positioning herself as a helper and supporting others through nurturing and relating to others. This, according to her, has enabled her to consider the broader implications of inequality and need as she attempts to make a difference in her community. Her narrative reveals an attempt for equality in the way she positions herself. Notable in this narrative is the way Nadine has avoided binaries of helper and recipients of support by referring to common characteristics of humanity that unite rather than segregate people.

By recognising that individuals who are perceived of as privileged could also face difficulties, this narrative also highlights that individuals, who can be construed as being disadvantaged in many ways, are able to present as a pillar of strength and offer warmth and care to others. Appreciation of equality was also evident in the image Nadine made following her narrative. This mixed-media multi-layered collage (Fig. 38), constructed within an equally sided paper sheet, united a background net, to schematically represent a tree, fruit, vegetables and circular forms, overlapping on the right-hand side of the image and gradually dispersing towards the centre of the sheet. The shapes within the image are of approximately the same size; there does not seem to be a hierarchy or a particular focal point. The colour scheme,

Figure 38

composition and shape of the image combined diverse elements to communicate individuality, but also imbued a sense of universality and balance within the whole, fusing unity and fragmentation within the image. The cooking ingredients represented in her image are the tools that have enabled Nadine to connect to others and re-position herself as an authority figure and as a valued member of the community. Nadine's concern for the community, according to her, had enriched her emotionally and had contributed to what she saw as more profound meaning and significance of her life. Constructing herself as a source of support and sustenance, Nadine extended her empathy and generosity to community members, regardless of origin or perceived notions of being privileged. This sense of agency and meaningful encounter with others was augmented by a significant impact of spirituality.

This newly established pluralistic sense of self which, according to some participants, was more meaningful and offered a richness of transformative potential. Self-actualisation and coming closer to a chosen sense of self, through this lens, was expressed within daily routines, as well as via relational aspects and personal philosophies. From this perspective, some participants identified as searching for an adoptive motherland that offered a secure base and enabled growth and fulfilment of their potential as active members of society. The apparent absence of clearly identifiable end goals, except for the ability to freely express individuality, beliefs, or absence of faith, was often present within participants' narratives. This visualisation of respondents' future was primarily driven by awareness of the opportunity to have their human rights upheld and express views without fear of retaliation. Agency, from respondents' perspectives, was linked to the ability to choose within a safe and predictable environment that afforded basic needs such as food, shelter, and safety. In this sense, well-being and empowerment were very often linked to authenticity and a sense of belonging, but also to attaining altruistic aims, such as opportunities contributing to communal, and citizenship needs.

Respondents reported practising newly acquired cultural rituals and traditions within the safety of the host community. Narratives also showed a tendency to adapt existing home traditions to the current context and environment and share practices within the new community. Respect for the values of the host community was demonstrated within these accounts. These representations differed from the popularised image of the antagonistic, risk-taking and border-crossing migrant worker, presenting as a national and security threat. Some of the respondents' narratives presented a move away from constructions of home as a fixed place to a more idealised representation of home. This included immaterial concepts such as myths, traditional rituals and cultural beliefs. Participants, in this way, positioned themselves as receptors and

keepers of cultural narratives and familial wisdom. This legacy provided access to artistic, cultural and religious sources of ethnic consumption that were considered valuable signifiers of respondents' sense of belonging and identity.

In this way, the spheres of the ideal and spiritual become spaces of antagonism and hybridisation. The eclectic self recreates and reproduces this symbolic heritage through oral histories and experiential rituals. Usually inhabited by a sense of ethnic pride, religious and spiritual realms were described as intrinsically connected to the habitual and ancestral spaces. Alongside this, a sense of hybridisation marked respondents' alchemic journeys of connectedness to others and re-constructions of the self. These acts of negotiating the home and host, historic and contemporary, communal and individualistic, are highlighted within a number of narratives, evidencing directionality towards connectedness to both the self and to others. Respondents constructed themselves as having hybrid identities, rooted in their distinctive histories and cultural heritages and extending their torsos and future in the host environment. Whilst appreciation for their heritage was expressed on a symbolic and emotive level, strong identification with the host environment was also presented. This indicated a transformative trajectory from traditional and purist to multicultural, multifaith and pluralistic attitudes. This openness to change was evidenced in the curiosity to encounter other beliefs and ways of being.

8.6 Discussion

This chapter has captured the hybridised constructions of participants' 'homes' as dynamic and multifaceted interactions that contain past, present and future trajectories. The concept of 'home' from respondents' perspectives collated aspects of physicality, spiritual elements, and a locus of inner renegotiation of personal truths, imaginaries and relationalities. In support of Maddison's (2006) conceptualisation of 'home' as a site of clarification for one's life purpose and expression of becoming, hybridised notions of 'home', relayed by participants in this chapter, mark containment within an inner reflexive space that enables connections to symbolic ancestral spheres and newer elements. The findings indicate that these negotiations are continuously changing and shifting through a process of immersion in the host environment. In alignment with Heidegger's (1996) identification of 'home' as symbolic to personal development that is fluid and evolving, findings from the current chapter highlight respondents' constructions of home as a reflexive site of alchemy that facilitates a continuous construction

and deconstruction of meaning-making and identifiers of belonging. More specifically, these findings indicate that this process could enable personal and social constructions of a place of safety and comfort that also include a site of tension and inner struggle. Participants' conceptualisations of the original home were constructed as safe and unsafe at the same time. Ancestral homes tended to be romanticised and represented within abstracted and symbolic content, imbued with intense emotionality and nostalgic sentiments. On the other hand, a sense of tension was expressed regarding cultural practices that rendered participants disadvantaged and dependent on others. These home and host constructs, examined from the perspectives of trafficked people, align with studies (i.e., Doezema, 1999; Andrijasevic, 2007; Aradau, 2008) that oppose dominant trafficking constructions of original 'homes' as safe. Respondents' narratives in this chapter imbue particular meaning to entering a new space within the host environment, where they could negotiate new terms, conditions and values that they consider beneficial for their wellbeing. This could include access to a symbolic space of holding that ensures individuals rights and choices.

Participants' narratives tended to frame their experiences in terms of their sense of self and belonging alongside an encounter of past, present and future symbolic elements. Such references to past journeys, at times, examined alternative pathways and raised questions in relation to future directions and searches for meaning. According to Jungian psychoanalysis (Jung, 2003; 2005; 2006), this could relate to individuals' search for personal truths in their innate spiritual being and restore their energy in an archetypal exploration of strength, resilience and intuition. Through the lens of archetypal and mythical qualities, conceptualisations of respondents' homes within the leitmotif of the 'hero on a journey' could symbolise an alchemic process of uniting symbolic elements of the past with future identifications through the process of individuation through overcoming difficulties.

Findings further suggest that the process of acculturation reflects a multifaceted and multi-layered process that contains contradictions, juxtapositions and subaltern voices that are in continuous dialogue with each other to form new selves and to reflect multiplicity and diversity. In line with Kierkegaard's (1940) understanding of the cross-cultural migratory experience of home through an aesthetic, ethical and religious lens, respondents in this study relayed ways in which they have facilitated deep reflections and inner dialogues that incorporate spiritual, cultural and emotive connotations. Similar aspects of synthesising cultural identifiers within Berry's acculturation model (1984; 1997; 2006) highlight the significance of maintaining links with both the original and the new cultures. This complexity and tension between nostalgic and

present homes have been explored within the participants' images and narratives in this chapter, evidencing dramatic transformations of the self from being led by external values to more fully aligning to their intrinsic worth and having the opportunity to exercise their voice and active engagement. In this way, respondents' visions for the future could be understood as transgressing the realms of fulfilling personal needs, to move towards being transformational agents of change and active citizens within the host community.

Research has emphasised the importance of the post-migration period for individual wellbeing, establishing a sense of self and stability in the host community (Li et al., 2016). Alongside studies that highlight the importance of emotional and social support, strengthening social networks and developing social capital (Dow, 2011; Slobodin et al., 2018), findings from this study suggest that respondents' connections to the host community was perceived as particularly meaningful and supportive for their wellbeing. Participants' images and oral narratives reflected the multi-dimensional nature of experiences and events, to show deep and meaningful connectedness to others and the environment. Highlighting a rooted in histories and relational selves, everyday routines and practices offered variable nuances between markers from the everyday and habitual way of being. Identity and belonging– related factors, such as links to original cultural heritage, stories and myths, occupied a prominent place within respondents' visual and textual narratives. The study attempted to offer nuanced conceptualisation of agency that contains intersubjective understanding and socio-cultural negotiations. Respondents demonstrated negotiations of being 'active agents' within their relationships with other agents and structures. Participants tended to construct themselves as individuals who follow their direction and shape their own version of their future.

Migration research has recognised individuals' developing strength and resilience. One of the most distinctive tasks associated with post-migration experiences draws on a multitude of protective factors, as well as developing personal and social characteristics, that could aid integration following transition (James et al., 2019; Slootjes et al., 2017; Phillimore et al., 2018). Participants in this study demonstrated resilience to withstand difficulties and challenge stereotypical beliefs, facilitating conditions that mark a step closer to becoming the individual they want to become. In this way, findings from this study suggest that 'homecoming in the host country' could be imbued with meaning relating to facilitating appropriate conditions for growth. These findings correspond to Davies' (2008) suppositions that a number of trafficked people exercise aspects of autonomy and agency that they would not have had access to in their home community.

Findings from this research indicate that enhancing social and symbolic capital through maintaining communal links, volunteering and educational opportunities, can enhance post-trafficking rehabilitation and integration. Participants' narratives of their living in the host environment explore existential themes and issues that reveal intrinsic meaning-making and motivation attached to these experiences. Home as a symbolic holding space, revealed an intimate emotive sphere of the past, that connected to respondents' spatial agency and deep emotional encounter with the ancestral. Similarly, interwoven into respondents' strive for safety, were respondents' attempts of achieving a sense of self-actualisation. Within the existential rationale that informs their migration decisions, participants referred to conflict of worldviews and tension brought about by pressure to submit to strict cultural requirements. For these participants, the site of struggle was the tension between own views and prevalent beliefs in the home environment. From this standpoint, homecoming in the imagined host community related to self-actualisation, self- expression, agency and dignity alongside access to opportunity to provide for self and family. In this way, the perceived homecoming in the host country enables a more congruent as well as a more autonomous being.

Themes of wellbeing, integration, and visions for the future were expressed through visual and textual means. Imagined access to opportunities where individuals could live unrestricted by stigma, extreme poverty and gender oppression informed many narratives concerning the envisioned future. This corresponds with studies linking successful integration to access to social capital and connections. For example, developing and maintaining social relationships and networks has been recognised as one of the most significant factors of supporting integration (Phillimore, 2012; Ager and Strang, 2004). According to Putnam (2002), the social connections domain includes three dimensions of social capital: bonds within migrants' own community, bridges with other communities, and links to institutions of power and influence, such as employment and education. Whilst these studies have highlighted the need for migrant individuals to develop relations with the new culture whilst maintaining existing connections with the original culture, respondents in this study highlight the ways in which the imagined home of the future become a sight of new domesticity that also contains and reproduces historic rootedness through symbolic and relational means. Constructions of home are reflexives spheres of belonging that transcend participants' locality that are fluid, negotiable and continuously developing.

Findings from this research suggest that factors associated with respondents' motivation for transnational mobility could be inspired by aspirations for personal autonomy, independence and gender equality. Within similar lines, Plambech's (2010) examination of trafficking in relation to social mobility, presents migrant women at risk of re-trafficking as independent decision-makers who take pride in escaping severe living conditions, exploitative labour relations and gender oppression in their home countries, to secure better living conditions in the host country. Contrary to the prevailing normative preoccupation with commoditised economic drivers for migration (Kofman and Raghuram, 2018; Schenk, 2020), this study shows that opportunities to partake in democratic relationships and assume Western individual values, emphasising independence and gender equality, were among the most decisive motivational factors for migration. This corresponds with studies depicting the dominant notions of stereotypical economic motivation for migration, focusing on economic pull factors and the prospect of better earning power, as problematic (Conway, 2005; Halfacree, 2004) and marking a shift towards recognising the complexity of factors that do not necessarily prioritise economic motivation for migration (Lawson, 1999; 2000). Similarly, respondents in this research relayed their aims and visions for the future as a symbolic process. Participants referred to rituals and symbolic interactions seen to support their links to ancestral wisdom and which provide a stable connection with their home culture. From this perspective, life in the host community was perceived as a means of self-awareness, self-development and self-actualisation, where ethnic and cultural belonging often became a secondary way of exercising identification.

Despite this apparent shift in identity perception and sense of identification noted within these narratives, it is essential to note the apparent risk of simplifying 'before' and 'after' narratives. This study does not claim that pre-migration circumstances were characterised by participants' complete subjugation to the needs of the family, whilst the post-trafficking environment facilitated individuals' development of expression and autonomy. As discussed in Chapter 5, apparent compliance, passivity and voicelessness during the pre-trafficking period could act as a survival strategy for participants and, as such, could also function as an important element of their strategic planning and agency to ensure their survival and endure difficult circumstances.

It will also be useful to highlight the diversity and vast cultural differences between male and female participants. Whilst most women who participated in this research applied for humanitarian protection, the majority of male respondents who took part in this study were European citizens who had the right to reside and work in the UK. Apparent differences

between male and female participants were noted with regards to their sense of identification. Whilst women tended to envision their future within more holistic, self-actualising and relational terms; men were more likely to identify as migrant workers in need of employment opportunities.

8.7 Summary

This chapter focussed on understanding the acculturation and integration experiences of formerly trafficked people. Due to the lack of research on integration following trafficking, previous studies have suggested that parallels could be drawn from research on similar circumstances following migration (Juabsamai and Taylor, 2018; Gajic-Veljanoski and Stewart, 2007; Zimmerman et al., 2011). Participants' accounts indicated that initiating a migration journey and leaving oppressive home conditions is a testament to exercising agency. As within Chapters 5-7, participants' accounts in this chapter have presented a counternarrative to dominant notions of victimhood. Despite the widely accepted stereotypical depictions of the trafficked person as a migrant worker, participants in this study offered a more holistic representation of themselves that did not solely relate to their labour function or experiences of inequalities.

Overall, participants' narratives showed that economic agency was not positioned as an aim; instead, it was regarded as a tool of securing basic living conditions to enable them to fulfil higher aims such as altruism, care and community transformation. From this perspective, the assertion of homecoming in the host was relayed in participants' appreciation for having basic human rights, such as the right to life and liberty, freedom of expression and access to education and work opportunities, depending on their immigration status. Respondents' narratives, in this way, related to a transition into the new environment that facilitated a drive towards self-actualising and authenticity. Participants referred to being exposed to diverse elements and ways of being, being able to make informed choices and integrate qualities and elements that were meaningful and aligned with their intrinsic values. In this way, homecoming related to a cultural space that marked deep alignment, rather than enhancing consumer power, informed by economic relations.

9

Concluding Discussion

9.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, I will revisit the main research findings and outline how this work contributes new understanding to research and practice. It will also detail how the current work contributes methodological insights that may benefit future research in this and related domains. Starting with the rationale for this study, this chapter will provide a brief summary of the findings in relation to broader issues of inequalities, wellbeing and agency, surrounding trafficking. Further to these reflections on the wider implications of this study, attention will be drawn to future research directions.

The aim of this research was to systematically explore trafficked people's lived experiences in the UK, with an emphasis on trafficked people's sense of integration and rehabilitation. Three research objectives were set out to meet this aim:

1.To examine post-trafficking experiences and perceptions of wellbeing, integration and rehabilitation in the UK from the perspectives of trafficked men and women.

2. To collaborate with trafficked men and women within a process-based creative exploration to gain a better sense of who they are and allow for a holistic understanding of how they construct their sense of self and their experiences.

3. To contribute new understandings of the ways in which post-trafficking services can be utilised for individuals who have previously been trafficked.

Towards meeting these objectives, this study aimed to qualitatively and systematically examine trafficked people's experiences of reintegration and rehabilitation whilst affording insights into participants' identities, reflections and future directions that underpinned these experiences.

By drawing on analysis of participant-constructed imagery and narratives, I posited that respondents' representations and identities within this research served as a counterpoint to more stereotypical trafficking aetiologies and representations. I argued that this is noteworthy because respondents' structural and gender oppression had not previously been systematically examined as directly linked to trafficking. Findings from this study convey marginalized discourses which have been largely overlooked in the research literature. Specifically, this inquiry indicates that the creative engagement facilitated by this research afforded new insights into participants' sense of self that include emotive and aesthetic qualities, illuminate the lived experiences post-trafficking identification, and better explore visions for wellbeing, integration and rehabilitation from the perspectives of trafficked people. Apart from adopting a holistic approach to affirming the views and experiences of those most affected by trafficking, recommendations for best practice aimed at informing the development of appropriate support services. Further, this study adds to the body of the literature on arts-based participatory methodologies and thereby also highlights the therapeutic potential for the use of research as an intervention.

9.2 Trafficking representations

The current study suggests that a more fluid understanding of trafficked people's experiences that steers away from victim/rescuer dichotomies could facilitate more holistic representations of participants' identities and experiences. By drawing on analysis of participant-constructed imagery, their self-representations as strong and resilient individuals were contrasted with the dominant victimhood image and, as such, served as a counterpoint to more stereotypical trafficking aetiologies and representations. Contrary to trauma-informed trafficking representations (Hopper, 2017; Glesne and Pashkin, 1992), participants in this research tended to frame their identities within concepts unrelated to trafficking, such as idiosyncratic characteristics and relational links, including nuanced representations evidencing agency and visions for the future. Adding to the body of research that cautions against making assumptions that identities could be uniformed or 'fixed' (Deutscher, 1997; Martin, 1993), this study extends the literature by offering an insight of respondents' identity constructions that are very

personal in nature. I further show that participants' embodied visual representations in this research, expressed in strong lines, vibrant colours and powerful evocation, alongside narrative representations, demonstrated respondents' identification and positionality as being 'heroes on a journey' of becoming and transforming.

Building on the concept of agency, this argument was developed further by examining participants' hybridity of identifications according to beliefs, practices, places and relationships, relayed through respondents' narratives and images. This contributes to research (i.e., Doezema, 1999; Andrijasevic, 2007; Aradau, 2008) disputing the stereotypical image of the coerced figure of the vulnerable trafficked person derived from agency, power, and vitality that has dominated contemporary trafficking discourses. This study adds a specific emphasis concerning the way in which respondents conveyed agency that was embedded within the creative process. The method of deconstructing and constructing, from this perspective, reflected a meaningful engagement, situated within the experiential context. Accordingly, findings from this study oppose the dominant perception of trafficking victims as inherently vulnerable (Hopper, 2017; Glesne and Peshkin, 1997). In this light, I contend that the majority of participants resisted the binary representations of trafficking victims and instead tended to represent their experiences within a 'heroic journey' framework. This supports notions of the multifaceted nature of agency, including relational, symbolic and experiential aspects, which were elicited by analysing participants' narratives and artwork of their experiences and perceptions.

Overall, participants in this study demonstrated strengths, resilience and autonomy, alongside areas of difficulties following trafficking. Whilst the detrimental effects of trafficking are undoubted, this study suggests that the generalisation of simplified contemporary discourses constructed by privileged state actors on behalf of trafficked people could perpetuate wrongful representations that could adversely affect trafficked people. In contrast to the existing discourses that represent trafficked people as vulnerable populations and a function of their health symptoms and conditions following trafficking, these strong images counteract the subjugation of these discourses to reveal depths of insight, evocation and meaning invested by the participants. In this way, through acknowledging trafficked people's resilience, the study has contributed to their more accurate voice and fairer representation.

9.3 Pre-trafficking circumstances and inequalities.

Although this research did not aim to explore pre-trafficking experiences, the flexibility of the research methodology allowed for themes and issues not pre-planned and intended by this research to emerge. In chapter 6, I showed participants' accounts of their pre-trafficking experiences that indicated their reasons for initiating a migration project. I suggested that while respondents' decisions and circumstances are multifaceted, strong push factors informed an initial intention to migrate. Generally, the participants' own narratives of their pre-trafficking circumstances were denoted in relation to structural barriers, disadvantages and inequalities faced in the home countries. I illustrated how, for most participants, experiences of gender discrimination and poverty, paired with lack of employment opportunities, contributed to initial attempts to instigate change and secure basic rights and safe living conditions. Alongside this, I suggested ways in which participants' lack of identification with home may have contributed to accumulating symbolic pull factors that influenced respondents' search for other alternative ways of being abroad.

Further, findings associated with the theme of pre-trafficking vulnerability indicated that many participants experienced circumstances that could render them eligible for humanitarian protection. As discussed in Chapter 6, diverse ethnocultural and political circumstances affected multifaceted everyday living routines. Participants who experienced political unrest and became orphaned at a young age were at most risk of multiple levels of disadvantage. Compared to this group of individuals who experienced threat of violence as an everyday occurrence for most of their lives, those who had no restrictions relating to transnational movement and access to employment at the time of the research (such as male participants from the EU) seemed to mainly account for push factors associated with securing basic living conditions.

A significant number of narratives in this study did not refer to participants' immediate trafficking circumstances. This omission could relate to participants' attempt to avoid discussing particularly traumatic events following forced migration. However, when references were made to trafficking experiences, adverse responses to these circumstances were much less prominent than the pre-trafficking conditions in participants' homelands. These relatively diminished emotive accounts of trafficking could indicate that respondents did not consider those events as significant markers in their life history. Further, the trafficking narratives presented by participants in this study contrast with trauma-centred rehabilitation initiatives

(e.g., Pascual-Leone, Kim and Morrison, 2017; Hopper et al., 2018; Scott, et al., 2019; Hopper, 2017) that focus on addressing the immediate health outcomes following trafficking.

Respondents consistently described their pre-trafficking experiences as the most severe and often life-threatening events and conditions they suffered. Therefore, according to participants' narratives in this study, the most coercive and traumatic circumstances were not those of trafficking but the conditions prior to their departures. This sheds new light on understanding trafficking through the lens of the background conditions that precipitated these circumstances. Within the context of unsafe living conditions, often incompatible with life, trafficking experiences were predominantly constructed by participants as a nuanced improvement of their original circumstances or as a barrier that individuals might face over the course of pursuing their wider migration projects. This contributes to studies indicating that individuals prefer to stay within trafficking circumstances rather than return to subjugation within their home environment (Davis and Davis, 2010). In particular, trafficking, from this perspective, can appear a lesser evil compared to other abusive circumstances in individuals' home countries (Katsulis, Weinkauf and Frank, 2010). Respondents' journeys, in this way, related to moving away from the most traumatic and oppressive circumstances that function as a drive towards imagined independence and, as such, indicated an expression of agency rather than vulnerability.

9.4 Inequalities Post-trafficking Identification

By drawing on participants' post-trafficking experiences and circumstances, I showed that their daily routines and practices were indicative of the multiple disadvantages faced in the process of securing immigration permanence and post-trafficking support in the host country. Under the umbrella theme of post-trafficking inequalities, exploration of trafficking identification issues raised questions regarding who is eligible for support and whose disadvantages are considered worthy of recognition. Although services were available to individuals who were in the process of being identified as trafficked people, support was, at times, deemed inadequate.

Research indicates that although considered the safest of all, the post-migration period can often be associated with instability (Li et al., 2016), partially due to uncertainties following the period of submitting a claim for protection and integration difficulties (Mulvey, 2015; Wehrle et al., 2018; Desiderio, 2016), as well as due to barriers to forming meaningful connections and

relationships in the host community (de Anstiss et al., 2019; Martzoukou and Burnett, 2018). Studies suggest further that emotional distress can be further exacerbated by the lack of relational engagement and social support (Wade et al., 2005; Dyregov and Yule, 2006), social exclusion (Levenson and Sharma, 1999); uncertainty about the future and language and cultural barriers (Dow, 2011; Slobodin et al., 2018). From this standpoint, waiting for a VoT decision or readjusting to living in a new country after receiving VoT status could further increase the risk of isolation and contribute to disorientation and loss of hope.

Through examining daily routines and practices, I showed how participants frame their sense of self and identity based on interactions with others and experiences. I argued that these accounts are significant in countering more sensationalised constructions of trafficking identities based on juxtapositions of criminality and innocence. Securing a conclusive grounds trafficking status was referred to by some respondents as one of the biggest challenges of their life post-trafficking. In other instances, participants discussed the pressure to fit their circumstances within stereotypical victim typologies. For participants who had already confirmed their trafficking status and secured semi-permanent residence, imminent challenges included the prospect of resettlement, integration and enabling social connections in the host community. Alongside this, I showed how some respondents who were in the process of undergoing the trafficking identification phase problematised the very notion of post-trafficking support, symbolically expressed as an empty waiting space, that brings to the fore

uncertainty and victimisation that they might have experienced in the periods of trafficking and pre-trafficking. The study, therefore, suggests that ,similar to the experience of trafficking, the post - trafficking period is characterised by instability, perceptions of being under surveillance, as well as economic and immigration uncertainties.

Analysis of participants' narratives and artwork challenged stereotypical notions of trauma-informed notions of trafficking identities based on presuppositions of trafficked people's inherent vulnerability and innocence. Despite claims that post- trafficking services provide specialist support, this was contradicted by several participants. Whilst some participants observed that highly qualified support was needed but was not consistently available, others made a case for a more empathetic approach built on common values. Sensitivity to upkeeping respondents' privacy and confidentiality by accessing services in the community, rather than receiving support through specialist post-trafficking services, was also highlighted. Furthermore, findings from this study challenge the dominant trauma-based conceptualisations

of trafficking and instead make a case for a more empathetic approach based on shared characteristics.

9.5 Integration post-trafficking identification

Under the theme of home and belonging, respondents in this study showed the symbolic significance of transnational ties in supporting familial links, rituals and practices and sharing embodied cultural knowing within the host community. The analysis of home as self, offered in Chapter 8, examined the complexity of home as a metaphor for identity negotiation. Findings from the analysis emphasised the spiritual aspect of the concept of home as self, that intertwined relational and self-actualising elements. In line with previous work (Koser, 2000; Laurie et al., 2015; Peled and Parker, 2013), participants' narratives in the current study demarcate a noteworthy differentiation of their identity transformation before and after the trafficking events. Many of the participants' narratives and artwork showed aspects of their negotiated identity constructions, relayed through the theme of 'homecoming in the host', and indicating transformative potential. Similarly, visual and narrative notions of home were distanced from conceptualisations of home as a place conveyed as more fluid and ideal sites of experiencing and interactions that facilitated containment and potential for growth. Respondents' narratives showed hybridity of identities and cultural identifiers that they had adopted and negotiated. A tendency towards symbolic boundary-crossing and repositioning of a sense of belonging was evident within respondents' visual and narrative accounts.

9.6 Contribution to knowledge

Through a choice of narrative and visual methodologies, this study incorporated participants' creativity and active engagement, to systematically explore themes and issues from the perspective of trafficked people themselves. Despite the well-established understanding of the negative health consequences following trafficking (Zimmerman et al., 2003; Cwikel et al., 2004; Cannon et al., 2016; Cary et al., 2016; Oram et al., 2011; Turner-Moss et al., 2013), existing studies have tended to maintain a narrow focus on pre-selected symptoms and conditions following trafficking, resulting in an overly need- and vulnerability-focussed understanding. Although exploration of trafficked people's needs is important in understanding the impact of trafficking as well as planning and delivering post-trafficking support, such

classifications, this thesis argues, tend to position trafficked people within a pre-selected category of needing physical or psychological interventions. On the other hand, structural inequalities that have primarily influenced trafficked people's decisions to cross borders have not been fully recognised. This omission in acknowledging the impact of disadvantages could contribute to deeply embedding 'victim blaming', normalising disparities and further marginalising individuals and communities. To counter the incomplete picture of trafficked people's representations, partially contributed to the lack of direct studies with this population, this research has employed a choice of arts-based and narrative research methodologies that allowed for a more holistic understanding of trafficked people's insights, reflections and experiences from their own perspectives. The semi- structured and unstructured aspects of the research allowed for a broader spectre of issues to be explored, whilst specificity to post-trafficking rehabilitation was retained.

9.6.1 Contributions to Understanding Trafficking Rehabilitation, Integration and Wellbeing

To date, this is the first study to explore trafficked people's experiences of integration and rehabilitation in the (UK) host country from the perspectives of trafficked men and women. Visual and narratives of representations in Chapter 5 and those of belonging in Chapter 8, afford a sense of respondents' representational multiplicity. The current study suggests that a more fluid understanding of trafficked people's experiences that steer away from victim/rescuer dichotomies could represent complexity of circumstances and facilitate more holistic representations of participants' identities and experiences. Alongside the predominant economic motivation to trafficking (Roopan and Stewart, 2001; Mahendra et al., 2001), this study highlights the impact of symbolic push factors. Although this research did not aim to explore pre-trafficking experiences, the flexibility of the research methodology allowed for themes and issues not pre-planned and intended by this research to emerge organically. Analysis of participants' narratives and artwork challenges stereotypical notions of trauma-informed notions of trafficking identities based on presuppositions of trafficked people's inherent vulnerability and innocence. This study contends that such representations are oppressive and obscure the multifaceted nature of agency, to include relational, symbolic and experiential aspects.

Respondents in this study constructed visual and narrative imaginaries of 'home' that incorporated physical structures, relationality and inner dialogue. Idealised notions of self,

social relationships and introspective spaces reflected participants' attempts to secure a home as a site of reconstructed belonging that is continuously revaluated within a profoundly reflexive inner space. This is in line with existential and phenomenological literature (e.g., Maddison, 2006; Heidegger, 1996; Kirkegaard, 1940), suggesting that 'home' must be examined through the lens of subjectivity and multiplicity of truths, collated through individuals' lived experiences and relationality to self, locality and others. According to participants in this study, the imagined home tended to reflect the potential to hold rich symbolic and relational spheres that are dynamic and negotiable. Postmodernity in the host environment enabled identification and belonging that was not bound by hard categorising but contained compromises within dynamic and complex identifications. In this way, participants did not construct their identifications as passive receptors of the new environment but revealed complex collaborations with the symbolic ancestral, co-constructed, and hybridised truths. This indicates that trafficked people's integration and acculturation must be examined from within to include lived experiences, meaning-making and expressive elements. These perspectives underlined the hope that participants expressed in contributing to their present and future homeland in the host environment that is constructed by choice and includes multidimensional experiences, myths and imagining that confront exclusions and fixed conceptualisations

The influence of pre-migration difficulties that contributed meaning to respondents' narratives was examined in Chapter 6. Alongside the economic hardships, restrictions on identifying diverse and multiplicated ways that did not strictly follow the socioculturally prescribed norms were prominent in some respondents' accounts. In this way, narratives of escaping danger and persecution highlighted the impact of these obstacles and threats to life that some participants faced prior to their trafficking experiences. These findings are directly in line with previous research (Sharoukhi, 2010; Donger and Bhabha, 2018; McCarthy, 2018; Plambech, 2014), showing the extent to which oppressive pre-trafficking conditions could increase vulnerability to trafficking. Added to the economic disadvantage that trafficked people might have faced in their homelands before their transnational movement, another small body of research (Vijeyarasa, 2012; Peled and Parker, 2013; Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012) examined trafficking through gender inequality lens, to outline oppressive cultural factors that add to trafficked people's pre-migration difficulties. In the case of female respondents in the current study, gender-based crimes interacted with some respondents' immediate need to flee to safety through transnational movement. In line with previous research (Emmeneger and Stigwall, 2019; Callamard, 2002; Conneely, 1999), respondents in this study expressed a sense of

exclusion and lack of acknowledgement of these crimes. In this way, the initial motivation for transnational movement, from the participants' perspectives, seemed to have been partially attributed to seeking sustainability and protection, alongside an existential catalyst collating subjective truths and facilitating an inner space of reflection and alchemy in the host environment.

Respondents' visual and narrative explorations outlined a number of protective and hindering factors with regards to their sense of agency, rehabilitation and wellbeing within the post-trafficking environment. Risk factors and barriers were often positioned outside of participants' control. These hindrances were primarily related to immigration uncertainty and long waiting times for confirming VoT status. These data support other research, suggesting that post-migration distress could often have more substantial negative consequences than traumatic circumstances experienced prior to submitting an immigration claim (Gorst-Unsworth and Goldenberg, 1998; Chase et al., 2008; Dyregov and Yule, 2006). Respondents in this research noted ways in which state systems could function to define, classify and regulate individuals. Findings from this research further indicate that prioritising objective verification of definitive factual information informed the type of knowledge that was considered valuable from the perspectives of state officials. Through facilitating deconstructive and reconstructive frames that challenged basic assumptions and helped identify and reinvent power relations, some respondents in this study confronted normative decision-making and explored new ways of securing justice. These findings relate to competing discourses of truth and notions of what is considered valuable from the perspectives of participants and state officials. This highlights the conflict between these diverse value systems and ways in which universally accepted forms of supporting others that do not align with individual beliefs may be produced and reinforced.

Participants explored sources of strength that enabled them to sustain hope and withstand difficulties. Several protective factors were found to be particularly prominent during participants' rehabilitation: altruism, relational opportunities to connect to the wider community, the installation of hope and access to education and employment opportunities. The relational aspects in supporting participants' health and well-being within the post trafficking environment were outlined as particularly significant protective factors. Respondents pointed to the importance of offering support to others and receiving support that is empathetic and relational. The importance of co-creating support based on empathetic connections with others presupposes maintaining communal links and mutual support networks as meaningful and organic way of supporting wellbeing. This is consistent with Wiseman and

Brasher's (2008) understanding that a sense of community is an essential part of individual wellbeing. In line with this supposition, respondents in this study made suggestions with respect to humanising the post-trafficking support services through empathic engagement and offering alternative choices to rehabilitation in the wider community. Participants in this research, in this way, displayed ways in which community engagement could support a sense of belonging while having their experiences honoured and respected. This tendency is also observed by McNevin (2010), who highlights the potential of community groups to aid cohesion through interdependence and peer support. Adding to this, findings from this research show that forming connections with different groups, communities, and organisations represents an important part of respondents' rehabilitation.

Findings highlight some respondents' tendencies to deflect from the specific nature of individual circumstances and to focus on the construction of emotional distress as a regular experience that is shared with others. Difficulties were acknowledged as an organic process, rather than as solely being linked to traumatic circumstances. The self in distress, from this perspective, is one that bears a strong sense of identification with common characteristics that connect to humanity and nature. Adding to Frank's (1994) conceptualisation of heroic narratives, findings from this study tend to align with ascending narratives that construct respondents' difficulties as embedded within the natural life cycles. Appreciation of diversity and fluctuations of the natural cyclical process was manifested in many participants' understanding of wellbeing. Acknowledging respondents' understandings of wellbeing and their interpretations of emotional distress as a transient part of life, rather than a specific trauma-based conceptualisation, could have implications for respondents' preferred modes of support. Under the umbrella of 'sameness to others', this meaningful identification highlights respondents' collective belonging and a sense of connection with the communal. This construct steers away from binaries to acknowledge the way in which the cycle as an inevitable natural rhythm incorporates diverse states and experiences.

9.6.2 Methodological contributions: Research as a therapeutic encounter

This study used collaborative image-making and narrative inquiry methods to explore and afford a better understand of trafficked people's lived experiences. In conjunction with image-making, narrative inquiry was a useful research method that allowed participants to direct the research, chose an appropriate methodology, facilitate a trusting relational environment, and

discuss significant unexpected issues. Through image-making, participants created moments of importance and recalled milestones in their journey to wellbeing and becoming. The study contributes to establishing the value of incorporating process-based and arts-based knowledge in research. More specifically, the study makes a case for applying experiential and art therapy knowledge as a base for facilitating creative engagement within a process-based research. I show how the combination of image-making and narrative enquiry can provide a relational platform for participants' exploration of themes and issues that they deem significant. This methodological flexibility offered participants the opportunity to communicate their insight and holistic understanding in a meaningful way, aligned with their intrinsic views and idiosyncrasies. The collaborative, relational approach facilitated self-expression, meaning-making and empathic connection through sharing of art and experiences. In this way, the methodology could support both research and therapeutic aims by facilitating conditions that honour respondents' intrinsic worldviews and process and attune to their reflexivity, vitality and relational depth during this process.

Adding to the body of the literature on arts-based collaborative methodologies, findings from the study highlight further the potential for the use of research as a therapeutic encounter. I considered how both narrative inquiry and arts-based research are particularly suitable for facilitating a relational way of engagement within a collaborative research atmosphere. Further, the use of arts-based research explicitly affords the flexibility of working with the image-making process, which does not impose the need to produce a final narrative and artefact. In this way, data collection could align with respondents' process, communicative preferences and intrinsic worldviews without imposing the need to produce a final artefact. Therefore, I discussed how the methodology could support both research and therapeutic aims by facilitating conditions that honour respondents' intrinsic worldviews and process while accommodating!? their reflexivity, vitality, and relational depth during this process.

Further, I examined how the application of arts-based methods offers the potential to facilitate transformative outcomes through dissemination and correcting misrepresentations. An exhibition event of participants' images alongside a three- dimensional art installation constructed from participants' imagery and captions were presented within professional and academic spaces. This empathetic way of engagement invited participants and audiences to share perspectives and experiences ways that were not aligned to any of the parties, whether this was due to means of expression or themes discussed. This inclusivity added another learning point from this research that builds on sensitivity to power issues and attempts to adopt

a humble empathetic approach to relating to respondents' experiences that connect to common human issues as opposed to trauma-based conceptualisations. The study was guided by participants' views of how they wanted to disseminate findings and contribute to their more accurate representation and establish links within the community. This methodology was closely linked to facilitating a connection to a population that is not well represented within research and contemporary discourses. As Barker and Weller (2003) suggest, arts-based methods afford access to affective and emotive spheres that enhance connectivity. It is therefore important for future research projects to build on the insights garnered in the present research and to consider how best to facilitate collaboration with individuals, groups, and communities, in furthering empathetic connection with diverse audiences.

Image-making offered a sustainable learning experience and introduced participants to a range of materials. I discussed how the use of diverse art materials within a safe setting offered respondents the opportunity to explore ways of expression that they might not have been previously exposed to. This supports the argument that the use of diverse art materials within a safe space can offer containing and reflexive capacity that is inductive to growth and development (Schaverien, 1999; Dalley, Rifkind and Terry, 2013; Burke, 2008). Accordingly, several participants expressed the wish to continue their exploration through image-making, while some considered pursuing visual arts as an expressive medium and even as a vocation. Most participants referred to their image as a significant marker of their life journey and an extension of the self. Some respondents wished to share their images with others and display their work in a way that celebrated their narratives and imagery. A large majority of the participants expressed the wish to keep the image as documentation of their experiences and wished that they could use it in the future as a memory aid and to commemorate their journey of courageousness and crossing borders to the unknown.

This study also furthers the debate about the use and value of visual methodologies as a social science research tool. To date, arts-based and narrative methods have not been previously used as a basis for creative engagement and collaboration with trafficked people. This study provided a method of enquiry that emphasized the holistic understanding and individuality of the participants. This included communication through narrative, metaphors, images and the use of artistic materials. As Case and Dalley (2014) contend, communication through art could offer value in recognising the diversity in participants' identities, instead of imposing dominant means of communication. Facilitating a connection to diverse groups, themes and issues through the use of artistic materials (Gilroy and McNeilly, 2000), was particularly relevant to

the aims of this research. The method combined structured and unstructured approaches to enable a more relational and inclusive research process. A more strictly planned research design that upheld a stronger focus on selected and firmly positioned themes and issues could have missed opportunities for respondents to highlight themes and issues that were not informed by trafficking.

By employing visual and textual methods, this study offered opportunities for respondents to express themes and issues that are difficult to verbalise. As a self-expression tool, the use of artistic materials presents the prospect of facilitating experiential knowledge through the creative process, without an emphasis on producing a final artefact. These exploratory characteristics have been related to potential to encourage new ways of thinking and expression through the creative materials (Cohen, 2006; Case, 2005). This offered the potential to hold diverse feelings of enhanced control and agency, as well as feelings of openness and uncertainty. Invitation to use the art materials as a way of processing experiences and communicating thoughts and reflections through imagery and narratives provided an alternative way of expression that is not entirely based on linguistic means of communication. In line with McNiff's (2019) suggestion that Arts-based research has transformative potential, participants in this research frequently described their experiences as being 'beyond words' and positioned on a spectrum of emotional intensity, which surpasses the capacity of linguistic methods of expression. This allowed for the idiosyncratic nature of experiences to be explored and included. Such subjective explorations and self-expression added important nuance to the consideration of trafficking representations through respondents' own language and emotive evocation.

9.7 Limitations and directions for future research

Alongside future research directions and contributions that this research could make to the fields of arts-based research and the use of research as an intervention and supporting the health and well-being of trafficked people, some considerations and limitations will be outlined. Firstly, participants represented a convenience sample which does not fully represent the trafficked population within the UK. Due to gender differences between participants' engagement with support services, male participants were less likely to engage with post-trafficking organisations, and therefore, their engagement with research was more limited. This thesis could also not capture the perspectives of many trafficked people who returned to their

homelands. Presumably, this group of people's identifications with home as well as attitudes beliefs and experiences post-trafficking support would have differed. Further research could explore and compare such different experiences.

Secondly, there might be significant differences between participants who sought support and who underwent the identification process for trafficking and those who failed to be officially identified or did not seek support or identification through the NRM. Moreover, those who maintained contact with the organisation after completing the identification might also differ from participants who did not wish to maintain links with the support services organisation. As participants highlighted power distance and conflict of interest between the recipients and providers of support services, questions were raised about whether or not the strategy to access and interview participants through the organisation influenced participation, trust, and resulted in data elicitation issues. Although recommendations for conducting research interviews with trafficked people highlight the need to collaborate with post-trafficking support organisations (WHO, 2003), detailed considerations of how power distance between trafficked people and support organisations could contribute to feelings of mistrust and being under surveillance. Whilst this was supported by some of the findings, other accounts indicated that this relationship might not have been perceived as supportive.

The research design did not deliberately exclude those who did not wish to be identified as trafficked people through the NRM. For ethical reasons, based on assumptions that the existing trusting working relationship would also enable safe research engagement, it was deemed safer for participants to be recruited via a support organisation. Presumably, it would be expected that accounts of the experiences of individuals who did not wish to be identified as being trafficked would differ. It is also conceivable that some participants might have been abducted, forced and imprisoned, in circumstances of total coercion, although such narratives were not revealed within this work. Further, there is a need for future research to explore how power relations influence support services. More work is needed to develop and investigate community well-being programs lead by trafficked people throughout the planning, delivery and evaluation phases. Similarly, further investigation could fruitfully evaluate the impact of victimised representations on trafficked people's identification and post-trafficking experiences.

Another limitation of this work is that due to the open methodological approach and research question, lack of specificity could, at times, render data difficult to organise and interpret. Due

to the limited number of explorative studies with this population, a broader investigation of themes and issues that respondents deemed significant, was needed. Despite the well-established strengths of using visual methods in research (Clark 1999; Punch 2002 Rasmussen 2004; Lomax, 2012), some drawbacks should be considered. Little is known about the potential of the research-produced image to cause harm. The emotional significance of the image could have the potential to access deep-seated experiences that vary in intensity and could compromise respondents' level of exercising control. It is important, therefore, to work very sensitively with participants, to ensure that they have the appropriate support should they need this in circumstances when the image-making activity might have taken them to a place where they did not feel in control.

Alongside the need to further research into power relations within the support services, investigating how compromised confidentiality influences the effectiveness and applicability of post-trafficking support services needs further attention. Several respondents commented on how their mere involvement with organisations known for working with the NRM could signify their trafficking experiences and compromise their confidentiality. Participants' lack of identification with the term 'trafficked people' has posed a number of difficulties in advertising the research and communicating the findings in a way that raises awareness of trafficking issues but does not compromise participants' identification and sense of self.

It is also important to differentiate between identities, rehabilitation and wellbeing experiences among participants from diverse ethnic, gendered and cultural backgrounds. Due to the broad scope of the study, it was difficult to establish the extent to which these differences played a part in respondents' experiences. It would be useful for future studies to examine such perspectives in more detail. From a theoretical standpoint, it was difficult to differentiate and outline how cultural issues would have influenced this research. The study features participants' subjective experiences, meaning-making and identifications that are not generalisable across cultures. Future research could investigate how individualised, and collective identities could influence trafficking vulnerability and post-trafficking experiences.

Limitations relating to the qualitative nature of this study include difficulty in applying reliability and validity. Due to the emotive and relational nature of the data, findings may not be replicated (Punch, 1998) as data may be interpreted differently!?. Although image and narrative analysis was led by participants' own interpretations, the researcher played a critical role in synthesising and analysing the findings. Despite this, findings were shared and related

back to a limited number of participants, which served as an opportunity to seek respondents' perspectives and verify the accounts and analysis with them. However, as previously discussed, due to the complexities and clandestine nature of trafficking, there were difficulties in sustaining connections with some participants over time.

A further avenue of research could expand on the longitudinal component of the present work to investigate the longer-term impacts of post-trafficking support and the meaning trafficked people imbue to such experiences over time. The longitudinal aspects of this study enabled capturing some individual experiences over a period of time, although this could be more fully developed. Due to practical difficulties in re-connecting to individuals following the passage of time, a number of participants could not be traced in the period following 9-12 months after stage 1 of this study. It was difficult to trace participants as they were no longer in contact with the support organisations, had changed their contact number or had relocated. As McCarthy (2018) notes, it is important to recognise that some trafficked people might find continuous and extended engagement with trafficking services unhelpful and re-traumatising, follow-up contact could remind participants of the difficulties experienced during their reintegration. As rapid changes to individual circumstances were very likely during this stage of trafficking identification, follow-up after 3 or 6 months could have elicited a better outcome, yet also captured some change over time.

Finally, findings from this research could suggest patterns that have implications and significance beyond participants' subjective experiences within the study. However, it is important to recognise the limitations as well as applicability to other research with other so-called vulnerable people. Further, it will be critical to interrogate trafficking inequalities within internal trafficking circumstances and to compare this with circumstances of transnational human trafficking. For example, links with refugees and asylum-seeking people are apparent because a number of participants share characteristics and both identities. However, while common characteristics may exist between people trafficked people from other countries and internally trafficked individuals in the UK, apparent differences in main groups' access to privileges, rights, and entitlements is likely to impact their experiences. Therefore, while some of the findings might suggest alternative representations, this study does not claim universality and generalised representations across cultures, genders and ethnicities.

The transformative potential facilitated by this methodology in the first instance contributed to a sense of connectedness to participants that are often mundanely labelled as vulnerable and

hard-to-reach. In this way, respondents' views and representations were shared within relational spaces that encouraged an empathetic relationship with diverse audiences. The use of these methods offers the potential opportunity to engage in both research and therapeutic encounters to ultimately support the health and well-being of participants affected by global adversity. Research could further explore employing relational perspectives to disseminate counter-narratives, encourage empathic understanding and facilitate a dialogical space where audiences could engage in interactional experiences based on shared human values whilst employing sensitivity and countering othering tendencies.

9.8 Implications of the research

Findings from this study highlight a complexity of factors that might affect trafficked people's rehabilitation, integration and wellbeing. More specifically, solutions to sustaining basic living conditions, including access to legal support and securing immigration permanence, are needed for trafficked individuals to establish more predictable life patterns. These findings correspond to studies that point to the need for long-term reintegration strategies, paired with considerations of the structural barriers that have precipitated trafficking (McCarthy, 2018; Donger and Bhabha, 2018; Paasche, Skilbrei and Plambech, 2018). Findings from this study add that successful confirmation of VoT status is a key reintegration factors. Consideration of social integration factors to facilitate trafficked people's feelings of connectedness to their communities is also required. Alongside securing basic needs, such as immigration stability and basic living needs, participants in this research highlight the need to draw attention to societal collaborations and strengthen support relationships to ensure rehabilitation.

Longer reflection and recovery processes are also needed where trafficked people are able to engage in employment and education opportunities. It should further be recognised that trafficked people need to have economic independence and find ways to sustain their living, hence they need to be allowed to work and access education opportunity from the beginning of the reflection period, to respond to those needs. According to West (2018), this could encourage better trusting relationship with authorities that prioritises trafficked people's needs over criminalising migrant workers. This also relates to research highlighting a need for intervention support services to address poverty (Donger and Bhabha, 2018).

Similar to other studies that have highlighted the adverse effect of socio-economic barriers, owing to formerly trafficked people's financial instability (Araujo-Forlot, 2002; Simkhada,

2008; Brunovskis and Surtees, 2012), findings from this research indicate that post-trafficking re-integration could be a difficult process, indicating the need to support individuals' economic independence to facilitate recovery and reintegration. This has also been highlighted by re-integration studies (McCarthy, 2018; Paasche, Skilbrei and Plambech, 2018; Rousseau, 2018), suggesting the need to consider a holistic approach in trafficking rehabilitation. Findings from this study show that considerations of the multiple levels of oppression and inequalities that have led to trafficking are needed. This study further suggests that training and work opportunities can contribute to a sense of social collective and autonomy that maintains communal links, helps develop employment and vocational skills and enables sustaining a sense of hope and future imaginaries.

According to participants in this study, it is essential for post-trafficking assistance programs to build on their agency and facilitate their individual autonomy as well as address the psychological outcomes of inequalities. Participant-led evaluation of post-trafficking intervention services has outlined areas in need of further development and consideration. The need for confidentiality, according to these accounts, included the necessity for autonomy and choice on the part of the trafficked person with their decision to identify as a trafficked person and to disclose the severity of their exploitation suffered during trafficking.

Findings from this study suggest that trafficked people need to be involved in decisions regarding whether or not they would prefer specialist trafficking services or access to community-based programs. Although some benefits have been drawn regarding receiving support within specialised post-trafficking intervention centres, some participants noted the added pressure and risk of further marginalisation that this could contribute to categorisation and victim identification. Moreover, participants indicated that accessing these support services made apparent that they have endured trafficking. This, in their view, compromised their confidentiality and added a degree of intrusion to their daily rehabilitation routines. Respondents' narrative accounts indicated the need to seek connectivity into the broader community, whilst formalised support agreement often required them to succumb, in their view, to inflexible models of support that prescribed their rehabilitation options. Despite the apparent lack of studies evaluating post-trafficking interventions, Brunovskis and Surtees (2012) note the importance of community-based programs that could offer an added level of confidentiality when accessing the services. This suggests that generic community services could offer valuable post-trafficking recovery alternatives. The current study supports these

suppositions and adds further attention to considering an added level of connectedness to common human issues.

Further issues of trafficking prevention need to be considered. Findings from this study point to an interrelation between pre-trafficking migration and human rights concerns. Participants' narratives indicate that consideration of the structural barriers that are associated with trafficking is needed. Since economic motives and structural factors that commonly featured within respondents' accounts of pre-trafficking vulnerabilities link to migration push factors, it could be expected that facilitating conditions of equality and opportunities to sustain a living within participants home environments would have influenced their motivation to migrate. This supports wider literature (e.g., Donger and Bhabha, 2018), suggesting that preventative measures should incorporate actions to reduce poverty that include trafficked people's views and considerations.

Many participants in this research reflected on their experiences of gendered poverty and deprivation in the pre-trafficking period. This is consistent with previous research suggesting links between gender role socialisation and trafficking vulnerability, reported mainly from a feminist lens (i.e., Doezema, 1999; Andrijasevic, 2007). Analysis of gender role expectations as placing additional pressure to succumb to traditional gender roles linked such cultural expectations to gendered poverty and ostracization. In contrast to the women, men less often accounted for experiencing physical threats but tended to report pressure to conform to traditional male role socialisations. This indicates the need to include considerations that regarding how wellbeing, rehabilitation and meaning-making would presumably differ as a function of gender, social class, legal status, and individuals' access to education opportunities.

Findings from this research further suggest a number of theoretical implications for work concerning trafficked people's agency. Whereas previous studies (Kiss et al, 2015; Sarker and Panday, 2006; Russell, 2014; Truong, 2005; Brysk and Maskey, 2012) have noted that trafficked people are likely to have experienced pre-trafficking disadvantages that could lead to an accumulation of adverse health outcomes, findings from this study suggest a more direct causal relationship between inequalities and trafficking. Where individuals appeared to be pushed by external factors to seek migration as an option to escape oppressive circumstances, a strong sense of respondents' agency underpinned these narratives. Although existing research enables a reflection concerning some of the barriers and challenges faced by trafficked people, a need for an asset-based approach (Goldman and Schmalz, 2005; Quon Huber et al., 2009;

Lohmann and Schoelkopf, 2009) requires the consideration of individuals' strengths alongside their areas of difficulties, to represent a more balanced and comprehensive view of participants' realities. It is important that trafficked people take the lead in this investigation as experts in their experiences. It is also imperative to consider that trafficked individuals are more than their narratives of migrant labour and trafficking experiences.

Support agencies and policymakers would need to consider strategies for supporting the employment and human rights of migrant workers. Findings from this research suggest that trafficking prevention should include an examination of pre-migration factors that precipitated trafficking circumstances, alongside attention to human rights, equality and solidarity. This supports studies advocating for the need to strengthen trafficked people's autonomy by securing fair labour rights that could sustain their livelihoods through facilitating their economic sustenance (Cruz, Davidson and Taylor, 2019; Gadd and Broad, 2018; Sychenko, 2017). In evidencing efforts to avoid 'risks' to trafficking, The Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's report (2020) focusses on ensuring safe labour conditions. Although the report claims that the complexity of individuals' circumstances is taken into account, trafficking prevention has extensively focussed on training courses provided to practitioners to enhance their skills in recognising signs of trafficking. In this way, prevention refers to eliminating irregular labour, concentrating on monitoring the regularity of so-called 'business compliance' with efforts to identify organisations who deviate from the required standards. Although securing labour rights play, without a doubt, a significant part in trafficking prevention, wider attention to pre-trafficking inequalities is needed. At the very least, recognising that such factors play a role in trafficking vulnerabilities would be a step in the right direction to acknowledging the hierarchies of oppression that trafficked individuals might have faced.

9.9 Conclusion

In this final chapter, I have revisited the main research aims and have evaluated how the thesis answers the research question. This chapter summarised the findings, with particular focus on trafficking inequalities, integration and rehabilitation, completed with reflections on broader implications of this research. Despite well-established links between survivors' voices and empowerment, trafficked people's voices have not been sufficiently represented in the literature. It was therefore important to provide a platform where trafficked people could relay their intrinsic worldviews, meaning-making and perceptions of their experiences, to inform

their own self-representation. Counter-narratives within this study provided a type of knowledge that might not have been considered valuable for legal and immigration purposes. However, participants' viewpoints beyond this factual knowledge have evocative potential that can enable connectedness with others.

During my work on this thesis, I aimed to facilitate an empathic research atmosphere that could encourage empathic understanding and facilitate a dialogical space that unites, rather than define separateness with participants who are mundanely labelled as vulnerable and hard-to-reach. I have been humbled and honoured to witness the warmth, strength and profound generosity that respondents shared within the research space and connected to diverse audiences. Within the 'hero on a journey' paradigm, participants' images and own words speak loud and clear of their resilience, spirituality and a strong sense of agency. Though the conceptualisation of home as the self that is inspired by courageousness in the encounter with the unknown, Alia's closing remark is a fitting testament to the way in which the homecoming journey of transformation intertwines with spiritual and self-actualising elements:

> *What I've learned is, if I need to grow, I must always look for new pathways; I must make a way where there is no way. And I know that even in times of struggles, I could still have the strength to find that other path.*

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Appendix 1: PIS Phase 1

Edge Hill University

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

Supporting the Health and Social Wellbeing of People Trafficked against Their Will into Modern Slavery in the UK

You are being invited to take part in Phase 1 of a research study. Before you decide whether you would like to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what will happen if you decide to take part in it. Please take some time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. You can ask questions if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

Why is the study being done?

We would like to better understand how people who have previously been trafficked, are adapting to living in this country. We don't know much about what it is like to try to get better after traumatic events whilst also getting used to living in a new country, speaking in a second language and connecting with people from a different culture. It is important to find out more about this directly from people like yourselves, who have been trafficked, had support, and are now living in this country. This may help professionals to understand what can be helpful or unhelpful, and to better support people like yourselves.

Who is doing the Study?

- I am Gergana Ganeva, a PhD Student at Edge Hill University.
- I am supervised by Dr Anthony Keating, Professor Derek Heim and Dr Peter Leadbetter from the University.

What will I have to do?

If you agree to take part in the research, I will meet with you and will ask you to take part in: 1) image making, 2) talk or 3) both image making and talk.

1) Image-making If you decide to make an image, I will give you all the materials you need. I will ask if you would like to use color, paper or clay to make an image that shows where you are now and how do you see yourself at this time of your life.

After this, I will ask you to tell me more about the image you made to help me understand what it means and how you decided to make it. I will then ask if it is ok with you to take a picture of the image so that I could use it in the research study as part of your story.

At the end of the meeting, you could take the image you made with you.

2) Talk

If you decide to take part in the talk, I would like to ask you some questions about your everyday living experiences in this country, how you are getting used to living in this county, what you are finding helpful or unhelpful and what you would like to do in the future.

I will **not** ask you any questions about your traumatic experiences. If you find that some of the questions bring up difficult memories, you can decide not to answer, if you wish.

or 3) do both:

Image-making + Talk

You may decide to take part in both image making and talking activities. The study is about your views and opinions, there are no right or wrong answers.

How long will the meeting last?

The meeting will last between 1 and 2 hours depending on whether you decide to take part in the Image making, the talk or both the image making and talking activities. This would be arranged at a time and place which are good for you.

Will you cover my travel expenses?

Yes. If you decide to take part in the study you will be given £5 to cover the cost of your travel to the place where we meet.

Do I have to take part?

No. You don't have to take part if you don't wish to. If you do decide to take part, you may choose to stop participating at any time. If you don't wish to answer a question or would like to ask me a question, please feel free to stop me.

If you decide to take part in the beginning of the study, but later wish to remove all of your information from the study, you are able to do that up until 30 days after our meeting. You will not be asked to give any reasons for this.

Will this affect my immigration status or the services I receive?

No. Taking part in this study is not linked to any services or advice you may receive. This means that there will be no negative or positive effects on your immigration status or any services you may receive. You do not need to provide your contact details but if you do, it will enable me to provide you with a summary of the findings at the end of the study in September 2019.

Will anyone know that I took part in the study?

No. Everything you say will be kept strictly confidential. However, if there are concerns about your, or other people's safety, I will have to speak to you and possibly to another professional, to make sure that everything is ok.

You do not need to give me your name. The information you provide will be anonymized so that it will not be possible for anyone reading the final report to know that you have taken part in the study. The collected information and images will be summarized within my PhD thesis and may be shared at public events, presentations, conferences and journal publications. Your words and images may also be shared through artistic methods, such as public exhibitions, dance, theatre and film – based performances.

What are the possible risks of taking part in the study?

It is possible that you may find some parts of the meeting upsetting. We can discuss in advance what we can do if this happens. One option is that I may have to arrange for you to speak to a Counsellor or another helping professional.

What will happen to the collected information?

The interview will be digitally audio recorded if you are happy for this to happen. This is simply to make sure that I can write down exactly what was said after the meeting. Once the information is written down, the recordings of the meeting will be destroyed. The written notes of the information you give will be then referred to by only a number and not a name, and will be stored securely. Any information that may identify you will be taken out.

What will happen next?

If you chose to provide your contact details, I will get in touch with you in 6 to 12 months, to invite you take part in Phase 2 of the study. In this follow up phase, we will explore your experiences since the first stage, to better understand how you have readjusted over time. You don't have to do that if you don't wish to.

Who has checked the study?

This study has been reviewed by the research ethics committee at Edge Hill University.

Thank you

for taking time to read this information sheet.

Contact information

Lead researcher:

Gergana Ganeva,
Room H116, Edge Hill University, Faculty of Health and
Social Care, St Helens Road, Ormskirk L39 4QP

Tel: 01695 654353, Email: Ganevag@edgehill.ac.uk

Director of Studies:

Dr Anthony Keating,

Tel: 01695 657062, Email: Keatingt@edgehill.ac.uk

If you have any concerns about any aspects of the study and wish to speak to someone independent, please contact Professor Clare Austin, on Email: austincl@edgehill.ac.uk.

Appendix 2: PIS Phase 2

Edge Hill University

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

Supporting the Health and Social Wellbeing of People Trafficked against Their Will into Modern Slavery in the UK

You are being invited to take part in Phase 2 of this research study, to explore your experience since the first stage and better understand how you have readjusted over time. Before you decide whether you would like to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what will happen if you decide to take part in it. Please take some time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. You can ask questions if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

Why is the study being done?

We would like to better understand how people who have previously been trafficked, are adapting to living in this country. We don't know much about what it is like to try to get better after traumatic events whilst also getting used to living in a new country, speaking in a second language and connecting with people from a different culture. It is important to find out more about this directly from people like yourselves, who have been trafficked, had support, and are now living in this country. This may help professionals to understand what can be helpful or unhelpful, and to better support people like yourselves.

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1)Image-making

If you decide to make an image, I will give you all the materials you need. I will ask if you would like to use color, paper or clay to make an image that shows where you are now and how do you see yourself at this time of your life.

After this, I will ask you to tell me more about the image you made to help me understand what it means and how you decided to make it.

I will then ask if it is ok with you to take a picture of the image so that I could use it in the research study as part of your story.

At the end of the meeting, you could take the image you made with you.

2) Talk

If you decide to take part in the talk, I would like to ask you some questions about your everyday living experiences in this country, how you are getting used to living in this county, what you are finding helpful or unhelpful and what you would like to do in the future.

I will **not** ask you any questions about your traumatic experiences. If you find that some of the questions bring up difficult memories, you can decide not to answer, if you wish.

or 3) do both:

Image-making + Talk

You may decide to take part in both image making and talking activities. The study is about your views and opinions, there are no right or wrong answers.

How long will the meeting last?

The meeting will last between 1 and 2 hours depending on whether you decide to take part in the Image making, the talk or both the image making and talking activities. This would be arranged at a time and place which are good for you.

Will you cover my travel expenses?

Yes. If you decide to take part in the study you will be given £5 to cover the cost of your travel to the place where we meet.

Do I have to take part?

No. You don't have to take part if you don't wish to. If you do decide to take part, you may choose to stop participating at any time. If you don't wish to answer a question or would like to ask me a question, please feel free to stop me.

If you decide to take part in the beginning of the study, but later wish to remove all of your information from the study, you are able to do that up until 30 days after our meeting. You will not be asked to give any reasons for this.

Will this affect my immigration status or the services I receive?

No. Taking part in this study is not linked to any services or advice you may receive. This means that there will be no negative or positive effects on your immigration status or any services you may receive. You do not need to provide your contact details but if you do, it will enable me to provide you with a summary of the findings at the end of the study in September 2019.

Will anyone know that I took part in the study?

No. Everything you say will be kept strictly confidential. However, if there are concerns about your, or other people's safety, I will have to speak to you and possibly to another professional, to make sure that everything is ok.

You do not need to give me your name. The information you provide will be anonymized so that it will not be possible for anyone reading the final report to know that you have taken part in the study. The collected information will be summarized within my PhD thesis and may be shared at public events, presentations, conferences and journal publications.

What are the possible risks of taking part in the study?

It is possible that you may find some parts of the meeting upsetting. We can discuss in advance what we can do if this happens. One option is that I may have to arrange for you to speak to a Counsellor or another helping professional.

What will happen to the collected information?

The interview will be digitally audio recorded if you are happy for this to happen. This is simply to make sure that I can write down exactly what was said after the meeting. Once the information is written down, the recordings of the meeting will be destroyed. The written notes of the information you give will be then referred to by only a number and not a name, and will be stored securely. Any information that may identify you will be taken out.

Who has checked the study?

This study has been reviewed by the research ethics committee at Edge Hill University.

Contact information

Lead researcher:

Gergana Ganeva, Room H116, Edge Hill University, Faculty of Health and Social Care, St Helens Road, Ormskirk L39 4QP

Tel: 01695 654353, Email: Ganevag@edgehill.ac.uk

Director of Studies:

Dr Anthony Keating,

Tel: 01695 657062, Email: Keatingt@edgehill.ac.uk

If you have any concerns about any aspects of the study and wish to speak to someone independent, please contact Professor Clare Austin, on Email: austincl@edgehill.ac.uk.

Thank you

for taking time to read this information sheet.

Appendix 3: Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule

1. INTRODUCTION

• The participant is informed that the interview should take about 1-2 hours.

• Introduction of the researcher with reference to the information sheet and allowance of sufficient time to read.

• Introduction of the research aims.

The purpose of this study is to better understand how people who have previously been trafficked, are adapting to living in this country. We will discuss your everyday living experiences in (city, e.g. Liverpool), your connections with the community and support services, as well as risk and protective factors associated with integration and living multi-culturally. There are no right and wrong answers.

• Outline and emphasise informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. Clarify circumstances requiring breach of confidentiality if during the discussions it transpires that there is a danger to self or others.

• Confirm that participant agrees for the interview to be recorded.

• Inform that if participant needs a break, he/she could let the researcher know and stop the interview.

2. SENSE OF SELF AND CONTEXT / IMAGE MAKING

If the participant has chosen to take part in image making, the task will be to create an image in response to the question:

Who are you? Where are you now? How do you see/ describe/ depict yourself?

Alternatively, if the participant does not wish to take part in image making, he/she could verbally articulate his/her viewpoints.

You can use the artistic media provided to produce a drawing/abstract image/ print/ collage/ 3d object that relates to you. You can use all the materials provided. There is no right or wrong way of doing this.

The participant is then invited to describe the artwork and their process of constructing it. The discussion could then highlight issues relating to artistic rationale, starting and end points, context, positioning, symbols, relationship to folklore, meaning, emotion, contrasts, brush stroke quality, use of texture and colour.

3. PERSPECTIVES ON DAY TO DAY LIFE

Tell me about your everyday living.

P: Could you tell me about a typical day in your life? What are your daily habits and activities? Where do you position yourself now in term of your life journey?

4. MULTI-CULTURAL LIVING

Tell me about your local community.

P: Do you know many people where you live? Who do you meet with each day? Tell me about your neighbours and the people in the local community? How do you get to know most of your friends? Is it easy to make friends in (city, e.g. Liverpool)? Do you have connections to the local community in (city, e.g. Liverpool)?

5. INTEGRATION IN THE COMMUNITY

Tell me about your Do you consider yourself to be a member of British society?

P: Do you feel that you belong to the community /locality? Do you feel welcome and friendliness? Do you think of (city, e.g. Liverpool) as being your home? Is anything holding you back/ helping you go forward? What barriers do you face in respect of integration? What does integration mean to you? How might your integration be enhanced?

6. POST-TRAFFICKING SUPPORT, SERVICE AND TRAINING PROVISION

Tell me about the support, services and training you had access to.

P: What was it like to receive support after going through traumatic events? Was there anything you found particularly helpful about this support service? What help/guidance/support did you find particularly useful? Is there anything you would have liked to have been different about the support? What was it like for you to be supported by someone from a different/ similar background to yourself? What was it like receiving support in a second language / using an interpreter? Were there any cultural or other difficulties in the process of getting support? Did your support cease at any time? How did this impact on you? Who would you turn to if you need support or information about something? Are there any particular services that you are satisfied or dissatisfied with? How satisfied are you with the support and /or services you received? Could the support you received be improved? If you were to give one piece of advice to practitioners working with people who had similar experiences to yourself, what would it be? Have you done any training or courses in the UK? Have they been useful? Were they easy to access? Any issues you want to bring up?

7. PERCEPTIONS OF HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Tell me about your future here in (city, e.g. Liverpool)

P: Do you feel able to achieve your full potential? If not, what is stopping you from doing that? What would improve your life here? Are you able to exercise your rights and responsibilities? What changes to your daily life here in (city, e.g. Liverpool) would help you to come closer to your preferred way of living? How might your life be improved in the future? What would you most like to change about your life here in (city, e.g. Liverpool)?

8. END

Do you have any particular issues or concerns that we haven't covered? How has it been for you talking with me today? Is there anything you would like to ask? Any concerns?

Debrief

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix 4: FREC approval letter

Edge Hill
University

Gergana Ganeva

19th June 2017

Dear Gergana,

Thank you for submitting your research ethics application '*Supporting the Health and Social Wellbeing of people Trafficked against Their Will into Modern Slavery in the UK* (FOHS 169) to the Faculty of Health and Social Care Research Ethics Committee.

I have pleasure in informing you that the Committee recommended that your study is granted Faculty of Health and Social Care research ethics approval, subject to the following conditions:

1. Ethical approval covers only the original study for which it is sought. If the study is extended, changed, and / or further use of samples or data is needed the Committee Administrator, Daniel Brown, must be contacted for advice as to whether additional ethical approval is required.

2. (NHS studies only) NHS Research governance processes must be adhered to. An application must be made to the HRA for approval for the research to be conducted in the NHS. All NHS RandD departments (in Trusts where data is being collected) will also need to be approached for Trust permission to proceed.

3. If the project requires HRA approval and/or NHS ethical approval, please forward evidence of the approval(s) to Daniel Brown
(email address redacted - 14/11/22) before commencing the study

4. The Principle Investigator is responsible for ensuring that all data are stored and ultimately disposed of securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) and as detailed within the approved proposal.

5. The Principle Investigator is responsible for ensuring that an annual monitoring form and an end of study form, where appropriate, is sent to the Committee Administrator

<doc title>	**<version no and date>**
PIS Phase 1	**V3, May 2017**

(email address redacted - 14/11/2022) The form will be sent to you at the appropriate time by the Committee Administrator.

6. Ethical approval for this research will expire on 01/06/2019. Any extensions to this date will require additional approval from the committee.

The study documentation that has been reviewed and approved is detailed below:

PIS Phase 2	**V3, May 2017**
Consent Form Phase 1	**V3, May 2017**
Consent Form Phase 2	**V3, May 2017**
Interview Schedule	**V2, April 2017**
Risk Assessment	**V2, April 2017**

Yours sincerely

Signature redacted 14/11/2022

Professor Mary O'Brien

Chair of Faculty of Health and Social Care Research Ethics Committee

Edge Hill University

St Helens Road

Ormskirk

Lancashire L39
4QP

Email address redacted - 14/11/22