THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

The Dynamics of Contemporary Slavery and Conflict: Agency, Asylum and

Accountability

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by

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Abstract

This thesis offers a new approach to understanding contemporary slavery by focusing on the root causes rather than on the end result of the enslavement. Adopting this approach allows for a move away from the current tendency of homogenising victims of contemporary slavery as having been 'vulnerable in some way' prior to their exploitation and identifies precisely what those vulnerabilities are and from where they derive.

The first-hand accounts of victims of contemporary slavery used in this research highlight the failings of current understandings of the 'ideal victim' which generate ideas of weak and passive individuals who find themselves caught in this crime. The notion of the 'ideal victim' does not reflect the experiences of a 'real victim', and this research explores how a person's agency interacts with overarching structures to lead them towards their exploitation.

The research compares the stories gathered via in-depth interviews with individuals who have experienced conflict to those of individuals who have experienced both conflict and contemporary slavery. By giving voice to those whose stories are rarely heard, this thesis identifies the point at which those who flee conflict become vulnerable to contemporary slavery. It finds that it is rare that victims of contemporary slavery experience a complete removal of agency in the lead up to their exploitation. Instead, they experience a limiting of their agency as a result of the impact of large scale structures, such as conflict. It is this restriction of agency in the face of inherently risky options that puts them at risk of contemporary slavery. These findings have policy

implications in requiring action to identify and tackle the issues most likely to limit a person's agency and lead them into making active, but not entirely autonomous, choices.

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Chapter One: Introduction – Context and Terminology

This thesis seeks to identify the precise vulnerabilities caused by conflict that lead people towards situations of contemporary slavery. While there is significant literature addressing both conflict and contemporary slavery, there is a paucity identifying any link between the two. That which does exist considers conflict only in the sense of war and, in so doing, overlooks the vast remit of the term. This thesis aims to offer a new insight into the relationship between conflict and contemporary slavery by understanding conflict in a way that goes beyond the very narrow definition of war. In considering a wider understanding of the concept, this thesis seeks to identify the vulnerabilities it causes in a way that can be generalised amongst forms of conflict that include but are not limited to war.

Current approaches to contemporary slavery often focus on the end result – the slavery. They discuss the different forms of slavery (Craig et al., 2007; Kara, 2009; Anti-Slavery International, 2018), the experiences of suffering (Bales & Trodd, 2008; Murphy, 2014) and life after the exploitation (Human Trafficking Foundation, 2015; 2016). However, in comparison, less attention has been paid to the root causes of contemporary slavery and, as this thesis seeks to prove, conflict is one. Without such insight, any attempt to tackle contemporary slavery can only combat that which is currently in progress and cannot endeavour to implement successful prevention programmes.

This thesis uses data gathered through in-depth interviews with those who have fled

conflict, those who have fled conflict and experienced contemporary slavery, and those who work with either of those groups. By using the first-hand accounts provided by the respondents, this research aims to identify precisely how conflict increases the likelihood that a person will become a victim of contemporary slavery. It will assess a variety of forms of conflicts in a range of different countries and compare the stories of those who fled and remained safe to those who fled and experienced contemporary slavery. This comparison will provide new insight into a little-studied area in order to identify where the vulnerabilities are generated, how they develop, and what could be done to tackle them.

This research gives voice to those whose stories are rarely heard and uses their accounts to identify why current approaches to tackling contemporary slavery in the UK are failing. It goes beyond the tendency of suggesting that people become victims of contemporary slavery because they were 'vulnerable in some way' prior to their exploitation. Instead, using first-hand accounts, the research intends to identify the specific vulnerabilities that put those fleeing conflict at risk of contemporary slavery.

While this research is interested in the root causes of contemporary slavery, it has the capacity to investigate only one: conflict. Although examining this source will provide new understandings of the issues that put individuals at risk of contemporary slavery, it is only one of many root causes and there is scope and necessity for much wider research that explores the impact of other potential sources of risk.

The thesis is separated into distinct but related chapters, following the format of:

definitions, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion and conclusion.

1.1   Chapter Outline

Definitions: With widespread disagreement on the definitions of both 'conflict' and 'slavery', this thesis works through the terminological debates, providing definitions for both terms alongside the reasoning behind these choices. These definitions are then used to discuss current understandings and highlight new findings on the relationship that exists between conflict and contemporary slavery.

By using the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines' definition of slavery alongside a broad definition of conflict that includes not only macro level conflicts such as war, but also covers micro level conflicts including those within a family or a marriage, this research assesses some of the key factors that make those who have experienced conflict vulnerable to contemporary slavery.

Literature Review: This chapter works through the available academic literature relating to the relationship between conflict and contemporary slavery. While both conflict and contemporary slavery receive a great deal of interest in isolation, there is little academic literature that considers the relationship between the two, and less still when ideas of conflict are expanded beyond the notion of war. This chapter highlights the three most common topics of discussion: victims of contemporary slavery during conflict, perpetrators of contemporary slavery during conflict, and immediate post-conflict zones. Scrutinising this literature emphasises how discussions of conflict generally fail to move beyond war and underlines a gap in the literature that calls for a

broader understanding of conflict. The literature review also highlights a need to understand that vulnerabilities to contemporary slavery triggered by conflict continue beyond the immediate post-conflict period. Using these gaps in the literature as a starting point, this thesis tackles the failings of current literature by using a broader definition of conflict as a starting point to understand the nuances of different types of conflict and the ways in which they may make someone vulnerable to contemporary slavery.

Methodology: Qualitative data collection was used through semi-structured interviews with three distinct groups of respondents. These were people who had fled conflict and experienced contemporary slavery, people who had fled conflict and not experienced contemporary slavery, and agency workers. By interviewing these groups of individuals, this research accesses hard to reach respondents who were able to give voice to their experiences. These interviews developed first-hand accounts, allowing the respondents to reflect on their own situations and attempt to identify the main factors that they believed either put them at risk of, or kept them safe from contemporary slavery.

Findings: Using grounded theory, findings from the interviews provide new insights into the links between conflict and contemporary slavery. The findings are divided into two chapters, the first discussing those who fled conflict and experienced contemporary slavery, and the second concentrating on those who fled conflict to safety.

The first chapter assesses a number of vastly different stories of those who experienced contemporary slavery, be it in the same country as the conflict, in the UK, or in an interim country. However, despite the disparity between these respondents' experiences, there were key commonalities that linked each situation, relating predominantly to issues of agentic choice and of the removal of support.

The second findings chapter considers whether those fleeing conflict to safety remained safe as a result of UK government policies or in spite of them. This chapter goes on to scrutinise the risk factors that those both seeking and granted asylum continue to face after fleeing conflict to the UK. It considers the ways in which UK policies impact upon the mental health of people seeking safety, and the ways in which these policies may, ironically, increase the likelihood of a person becoming vulnerable to contemporary slavery.

Discussion: The discussion is again divided into two chapters, the first focusing on the role of structure and the second on the role of agency. First, the relevance of intersectionality is debated in relation to whether a person's identity can increase the likelihood that they will become a victim of contemporary slavery. This is followed by a discussion of the hypocrisy relating to how Theresa May advocates for a hostile environment for illegal immigrants while simultaneously pushing an anti-slavery agenda. The chapter then considers the difference between slavery and exploitation and assesses whether it is possible, or even necessary, to develop such a demarcation.

In the second chapter, focus turns to the role of agency. It considers victim terminology and the impact that the notion of the 'ideal victim' can have on the

treatment of 'real victims'. This leads to a discussion regarding the link between victimhood and agency and whether the two are mutually exclusive. It then debates how the removal of agency has been blamed for causing slavery and considers who is responsible for removing an individual's agency in a case of contemporary slavery.

Conclusion: The conclusion draws together the key findings of the thesis. It also highlights the practical applications and further research that could be developed as a result of these findings.

1.2   Definition of Slavery

The definition of slavery is contentious and much debated. Its meanings vary across law, history, social sciences and lived experience. Starting with the first references to slavery in international law, this section works through key legislation and definitions used through time, alongside their limitations, to articulate the rationale behind the terminology chosen for this thesis.

1.2.1   The Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

In 1803, Denmark became the first sovereign state to legally abolish their slave trade. Four years later in 1807, both Britain and the United States enacted legislation following suit with the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade and the Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves respectively. This obviated the trade and forced labour of millions of Africans, however, the terminology was limited in scope as these Acts abolished the slave *trade* but not slavery itself. Further, in the US, abolition related

only to the international trading of the enslaved. In the UK, it was not until 1833 that slavery was legally abolished throughout the British Empire under the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833. In the US, slavery remained legal until 1865 when the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution was enacted, however, neither of these national laws provided a definition for the term 'slavery' or felt the need to do so. Prior to this, the notion of slavery was less contentious due to the clear legal parameters allowing human beings to be understood as the property of others. However, once slavery began to exist outside of these legal boundaries, the concept of slavery became more ambiguous in the public mind.

The next widely cited discussion of slavery came in the early 1900s surrounding the term 'white slavery'. The 1904 International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic was renegotiated into the 1910 International Convention for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic. The resulting convention was ratified by 41 states after coming into force in 1920 as a response to widespread concern over white women and girls being trafficked into prostitution (Bales & Robbins, 2001). The use of the word 'white' in this convention highlights the reluctance at the time to directly link this form of slavery with the transatlantic slave trade, where it was generally understood that only black people could be enslaved. The 1910 convention was ratified in 1921 by the League of Nations, after incorporating children in the title, to the International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children. It is here that the notion of 'trafficking' first entered international legal understandings of slavery.

Five years later, the 1926 League of Nations' slavery convention was introduced. The Convention to Suppress the Slave Trade and Slavery provided the first definition of slavery in an international agreement, describing it as "the status of a person over whom any or all of the rights attaching to ownership are exercised" (UN General Assembly, 1926). It prohibited all aspects of the slave trade, which it defined as "includ[ing] all acts involved in the capture, acquisition or disposal of a person with intent to reduce him to slavery; all acts involved in the acquisition of a slave with a view to selling or exchanging him; all acts of disposal by sale or exchange of a slave acquired with a view to being sold or exchanged, and, in general, every act of trade or transport in slaves" (ibid.). Article 2 of the Convention required that states were to "bring about, progressively and as soon as possible, the complete abolition of slavery in all its forms" (ibid.). However, the Convention was controversial as it was introduced at a time when forced labour was common practice under the colonial administrations of the 1920s (Bales & Robbins, 2001). To overcome this issue, the Convention stipulated that "forced labor may only be exacted for public purposes" and it required states "to prevent compulsory or forced labor from developing into conditions analogous to slavery" (1926). The Convention then prohibited slavery, the slave trade, slave dealing, serfdom, forced labour and any practice that restricted a person's liberty or acquired control over them in a form tantamount to slavery, therefore implying some large shifts in understandings of slavery. Firstly, it emphasised a change in understandings by implying the existence of multiple forms of slavery that go beyond chattel slavery. Secondly, it signified a shift from understanding slavery as 'ownership', as per the transatlantic slave trade, to 'control'. The Convention was therefore significant in opening the way for understandings of slavery to go beyond the

previously restricted interpretation of slavery as only the enslavement of black people via chattel slavery.

In response to this convention, the International Labour Organization (ILO) acknowledged the reading of forced labour as slavery, leading to the development in 1930 of the Forced Labour Convention. The aim of this Convention was to prohibit forced labour regardless of the type of work it involved, thereby retracting the stipulations of the 1926 Convention which permitted forced labour for public purposes.

Subsequent focus on slavery came with The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 which stated that "no one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms" (UN General Assembly, 1948). The adoption of this declaration by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) was a reaffirmation of the international stance on slavery. The European Convention on Human Rights used similar wording when it came into force in 1953, stating that "no one shall be held in slavery or servitude" and that "no one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour" (Council of Europe, 2010:7).

1.2.2   Widening Parameters in International Understandings of Slavery

The 1926 Slavery Convention was updated in 1956 with The Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery of 1956, alternatively known as the Supplementary Convention. This

was a response to a UN decision that the 1926 Slavery Convention omitted some practices which were tantamount to slavery. The 1956 convention also obligated states to abolish any institutions and practices which were homologous to slavery, known as servile statuses, whether or not they were covered by the 1926 Convention. These servile statuses included debt bondage, serfdom, servile marriage and the transfer of a person under 18 years old by his guardian(s) to another person, regardless of reward, with the intention of exploiting him or his labour. The 1956 Convention then expanded on the 1926 Convention's recognition of different forms of slavery. It confirmed that there were multiple manifestations of slavery, each of equal importance, and emphasised that chattel slavery was no longer the only, or even the main, form of slavery. The definition provided by the 1956 Convention adds to, rather than replaces, the definition of the 1926 Convention. From an international standpoint, it is the amalgamation of these two conventions that provides the basis for any current legal definition of slavery.

The 1998 Rome Final Act established the International Criminal Court and employs a definition of slavery that is based on the 1926 and 1956 conventions. It defines slavery as "the exercise of any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership over a person and includes the exercise of such power in the course of trafficking in persons, in particular women and children" (UN General Assembly, 1998). The Rome Final Act extends the legal definition to include trafficking but, like the International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children, it specifically highlights the plight of women and children. Whether this is based on ideas that women and children are more vulnerable to slavery, or perhaps considered more deserving of assistance, is

a point not widely discussed.

In 2000, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (better known as one of the Palermo Protocols) was introduced as part of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The terminology in the titling of the protocol again indicates a bias towards women and children, but also emphasises its purpose of focusing on human trafficking, with no mention of slavery in the title. It is notably different in its definition to the conventions that preceded it, as it extends beyond just the exertion of control over a person. It states that:

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

> (b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;

(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of

a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking

in persons" even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in

subparagraph (a) of this article;

(d) "Child" shall mean any person under eighteen years of age

(UN General Assembly, 2000:2).

To simplify this, human trafficking according to this Palermo Protocol must contain

three elements: The Act, The Means and The Purpose. The Act refers to what is done,

The Means refers to how it is done, and The Purpose refers to the form of exploitation.

This Palermo Protocol continues the previous conventions' failures of defining slavery

and simply lists it as one of numerous forms of human trafficking.

1.2.3 Diversification of Terminology: Successes and Limitations

One of the key failings of the term 'human trafficking' is its propensity to be confused

with people smuggling. Although people smuggling has the potential to become

human trafficking, the terms are not interchangeable. People smuggling refers to an

assisted illegal border crossing of a person into a state where they are neither a

permanent resident nor a citizen. Although people who are trafficked may well

experience an illegal border crossing, they may equally be taken to a destination in

which they are legally entitled to reside. For example, European Economic Area

nationals have the legal right to live and work in the UK, yet a large number have been

identified as victims of human trafficking or 'modern slavery' in the UK (National Crime Agency, 2016).

Much of the confusion between smuggling and trafficking centres on the notion of intent, with the common claim that people who are smuggled do so willingly, but those who are trafficked are deceived. This is not a generalisable assertion and those who are trafficked do, in many instances, consent to their travel. While victims of trafficking may be deceived, the deception tends to occur in relation to the exploitation they will suffer rather than in relation to the destination.

Overall, the clearest way to differentiate between smuggling and trafficking is by identifying the point at which the relationship between those travelling and those organising the travelling ends. The relationship with those being smuggled will end upon arrival at the destination, while the relationship with those being trafficked will not. Although the confusion between smuggling and trafficking is understandable, by defining trafficking using The Act, The Means and The Purpose as discussed above, the Palermo Protocol plainly differentiates it from smuggling.

Considering the force and connotations surrounding the word 'slavery', it is surprising that the Palermo Protocol places it as a subheading of another issue – human trafficking, as to do so is to reduce its potency. This understanding of the relationship between slavery and trafficking is reversed by the Modern Slavery Act.

As the Home Office was developing plans for the Modern Slavery Act, the term 'human

trafficking' was used less by media and practitioners and was commonly replaced with the term 'modern slavery'. However, little attention was paid to the meanings of the terms and they were often used interchangeably. Considerable and lengthy debate ensued amongst the working group preparing the first draft of the Bill, about 'slavery', 'trafficking' and how either might be defined. Only with the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act in March 2015 was a definition of the differences properly elucidated.

Unlike the Palermo Protocol, the Modern Slavery Act sets 'modern slavery' as an umbrella term where human trafficking is one of two sub-categories, alongside 'slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour' (Home Office, 2014a:9). This helps to overcome the problem whereby situations of slavery which do not incorporate movement are overlooked. Using The Act, The Means and The Purpose criteria again, human trafficking requires the presence of all three, while 'slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour' only require The Means and The Purpose: how the victim is recruited, and the form of exploitation intended.

However, the Act lacks clarity by identifying slavery as a subset of 'modern slavery' without providing any definitions for its use. The legislation states that:

(1) A person commits an offence if—

(a)the person holds another person in slavery or servitude and the circumstances are such that the person knows or ought to know that the other person is held in slavery or servitude, or

(b)the person requires another person to perform forced or compulsory labour and the circumstances are such that the person knows or ought to know that the other person is being required to perform forced or compulsory labour (Modern Slavery Act, 2015).

The only mention of definitions is the statement that "the references to holding a person in slavery or servitude or requiring a person to perform forced or compulsory labour are to be construed in accordance with Article 4 of the Human Rights Convention" (Modern Slavery Act, 2015). However, the Human Rights Convention simply states that:

1. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.

2. No one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour.

(Council of Europe, 2010:7)

In effect, the Modern Slavery Act is a simple repeat of Article 4 of the Human Rights Convention with the addition of human trafficking but, like the Human Rights Convention, it fails to provide a definition of slavery. This exemplifies how legal understandings of slavery continue to date back to the 1926 Convention. Each time legislation is passed without providing a definition, previous legislation must be consulted for clarification. The point has now been reached where the basis of the legal definition is over 90 years old, yet the crime continues to morph and expand.

Academic disagreement on the definition of slavery continues. Some claim that it is a form of exploitation manifested as a system through political violence, captivity and

theft (Meillassoux, 1991). Others understand it as 'institutionalized marginality' (Miers & Kopytoff, 1977:3-77). Some argue that the defining factor of slavery is that the victims are outcasts (Testart, 2002), while others suggest it is a form of social death whereby the victim suffers powerlessness, degradation and removal from their familial claims and obligations (Patterson, 1982). Recent UN activities have a more open-ended depiction of slavery than those suggested here and those defined in the conventions. A broader definition increases the likelihood that victims of exploitation will receive support, but expands the definition to a point where it risks being so general that it becomes redundant. As Quirk (2011) suggests, wider definitions of slavery risk becoming overgeneralised to a point where they could incorporate potentially any type of exploitation that involves some extent of dominance. Such generalised definitions risk slavery becoming an evocative concept relating to extreme forms of human maltreatment, rather than a specific analytical category. This problem is addressed further in Chapter Six.

Other academics criticise the use of the term 'modern slavery' in reference to forms of extreme exploitation occurring since abolition. These claims are based on the notion that there is no clear segregation between 'modern slavery' and other forms of exploitation, including labour, marriage and debt (O'Connell Davidson, 2015; Quirk, 2015a). Others suggest that current interest in the term 'modern slavery' is simply reflective of a 'white man's burden', imposing cultural relativism on other societies (Kempadoo, 2015; Dottridge, 2017; Faulkner, 2017). Similar arguments criticise the terminology of 'modern slavery', claiming that is not reflective of historic practices and the preoccupation with the topic diminishes and trivialises the historical experiences of

the enslaved (Beutin, 2017).

One key criticism O'Connell Davidson has of the term 'modern slavery' is that where, in the transatlantic slave trade, the enslaved were moving from relative freedom into violent, exploitative situations, "the so-called 'modern-day slave trade' often serves to transport people into conditions that are safer and/or otherwise more desirable than the conditions they left" (quoted in Martins, 2016). This stance on 'modern slavery' is reflective of paternalistic proslavery activists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who claimed that slavery actually improved the conditions of Africans by removing them from worse situations (Dumas, 2016). Equally, while it is undeniable that some cases of 'modern slavery' may lead individuals to situations preferable to the ones they left behind, there is no reference as to why this is believed to *often* be the case. Most importantly, a situation of slavery being preferable to a previous situation does not negate its status as slavery.

Some argue against a disputation of the link between historic and modern forms of slavery (Quirk, 2009), claiming that there are significant parallels between the two (Gupta, 2016). There are arguments that 'modern slavery' continues to reflect historic slavery, but through modes and modalities unavailable in the 18th and 19th centuries (Nelson & Kidd, 2018), with some advocating that historians and contemporary scholars should work together to tackle this human rights issue (Diptee, 2018).

O'Connell Davidson also highlights the lack of unified definition of 'modern slavery', and it was in response to such blurred and varied understandings that the Bellagio-

Harvard Guidelines on the Parameters of Slavery were written (Allain et al., 2012). The Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines were developed by the Members of the Research Network on the Legal Parameters of Slavery, a group of leading property scholars and slavery experts, with the intention of overcoming the lack of clarity regarding the definition of slavery in international law. By bringing together the slavery understood by law and the slavery experienced in reality, the Network believes these guidelines to be a reasonable description of slavery.

The overarching theme from the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines is:

> In cases of slavery, the exercise of 'the powers attaching to the right of ownership' should be understood as constituting control over a person in such a way as to significantly deprive that person of his or her individual liberty, with the intent of exploitation through the use, management, profit, transfer or disposal of that person. Usually this exercise will be supported by and obtained through means such as violent force, deception and/or coercion (Allain et al., 2012).

This definition progresses the 1926 Convention where "slavery is the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised". The Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines unpack such powers to equate to the control of a person to an extent that is tantamount to possession, where possession is the most fundamental of the powers relating to ownership. A person cannot sell an item or profit individually from it unless they own it; this extends to human beings. A person cannot exploit someone else's labour or body entirely for their profit unless they possess them. However, these Guidelines use control to

delineate possession, as people can no longer be legally recognised as property.

The Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines expand the 1926 Convention's definition beyond just notions of possession by stipulating that the intent of exploitation must also be in place for a situation to constitute slavery (Guideline 2). This addition helps to combat critiques which suggest that defining slavery simply as the possession of others fails because it forms no specific category of persons. As Patterson states, "proprietary claims and powers are made with respect to many persons who are clearly not slaves" (1982:21). To understand slavery based only on possession would be to incorporate people such as military personnel whose actions are controlled and who are instructed on where they must live and the battles in which they must partake. It would consider prisoners to be enslaved, with their experiences of being controlled and constantly monitored. It could include children, as they may be considered their parents' possessions, or couples who could reasonably be argued to have an extent of possession and control over one another. It would cover victims of kidnapping who are controlled in a way tantamount to possession. Couples in arranged marriages could be deemed to be victims of slavery by this understanding, as their parents are able to exert enough control over them to promise them to another person. However, by including the clause requiring the intent to exploit, the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines comfortably overcome this issue and exclude the above from definitions of slavery. Although, should the intention of exploitation be, or become, present, the above could all decline into situations of slavery.

1.2.4 Implications of Definitions on Accountability

While intent is fundamental in the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines, it is approached differently by the Modern Slavery Act. To refresh, the Modern Slavery Act states that:

> (1) A person commits an offence if—
>
> > (a)the person holds another person in slavery or servitude and the circumstances are such that the person knows or *ought to know* that the other person is held in slavery or servitude, or
> >
> > (b)the person requires another person to perform forced or compulsory labour and the circumstances are such that the person knows or *ought to know* that the other person is being required to perform forced or compulsory labour (Modern Slavery Act, 2015, emphasis added).

The added emphasis highlights how the Act implies the possibility of holding a person in slavery without the intention of exploiting them. If a person "knows or *ought to know*", then there must be cases in which a person *does not* know that they are enslaving a person. Agency work could exemplify this situation, where an employer hires a worker through an agency. The employer believes that he is paying the victim directly, but the bank account is being controlled by someone at the agency. The employer then *ought to* know, but could reasonably claim not to know, that a person is being required to perform forced or compulsory labour. This underlines the lack of clarity afforded by the Modern Slavery Act in stipulating how far along the employment line responsibility can be assigned.

This situation is exemplified by a case in West Yorkshire where numerous people were

held in forced labour in a bed factory. The traffickers who found the employment and confiscated the workers' pay were convicted (Tickner, 2014). The legitimacy of this conviction is unquestionable as the perpetrators were both aware of, and had intended to benefit from, the exploitation of these victims. The owner of the bed factory also received a custodial sentence (ITV.com, 2016); again, he was wilfully aware of the exploitation. However, the lines begin to blur in tracing the products to the point of distribution where they were being supplied to well-known companies including Next and John Lewis (Connett, 2015). These companies have corporate social responsibility teams and auditing trails into their supply chains. It is therefore not unreasonable to claim that those companies, *ought to have known* that people were being required to perform forced or compulsory labour. Despite the lack of direct involvement in the exploitation of the victims, the Modern Slavery Act's definition implies that these companies did commit a 'modern slavery' offence.

It is here that the Modern Slavery Act fails to provide conclusive parameters as to who is culpable in a situation of 'modern slavery'. In this example, the Act can demonstrate that an offence has been committed, but it leaves an open-ended possibility for where the responsibility for the offence lies. Under the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines, the example would again be defined as slavery, but the assignation of culpability would be much less ambiguous. Here, the blame would rest only with the recruiters and the factory owner as it was their intention from the outset to benefit from the exploitation of these victims. The intention of John Lewis and Next to exploit the victims cannot be proven, meaning the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines would not identify them as perpetrators in this case.

The Modern Slavery Act's premise that responsibility should be shared along the supply chain, from factory to distributor, is a positive step in encouraging all parties to actively investigate their products and supply chains, however its lack of clarity on who should be held accountable makes convictions difficult. The transparency in supply chains clause in the Modern Slavery Act requires any company with an annual turnover of £36 million or more (the figure used to define a large company within the Companies Act) to produce an annual statement defining the actions the company is taking to identify and prevent slavery within its supply chain. This is a positive development, indicative of accountability as, if these companies are investigating their supply chain and slavery is occurring, they *ought* to be aware. However, the Act requires a statement, it does not require action. A company could publish a statement asserting that they are doing nothing to identify slavery in their supply chain; as long as this statement was published, it would be compliant. The belief is that consumer pressure will encourage the companies to act, but this relies heavily on public awareness, and even more so on consumers making ethical purchasing decisions. Leaving the companies accountable only to their consumers risks minimal impact; if ethics were the main priority of consumers then supermarkets would struggle to sell non-Fairtrade products. However, there is another flaw with this clause of the Act; arguably a company is in a safer legal position if it chooses not to investigate its supply chain. If a company were to investigate and find evidence of slavery but deal with it inappropriately, or even if it investigated but failed to uncover slavery, the company could be deemed to have committed an offence as they knew, or ought to have known, that slavery was occurring. Contrastingly, if they did not investigate their

supply chain, they could legitimately plead ignorance to knowledge of slavery and therefore not be held accountable for having committed an offence.

The Modern Slavery Act's open-ended assignation of accountability is a positive step in encouraging action within large businesses. Without such a threat, the likelihood that a company will take a proactive approach against slavery rests on the moral fortitude of its consumers (though with the limitations mentioned above, it continues to do this to an extent) and on the company's approach towards corporate social responsibility, although debate regarding corporate social responsibility and whether a business is required to apply it is rife within the social sciences; see Zenisek, 1979; Blowfield & Frynas, 2005; McWilliams et al., 2006; Slapper, 2011. However, the practicalities around assigning and proving blame outside of the immediate exploitation are complex and difficult to enforce.

The Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines fuse legal understandings of slavery with the true lived experience of victims and provide a more practical approach to defining perpetrators of the crime. By basing the definition on control coupled with intent to exploit, the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines offer the clearest definition of slavery; as such, it is this definition that is used in this thesis. To repeat this definition for clarification:

> In cases of slavery, the exercise of 'the powers attaching to the right
> of ownership' should be understood as constituting control over a
> person in such a way as to significantly deprive that person of his or
> her individual liberty, with the intent of exploitation through the use,
> management, profit, transfer or disposal of that person. Usually this

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exercise will be supported by and obtained through means such as violent force, deception and/or coercion (Allain et al., 2012).

1.2.5   The Terminology of Perpetrators and Victims

While the definition of slavery has been clarified, there are other terminological issues requiring attention. The discussion of the bed factory highlighted the use of the term 'trafficker' in reference to perpetrators of some forms of 'modern slavery'. The alternative, as invoked by the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (2018a), is to use 'trafficker' alongside 'slave master'. However, 'slave master' is inappropriate for many situations of 'modern slavery', as it implies a situation in which the victims have no agency at all. Although this is certainly the case in some circumstances, it is not generalisable to all instances, as addressed in Chapter Seven. This lack of generalisability makes the term unsuitable here, yet 'trafficker' suffers the same flaws by referring to cases of human trafficking rather than to slavery more generally. To overcome these issues, this thesis uses 'perpetrators' to refer to those who commit slavery offences and uses 'traffickers' (and trafficking) only rarely and in reference specifically to situations of human trafficking.

Clarifying the terminology of the offenders is important, but it is also necessary to highlight the use of the term 'victim'. There is significant academic discussion which considers whether using the word 'victim' serves to remove agency from the individual, though focus rests predominantly on sexual assault (e.g., Dunn, 2005; Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, 2009; Jean-Charles, 2014; Williamson & Serna,

2017). Some propose more empowering terms, such as 'survivor', in recognition of the subject's agency. Advocates claim that such terms view the individual more positively, as strong and active, rather than as weak and passive as implied by 'victim' (Alachkar, 2016; Papendick & Bohner, 2017). Hunter (2010) highlights the impact of terminology with his argument that those labelled victims commonly find it more difficult to develop a sense of self that goes beyond their victimhood. Other literature concurs that the term 'victim' reinforces a sense of passivity, an almost accusatory word indicating that those in question are not working towards recovery (Dunn, 2005) and one that could cause feelings of shame and guilt.

The term 'survivor' also faces criticism with claims that it can put pressure on an individual who may not feel like a survivor (Peternelj-Taylor, 2015). However, the same can be said for the term 'victim' in some situations of 'modern slavery'; individuals may not identify as victims, especially if they had significant agency in the decisions that led to their exploitation (discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven) or if the situation of slavery was preferable to their previous circumstances.

Hunter (2010) suggests that 'victim' and 'survivor' sit on a continuum where individuals may initially identify as victims, but after talking about their experiences and confronting or reporting the perpetrators, go on to identify as survivors. However, because it is not always possible to identify the terminological preferences of those who have experienced 'modern slavery', a generalisable term is required here. Because the term 'survivor' is applicable only to situations after the exploitation has ended, its relevance is limited in this study which refers both to those who have

escaped situations of slavery and to those who continue to be exploited. For these reasons, this thesis continues to use the term victim, whilst acknowledging its faults.

A final terminological issue to address is a problem with the governmental and 'modern abolitionist' choice of the terminology 'modern slavery' to reference current situations. Of note is Eric Williams' argument linking the abolition of slavery to economics rather than humanitarianism (1944). This identifies slavery as 'the birth of the modern', tying it to modern understandings of capitalism and connecting current concepts to historical ones. Considering this, this thesis uses the term 'contemporary' in place of 'modern' slavery in order to overcome any confusion surrounding the fact that, by this standard, historical slavery *is* modern slavery.

1.3   Definition of Conflict

In the same way that contemporary slavery is not universally defined or easily characterised, 'conflict' as a term suffers some of the same problems. The use of 'conflict' is common within academia, yet its parameters are rarely outlined. Giving thought to how this could be achieved highlights how convoluted conflict is as a concept.

1.3.1   Conflict or Competition: The Impact of Regulation

There is a common tendency to amalgamate conflict and competition (Schmidt & Kochan, 1972), as illustrated by Stagner's definition of conflict which mirrors Doob's definition of competition (Fink, 1968). Some argue that competition and conflict are

different issues separated by regulation (Schmidt & Kochan, 1972), where competition is regulated and conflict is not (Mack, 1965). The opposing parties may well be competing for the same thing: land, wealth, power, etc., but there is no definitive point offered at which a competition becomes a conflict. However, this argument is defeated with the realisation that, with International Humanitarian Law, conflict can also be regulated.

1.3.2   International Humanitarian Law

International Humanitarian Law refers to two distinct forms of conflict: international armed conflict and non-international armed conflict. International armed conflict is defined in the Geneva Conventions of 1949, common article 2 as:

> all cases of declared war or of any armed conflict that may arise
>
> between two or more high contracting parties, even if the state of
>
> war is not recognized by one of them. The Convention shall also
>
> apply to all cases of partial or total occupation of the territory of a
>
> high contracting party, even if the said occupation meets with no
>
> armed resistance (ICRC, 1949:common article 2).

This is expanded with an additional protocol to include "armed conflicts in which peoples are fighting against colonial domination and alien occupation and against racist regimes in the exercise of their right of self determination" (ICRC, 1949:additional protocol I, art. 1, para. 4).

Non-international armed conflict is covered by common article 3 of the Geneva

Convention, describing "armed conflicts not of an international character occurring in the territory of one of the high contracting parties" (ICRC, 1949:common article 3). This means that non-international armed conflict can include armed forces that are not linked to a government. The conflict could even be constituted entirely by non-governmental groups.

According to International Humanitarian Law then, international armed conflict is one between the armed forces of two states or for national liberation, while non-international armed conflict is an internal conflict which does not necessarily involve governmental armed groups.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) declared that "an armed conflict exists whenever there is a resort to armed force between States" (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2008). However, because this could relate to a dispute between just a few dissidents, to warrant the attention of International Humanitarian Law, there are two widely accepted criteria that must be met: a minimum level of intensity and a certain degree of organisation within the opposing parties.

The level of intensity is reached when the hostilities are collective or when a police force cannot contain the fighting force, requiring the government to engage its armed forces (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2008). The ICTY provides examples of cases where such levels of intensity could be reached, including intense devastation of a small number of buildings, the preparation of combat units, or the use of anti-

aircraft equipment without resources for air power (ICTY, 2005). However, this is simply a list of examples; there is no agreed base level, making it impossible to create a generalisable definition.

The degree of organisation refers to conflict involving non-state actors. Again, examples are provided in the ICTY document, including situations in which land is divided into zones, each with a commander required to provide updates to the general staff. This threshold is much easier to define in that the non-governmental parties involved in the conflict must have organised armed groups with a recognisable structure and the capacity to undertake military operations. Unlike the level of intensity, this is a basic definition that has the potential to be generalised to other conflicts.

While the requirement of state involvement is understandable to necessitate the involvement of International Humanitarian Law, the definitions provided fail to offer a generalisable definition of conflict that goes beyond large scale armed violence.

These definitions provided by International Humanitarian Law offer legal classifications for those who are signatories to the Geneva Convention. However, they exclude situations that exist beyond the realms of international or non-international armed conflict, for example a conflict between a state and a foreign non-state actor (Belandra, 2007; Duxbury 2007). Further, they refer only to armed conflict, and within that, only to situations which occur on a scale large enough to require the acknowledgement of international law.

Of course, the actions of those who exploit people in the form of contemporary slavery are not influenced by law. Slavery is illegal in all states yet continues to exist in times of conflict, both in terms of war and in wider understandings of the concept. This means that, like the definition of slavery, it is necessary to look further than legal definitions to identify the broader reality of conflict and to establish the common themes that can provide a generalisable definition. However, Dahrendorf (1958) suggests that reducing all conflicts to a single common principle risks leading to either huge generalisations or unreasonable oversimplifications. This thesis seeks to identify a definition of conflict which is both robust and which expands beyond the limited parameters of war.

1.3.3   Non-Legal Definitions of Conflict

Using a dictionary to define conflict provides a variety of suggestions:

1. a struggle or clash between opposing forces; battle

2. a state of opposition between ideas, interests, etc; disagreement

or controversy

3. a clash, as between two appointments made for the same time

4. (psychology) opposition between two simultaneous but

incompatible wishes or drives, sometimes leading to a state of

emotional tension and thought to be responsible for neuroses

(Collins Dictionary, n.d.).

As this research is concerned with understandings of conflict between people, points

three and four are disregarded. The remaining points purport that conflict occurs when there are incompatible goals between two or more sets of people. However, the concept of conflict has been debated for decades.

1.3.4   Conflict Resolution in Defining Conflict

The field of conflict resolution was established in the 1950s and 60s when academics of varying disciplines agreed on the usefulness of studying conflict as a generalised issue where there were commonalities between all forms, regardless of scale. However, before conflict resolution could prove insightful, it was essential that contributors provided some form of definition of 'conflict' to set the parameters of study. There were debates over the variations in conflicts and how they should be categorised. Some scholars generated lists, like LeVine (1961) who limited conflicts to four types: intrafamily, intracommunity, intercommunity and intercultural. Others created much vaster lists, such as Chase (1951) who characterised 18 different types of conflict ranging in degrees from personal quarrels to East vs West. In fact, many writers developed lists of types of conflict alongside a caveat stating that the lists were not exhaustive. However, providing examples of situations that can be defined as conflicts, mirroring the 'minimal level of intensity' described above, does not provide a generalisable definition so much as an incomplete list of illustrative cases.

There is also academic debate over whether conflict always denotes a negative, or whether it could be understood as positive, as a method through which solutions can be created (Tjosvold, 2006); these are, respectively, notions of destructive and constructive conflict. Destructive conflict is deemed negative and to be averted, but

constructive conflict is valuable and necessary to overcome situations of tension and reach a productive outcome (Deutsch, 1949). Singer (1949) raises an insightful thought on this issue in that, logically speaking, the struggle (e.g. war) could be understood as a method of solving the conflict rather than an example of conflict itself. With this understanding, war is not a conflict, but a response to one, where its purpose is to find a resolution to the initial problem. This thesis considers conflict to encompass both these notions: a conflict arises when there is a clash between two people or groups of people, and continues as that disagreement endures, through whatever means.

1.3.5   The Motivations of Conflict in Generating its Definition

Another key concept relating to the definition of conflict is that it has two possible motivations: fighting over the same resource or fighting over differing values. These are the notions of consensual and dissensual conflicts as discussed by Ramsbotham et al. (2011). The former refers to opposing parties fighting for the same thing (such as land, control, autonomy) and the latter refers to opposing values (such as religion, ethnic bias, etc.), however there are clearly times when the two overlap. The Northern Irish conflict exemplifies this; it began as a dissensual conflict where Protestants and Catholics had differing values, yet it continued in consensual form over the right to land. Defining conflict then becomes even more complex if its reasons for existence form the basis of whether a disagreement can be defined as a conflict. The character of a conflict may change over time and the reasons for its commencement are not necessarily the same as the reasons that promote its continuation.

1.3.6 Widening the Remit of Conflict

There has also been significant disagreement on how narrow the parameters of conflict should be. Those who advocate for a narrow definition claim that generalising the term could result in it being used to refer to anything "from war to choices between ice cream sodas or sundaes" (Mack & Snyder, 1957, quoted in Fink 1968:431). However, others such as Dahrendorf (1958) and Ramsbotham et al. (2011) promote a more inclusive understanding of the term; one more resonating of the dictionary definitions. For research based on vulnerable populations, it would be remiss to use a narrow definition, as doing so would limit an already restricted sample size of potential respondents. As such, it is this more generalised approach that is adopted here to denote conflict through the broadest set of conditions whereby parties identify and act on mutually incompatible goals. Unlike the definitions offered by International Humanitarian Law and ICTY, such understandings include non-violent conflicts as well as those that incorporate violence. As advocated by the dictionary definitions, violence is not an essential feature of conflict and, as Wieviorka asserts (2009), while conflict and violence may merge, they are not co-dependent:

> conflict is not only not to be confused with violence: it tends basically
>
> to be its opposite. Violence closes down discussions rather than
>
> opening them up. It makes debates and exchanges – even unequal
>
> exchanges – difficult and encourages ruptures or even pure power
>
> relations (Wieviorka, 2009:10).

It is important then that any understanding of conflict is not automatically conflated with violence. However, searching 'non-armed conflict' in academic literature is a futile

exercise returning only results of 'armed-conflict' or 'non-international armed conflict'. This emphasises the tendency of academia to focus on conflict only in terms of war or armed violence. Extending this search to 'non-violent conflict' does little to narrow down academic definitions. Although this heading incorporates much more literature that is accepting of the existence of conflict without violence, it continues to fail to provide parameters. As an example, Ackerman and DuVall's book 'A force more powerful: a century of non-violent conflict' (2000) focuses on the ways in which non-violence has been used in conflicts over the past century. However, it refers to 'non-violent conflict' without offering definitions of the term.

Another interesting finding in literature on non-violent conflict is the use of the term 'non-violent resistance'. Stephan and Chenoweth (2008:9) define this as "a civilian-based method used to wage conflict through social, psychological, economic, and political means without the threat or use of violence" and they offer examples including "boycotts, strikes, protests and organized non cooperation" (2008:8). They discuss how little literature on non-violent conflict comprehensively analyses all forms of non-violence, instead providing lists of examples, thereby repeating the above-mentioned problem that examples do not constitute a definition. While Stephan and Chenoweth focus on resistance and offer a rare academic insight into violence-free conflict, they continue to reference conflict without defining its meaning, and they depict non-violent resistance as separate to conflict while offering no clear distinction between the two.

This tendency to overlook a definition of conflict is reflected widely in the literature

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(see for example Steiner, 1969; Helvey, 2004; Mnookin & Verbeke, 2009). To identify a generalisable definition of conflict, situations must be identified that are not framed purely around armed violence, yet that go beyond listed examples of non-violent resistance. To incorporate non-violent forms of conflict would be to recognise issues such as familial conflict, marital conflict, political conflict, ethnic conflict, employment conflict and religious conflict. To offer clarity on these issues, familial conflict refers to any dispute within the family; this could be the desires of one family member not being acknowledged by another, for example a woman wanting to take on traditionally male employment, a forced marriage that goes against one of the participant's wishes, a relationship that other family members do not approve of, etc. Marital conflict relates more specifically to a breakdown in the relationship of a married couple, particularly if this were to lead to divorce.

Some instances of political conflict will be covered by International Humanitarian Law should they reach the required thresholds. However, smaller scale political conflict could include disagreements between parties (as, of course, is commonly the case) or disputes between party members.

Ethnic conflict can be illustrated with examples whereby ethnic discrimination has led to widespread violent conflict, such as the Rohingya Muslims of Myanmar, the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Horowitz argues that ethnic conflict may have any number of causes, including religion or politics, and any conflict based on ascriptive qualities could be deemed ethnic (1985). However, as Varshney (2002) counters, while there may be

multiple religious and political views within a single ethnic group, to be defined as ethnic conflict the dispute must be explicitly for the societal position of that ethnic group. An ethnic conflict need not lead to widespread displacement, murder, or even violence in order to be defined as conflict; the conflict may simply be between two ethnic groups or members of those groups.

Employment conflict relates to a conflict of interests between two parties; two or more employers, two or more employees or a dispute between employers and employees. While many employers have policies to ensure that no employment conflict escalates beyond a manageable threshold, this is not always the case. Employers may have human resources teams and employees may be represented by unions, each of which could either heighten or lessen the conflict. Should these prevention methods fail to counter a conflict, there is the possibility that the dispute could progress to an uncontrollable level.

The connection between religion and violent conflict gained significant academic recognition in the early 1990s in response to the fall of communism in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, where examples of religious conflict ensued, such as in Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina (Little, 2006). As with ethnic conflict, there may be numerous root causes for a religious conflict and multiple political and ethnic representations may exist within that one religion. However, for a situation to be understood as a religious conflict, those in conflict must be fighting explicitly for the position of their religious group within society (take, for example, Israel and Palestine, or Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland). Again, violence or arms are not required for such a

situation to meet the definition of being a conflict.

The above examples of non-violent conflict form a non-exhaustive list. However, as raised above, lists of examples do not constitute a definition and the parameters of the term 'conflict' must be identified if it is to be used in a meaningful and generalisable way. Having considered the academic arguments surrounding the definitions of conflict, this thesis will use its own, newly developed definition of the term as 'a set of conditions whereby parties identify and act on mutually incompatible goals. While this act may be violent, the presence of violence is not necessary in order for the situation to be defined as conflict. It is possible to be affected by a conflict without being an active participant.' The following chapter reviews the literature for intersections between conflict and contemporary slavery.

Chapter Two: Conflict and Contemporary Slavery in Current Literature – Shaping the Research

As discussed in the previous chapter, conflict includes but is not limited to war and should be understood in much broader terms. However, one pertinent flaw of the literature is its failure to do this. This chapter reviews the available literature, focusing on the few topics that address the links between conflict and contemporary slavery: understandings of victims and perpetrators of contemporary slavery during war, and the impact of the post-war period in generating situations of contemporary slavery.

By reviewing the literature, this chapter highlights the gaps and limitations of current writings that link contemporary slavery to conflict. This review is crucial in understanding the current approach to these issues and in developing a framework and rationale for the methodology used to conduct the research for this thesis. This review assisted in generating a research project that goes beyond the currently limited understandings of the link between conflict and contemporary slavery to identify the conditions that put a person most at risk of becoming a victim of contemporary slavery.

This chapter begins with a discussion of diaspora studies, as the dispersal of people is intrinsically linked with movement associated with both slavery and conflict. It then goes on to examine the literature relating to victims, perpetrators and temporal considerations relating to conflict, before addressing the key gaps in the literature.

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2.1   Forced Migration: The Usefulness of Diaspora Studies

Diaspora studies form an obvious starting point for discussing the impact of conflict. Classic definitions state a diaspora to be "the idea of dispersal following a traumatic event in the homeland to two or more foreign destinations" (Cohen, 2008:2). Brubaker (2005) attests that although the features of diasporas vary, there always remain three key themes: dispersion from the homeland, homeland orientation (that is, a desire for the homeland, be it the real homeland or an imagined one, as discussed by Anderson, 1983) and boundary maintenance, where groups are both mobilised and retained.

This thesis focuses on contemporary slavery in the context of conflict and while diaspora studies may initially appear to concentrate on this issue, their focus is more concerned with the structures of the movement of people rather than individual experiences within that movement. Diaspora studies suggest that people could face difficulties as they leave their homeland, but this is not a topic of focus. Instead, they emphasise the reasons for the dispersal and, even more so, life in the new host countries. They also rely heavily on the dispersed groups having idealised and collective memories of their homeland (Esman, 1986; Safran, 1991) and an intention to return to it (Reddy, 2015).

> In both established and embryonic victim diasporas, the wrench from
> home must survive so powerfully in the folk memories of these
> groups that restoring the homeland or even returning there becomes
> an important focus for social mobilization, and the mould in which

their popular cultures and political attitudes are formed (Cohen, 2008:4).

This is where understandings of diasporic movements fail to merge with understandings of contemporary slavery related to conflict.

Those who have left their homeland and then become victims of contemporary slavery are unlikely to become part of any efforts of social mobilisation because of the nature of their exploitation. Their freedom and agency are likely to have been severely limited and their interaction with others significantly restricted. Though these individuals may become part of such social mobilisation and collective memory after escaping their exploitation, diaspora studies models provide no understanding of how individuals may become vulnerable to contemporary slavery as a result of conflict.

Further, while people fleeing conflict may meet part of the definition of diasporas - dispersal following a traumatic event - not all those fleeing will necessarily leave the country. Although there have been attempts to research questions like 'can there be diasporas without migration?' (discussed by Cohen, 2008:9), widening the definition of diasporas dilutes the concept and, as Brubaker (2005:3) acknowledges, "if everyone is diasporic, then no one is distinctively so." The generally accepted definition of diasporas as based on international migration overlooks experiences of those who remain in their homeland despite the traumatic event. This then fails to consider internally displaced persons who have been recognised as prime targets for perpetrators of contemporary slavery (for example, Malinowski et al., 2016).

The 'traumatic' event in the case of diasporas must relate to something that encourages large groups of people to migrate and resettle in a new country; in cases of conflict this is likely to relate to an issue affecting large scale structures, such as armed violence and war. Again, this overlooks how individuals affected by the broader definition of conflict may be encouraged to move. Such movement may not be out of their homeland, though if it is, it could involve just one or two people rather than a large scale exodus.

This summary of diaspora studies highlights how they are useful for studying some of the structural issues that lead to mass migration, but how they fail to analyse the experiences of those who remain in the homeland, the experiences during the migration, or the experiences of migrants who move in small groups or as individuals. Most importantly, by focusing on the structural causes of migration, diaspora studies fail to acknowledge the impact of individuals and their agentic choices in the processes of migration. A diaspora is a mass movement of a homogenous group with a degree of choice, while contemporary slavery inherently relates to heterogenous situations in which people are faced with a lack of choices. Without understanding the experiences of individuals, or how migration processes may cause contemporary slavery, diaspora studies can only ever offer a generalised overview of movement and will struggle to offer insight into the nuances of people's experiences or how they might become victims of contemporary slavery. To gain such insight, this literature review now considers the experiences of some of the victims and perpetrators of contemporary slavery in conflict.

2.2   Victims of Contemporary Slavery in Conflict

Very few studies regarding conflict and contemporary slavery consider the interplay

between the two concepts or look at notions of conflict outside of war. There is also

limited acknowledgement of who is affected by contemporary slavery resulting from

conflict, with the main exceptions being discussions of child soldiers and women. Of

these two topics, child soldiers receive significantly more attention; whether this is

because children are considered the most vulnerable members of a society in conflict,

are most willing to contribute information to researchers, or whether funding and

international interest encourages researchers to focus their efforts on children is

unclear. However, it is important to note how the terminology of 'child soldiers' could

be confusing, leading to understandings of children as active, willing participants in

violent conflict when they should be understood as victims of contemporary slavery.

> A child soldier has been defined as any person under 18 years of age
>
> who forms part of an armed force in any capacity, and those
>
> accompanying such groups, other than purely as family members, as
>
> well as girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced marriage
>
> (Secretary General of the United Nations, Report to the Security
>
> Council, S/2000/101, 11 February 2000 quoted in Verhey, 2001:27).

A child soldier then, is a child attached to the armed forces. He or she is not necessarily

a combatant but could be used to carry out a range of tasks including being a guard, a

courier, a domestic labourer, a manual labourer or a 'wife'. With this definition widely

accepted, it is important to emphasise how the experience of child soldiers is a direct

result of conflict; without the conflict, their use would not be required, and they would

not experience contemporary slavery in this way.

2.2.1   Methods of Recruitment

A large proportion of the literature on child soldiers as victims of contemporary slavery

focuses on methods of recruitment, be this pre, or mid-conflict. Children are

particularly desirable to armed forces because they are so easy to manipulate, they

obey instructions, and they eat and earn less than adults (Human Rights Watch &

Brett, 2003). There are several methods through which children are recruited into

armed forces. Some children claim that they volunteer, however this raises issues

around children's agency and questions the possibility of whether such 'volunteering'

is, in reality, due to a lack of alternatives. For example, if a child comes from a

particularly impoverished area where food, employment and safe shelter are scarce,

their situation may be particularly desperate if they are also living in a conflict zone.

Human Rights Watch (2003) discusses examples of thousands of children in Ugandan

villages and towns who fear abduction, leaving their homes every night to seek refuge

in churches, factories and bus depots where they hope to be safe. They will then travel

back home every morning. Some children see that joining an armed force would at

least provide them with food, accommodation and some degree of protection (Verhey,

2001; Human Rights Watch & Brett, 2003; United Nations Department of Economic

and Social Affairs, 2005). This will be the case particularly for children who have been

separated from their families and are living in abject poverty with a lack of social

services (Watchlist, 2003).

Wars alter both the social and economic roles of children, whose vulnerability to

slavery becomes heightened if they have also suffered poverty, the death of parents, if they are runaways or live close to places with high demand for child labour or where armed forces recruit new soldiers (Smucker & Murray, 2004). Again, this emphasises how pre-existing vulnerabilities alone are often not enough to push children into slavery, but how conflict can intensify their vulnerabilities to lead them towards such situations.

When people flee from conflict, their community and family support systems often break down. Children may be separated from their families, increasing their vulnerability to recruitment into the armed forces or other forms of exploitation (UNHCR, 2003). Research has shown that some parents ask commanders to take their children when they can no longer afford to feed them (Human Rights Watch & Brett, 2003), believing that the children will live better lives, or at least be more likely to survive, as child soldiers than if they stayed with their families. Other children 'volunteer' into the forces to seek revenge for atrocities suffered by their families (David, 1998), though, again, without the impact of war, those children would likely have no need for revenge. The literature provides plentiful examples of children threatened with murder for refusing to join, and the most common course of recruitment is through threats, force and outright kidnapping (David, 1998; UNICEF, 2002; Human Rights Watch & Brett, 2003; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2005).

Some children are recruited on false promises of payment, where an income is hugely desirable in the context of war and their families are facing dire poverty (UNICEF,

2002). However, after recruitment, it becomes clear that the payment will never materialise and, for many child soldiers, there is no hope of escape. In some circumstances, child soldiers *are* paid a wage, for example Human Rights Watch and Brett (2003) discuss how children in Colombia are recruited into the armed forces and paid 900,000 – 1,200,000 pesos every three months (US $293 – 390). This is an attractive offer for war and poverty-stricken children and their families, but does not exempt them from being defined as victims of slavery.

These children fit the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines' definition of slavery regardless of whether they were promised or received a wage. With reference to the Guidelines, for child soldiers, the powers attaching to the right of ownership are used to minimise the child's liberty with the intention of exploiting him/her.

2.2.2   Experiences of Exploitation

Although for some, recruitment is an exploitative and traumatic experience, for others it may appear 'voluntary', with the extent of the exploitation only becoming apparent once they have become part of the armed force.

McKay and Mazurana (2004) discuss child soldiers in depth. One of their focuses is recruitment in Uganda. Here, children tend to be abducted into the forces where their initiation involves committing atrocities against those from their communities: rape, torture, maiming and even murder. This serves a double purpose: it initiates the child into the armed force and simultaneously destroys links between him and his (male

pronouns are used for ease, but it is pertinent to note that girls are also abducted as recruits) family and community. These aspects make it difficult for the child to reintegrate back into his society should he escape or be permitted to leave. Therefore, for these children, the impact of war does not end in their recruitment to the armed forces but continues for the rest of their lives as they lose their pre-war societal connections. This means that should they ever leave the armed force they must make a life for themselves with little or no outside support.

Human Rights Watch (2003) discusses this in further detail, also in relation to children in northern Uganda. Children are abducted from homes, schools and the streets and forced into sex work, to burn houses, carry out raids, beat and kill civilians and abduct other children. Some are forced to fight while others become 'wives' or servants or are given auxiliary roles as guards, spies, miners, domestic servants, porters, or forced labourers (Sommers, 2002). Although being a front line fighter may appear the least desirable role when other auxiliary roles are less dangerous, often children choose these combat roles, knowing there is a greater chance of escape when they have a weapon (Newman, 2014).

There are countless distressing tales recounting the stories of child soldiers: discussions of children forced to murder their parents, or threatened with murder themselves if they fail to laugh as their family members are executed. Some are sent to kidnap other children, burn down houses, shoot weapons that are bigger than the children themselves, loot, rape, terrorise. They are often starved, beaten or locked away as punishment or to make them compliant. David (1998) provides examples of

children having their skin seared with burning plastic and open wounds being doused with pepper water if they hesitated to obey orders; all experiences that these children would not have suffered if not for conflict.

Although girls are recruited by armed forces, many are not given fighting roles, but are taken as 'wives' to commanders (David, 1998; Mazurana et al., 2002; Watchlist, 2003; McKay & Mazurana, 2004). The commanders choose the girls they consider prettiest as their wives, and the other girls are given ancillary roles (Human Rights Watch, 2003). The 'wives' may well bear children to the commanders.

2.2.3   Demobilisation and Reintegration of Child Soldiers

Once the conflict ends, children may be reluctant to leave the armed forces for various reasons, chief amongst them having no family to return to, not knowing the location of their family or fearing stigma for some the acts they committed as a soldier, as exemplified above (Verhey, 2001; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2005).

Education can help prevent child exploitation and recruitment into armed forces as well as assisting in the prevention of the enslavement of children once the conflict has ended. However, education during an armed conflict is often limited (UNICEF, 2002). Governmental priorities commonly change during times of war and governments may choose to remove funding from education to assist in tackling the conflict. Teachers' salaries may be cut, forcing some of them to leave (and as a result, potentially making

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them vulnerable to offers of employment that transpire to be situations of slavery). In post-conflict societies, parents commonly choose not to send their children to school, believing that the schools are unsafe (de Watteville, 2002). Land mines, military gangs and fear of rape encourage many children to stay at home rather than risk walking to school (Sommers, 2002). Further, many returning child soldiers are unable to attend school because even though the school is free, their books and uniforms have been stolen or destroyed with no family money to replace them. Alternatively, schools may have been closed because of rebels, or families may have been displaced to an area without schools. Other children choose not to return to school because they are ashamed to have to be in classes with younger children due to the schooling they missed because of their time in the armed forces (McKay & Mazurana, 2004). This lack of schooling is a direct result of conflict which leaves children uneducated and naïve to migration rules and to offers of people who may exploit them.

Women and girls face real difficulty if they manage to escape the fighting forces. Their experiences as soldiers are often overlooked and they are disregarded from demobilisation efforts (de Watteville, 2002), yet those girls who were taken on as 'wives' to commanders may be rejected by their communities on their return. Some families do not believe that the child was forced into a relationship with the commander and consider her a traitor (Newman, 2014). This is especially the case if the girl has given birth to children fathered by the commanders; children that the family may refuse to accept as related. These mothers may still be children themselves, but many say that once they have returned, they have no one to look after them and are considered a burden to relatives. They are abused by relatives, unable to

provide for their children, have no permanent home and no access to education

(Newman, 2014). If these mothers have no one to support them and their children,

they become pressured into finding work to support themselves. If their community

has rejected them, they are likely to move elsewhere in search of work. With a lack of

education and assistance, they become vulnerable to exploitative offers or, with an

absence of alternative options, tempted to return to the commanders who were

exploiting them. These are all situations that exist as a direct impact of the conflict.

Post-conflict situations require strategies that encourage youth employment in order

to discourage children from being recruited (or re-recruited) into armed forces.

However, of course, the job market and trade networks are often negatively affected

by conflict (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2005). Ex-

combatants can be a burden on their families when they return: physical and

emotional trauma means that they are often unable to undertake manual labour – the

labour most commonly available in post-conflict areas (Newman, 2014). A lack of

support, a dearth of job opportunities, or the inability to undertake the work available

in post-conflict situations, means that demobilised child soldiers become vulnerable to

being re-enslaved when they are forced to travel to look for employment.

Alternatively, the child soldiers' return means that their families have extra people to

care for. Those who lack suitable income may be the ones who search elsewhere for

better paid jobs, making them perfect targets for people looking to profit from their

exploitation.

Verhey (2001) discusses the example of the Angolan Quick Impact Project which has

provided funds for a number of families with demobilised child soldiers to establish small businesses, giving the children work to be able to earn an income for the family and bringing economic activity to the local area. Projects such as this are one method through which the risk of enslavement of demobilised child soldiers could be reduced. If children are not required to seek work outside their communities, then they are less likely to be enticed by the offers of those looking to exploit them. This risk of slavery after leaving the armed forces is discussed in Chapter 2.4 with reference to slavery in post-conflict zones.

2.2.4   Summary

Using the definition provided by the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines, child soldiers can be understood as victims of slavery. Their individual liberty is significantly deprived as they suffer control to an extent that is tantamount to possession. This is done for the purpose of their exploitation and is usually achieved through violence, deception or coercion. However, the main point to emphasise is that their experiences as child soldiers would not have occurred if not for the impact of conflict. Although many of the children may have been living with various vulnerabilities, it is the war that exacerbates these vulnerabilities to an extent that makes them susceptible to being recruited as soldiers.

This section has demonstrated that children are vulnerable to slavery at all points of a conflict. Pre and mid-conflict, they are vulnerable to recruitment, both forced and 'voluntary', into the armed forces whether that be as combatants, 'wives' or in

ancillary roles like guards, cleaners, porters or cooks. Post-conflict, children are vulnerable as they return from the armed forces and are faced with rejection from their families and communities because of the acts they committed (David, 1998). Some are unable to locate their families, are unable to go to school or are unfit to work because of the physical and psychological trauma they are suffering. This lack of support, education and employment coupled with the precariousness of living in post-conflict zones where law and order, social services and healthcare are limited if not non-existent, puts children in significantly unstable situations where searching for employment makes them highly vulnerable to the offers of those looking to profit from their exploitation. Significantly, if not for the conflict then these vulnerabilities would not be exacerbated to the extent that these children are pushed into situations of slavery.

2.3   Perpetrators of Contemporary Slavery Linked to Conflict

The above section recognises that child soldiers are not the only victims of contemporary slavery during conflict even though the literature refers to them almost exclusively. This is a clear gap in the literature that will be discussed further at the end of this review.

While there is a little attention paid to those who enlist and exploit child soldiers, discussions in the literature of offenders of slavery linked to conflict focus heavily on the role that peacekeepers play as perpetrators and exacerbators of slavery in both conflict and post-conflict zones. Perhaps this interest is due to the disjunction between ideas of the values that a peacekeeper should uphold compared to the lived

experiences.

Acknowledging the impact of a lack of law and order in post-conflict zones highlights the effect that peacekeeping missions have on contemporary slavery. The role of peacekeepers is to help maintain law and order and protect citizens living in conflict afflicted states, however there is a range of literature that focuses on the methods through which peacekeeping missions can encourage contemporary slavery (Human Rights Watch, 2002; Amnesty International, 2004; Smith & Miller-de la Cuesta, 2010; WILPF, 2012). This literature focuses predominantly on UN peacekeeping missions which send international troops into an area to establish and maintain peace once a conflict has ended. As with any topic of a clandestine nature, obtaining accurate statistics on slavery related to peacekeeping missions can be difficult; this is especially the case with governments who host peacekeeping forces as they are likely to be concerned with downplaying human rights issues to retain a positive international image and to ensure the continuation of funding. However, there are multiple examples citing that these foreign troops have served to increase demand for trafficked women and girls, and that some troops have been complicit in the trafficking itself.

2.3.1   Generating Demand for Victims of Contemporary Slavery

The introduction of foreign peacekeepers into conflict zones generates a previously non-existent demand for human trafficking (Smith & Miller-de la Cuesta, 2010; Smith & Smith, 2010). Smith and Miller-de la Cuesta's studies in Kosovo, Haiti and Sierra Leone

suggest that the influx of relatively wealthy foreigners encourages the establishment of criminal networks. Although there may already be some degree of demand for sex workers, these criminal networks identify that the foreign troops are likely to bring with them a much higher demand. They begin to traffic women and girls, knowing that they can earn considerable profit by selling their victims' sexual services to the peacekeepers. However, the trafficking may begin before the peacekeepers are even in situ. IOM (2001) discusses how, as soon as there was intelligence to suggest that there would be an international presence in Kosovo, mafia groups began to move in, putting their focus on trafficking women into brothels to service the foreign troops once they arrived. Similarly, Picarelli (2002) notes how in south eastern Europe, brothels began to open in anticipation of the peacekeepers' arrival, with the expectation that they would pay for sex workers. These studies also discovered that the increase in human trafficking is directly proportionate to the size of the foreign force, making the link between peacekeeping missions and human trafficking difficult to deny. As peacekeeping troops are introduced to an area only in response to a conflict, this increase in trafficking is therefore a direct result of conflict.

Smith and Smith (2010) also undertook studies in Kosovo, Haiti and Sierra Leone which all hosted UN peacekeeping forces, and Nepal which did not. Those with peacekeeping forces saw a surge of women and girls trafficked into the region alongside the introduction of the troops, whereas Nepal saw no change in human trafficking. This provides a clear indication that peacekeeping troops directly encourage contemporary slavery.

The Kosovan peacekeeping mission perfectly illustrates this point. The UN mission to

Kosovo was the largest peacekeeping operation by the UN, where 20,000

peacekeeping troops were deployed to protect civilians from a war between the

Kosovo Liberation Army and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The introduction of

the foreign force as a result of the conflict brought with it a demand for sex workers

that significantly exceeded the local supply. It was soon noticed that there was a

substantial increase in human trafficking to the region to meet this demand. The initial

deployment of troops was in July 1999; in January 2001, 75 premises had been

identified for using trafficked women. By the end of 2003, this number had increased

to over 200 (Amnesty International, 2004), although, of course, it is difficult to provide

these numbers with any certainty. Unfortunately, the lack of knowledge on premises

using trafficked women prior to 1999 is unknown, meaning no true comparison can be

made, but there remains a clear link between the number of troops and the number of

establishments using victims of trafficking.

In Kosovo, the prostitution market was taken over by organised criminal networks and

the peacekeeping troops were identified as the sex workers' main client group,

comprising 80% of their clients (Picarelli, 2002; Amnesty International, 2004; Smith &

Miller-de la Cuesta, 2010; WILPF, 2012). The post-conflict conditions of Kosovo

alongside the relative wealth that the international troops brought turned Kosovo into

a profitable and easy destination for traffickers to bring their victims, all as a result of

the war.

IOM (2001) further discusses how the increase in international troops directly led to an

increase in the demand for sex workers in the post-conflict Balkans, yet this increased demand was not only from international troops but also from local men. The amplified cash flow resulting from the influx of foreigners had increased the spending power of local men, meaning trips to brothels became an affordable possibility. This indicates how the impact on slavery due to peacekeeping troops could last much longer than the duration of the missions. If local men are provided with both an increased income and the opportunity to visit brothels because of the international presence responding to conflict, then this new lifestyle habit could continue once the international troops have left, therefore perpetuating the demand for the trafficking of women and girls.

Without the presence of the international troops, the demand will be lower, but without their custom the victims may become vulnerable in other ways. It may be that the criminal gangs that trafficked them initially force them into other forms of exploitation, such as for labour or for trafficking drugs or arms. Alternatively, they may be abandoned and left without employment, housing or support in an area that they are unfamiliar with; an area they were brought to only because of the international response to a conflict. In this scenario they may become vulnerable to offers of assistance that may be genuine, but which may alternatively lead to further situations of slavery.

However, the influx of international troops is not the sole factor causing the increase in trafficking for sexual exploitation. Other conditions assist by making trafficking easier for the criminal networks. Kosovo's geographical location makes it a perfect trafficking hot spot. It is close to source countries of poverty stricken eastern Europe where

women face gender discrimination, huge levels of poverty and unemployment and over ten years of economic imbalance. It is also close to established trafficking routes to the EU and has cooperative links with organised criminal networks in Serbia, Albania and Macedonia (Amnesty International, 2004). The infrastructure was therefore already in place for trafficking to occur prior to the peacekeeping missions however, without the troops' demand, these were just plans in waiting. The conflict led to the introduction of the foreign troops, and therefore served as the catalyst to encourage the criminal networks to begin trafficking women and girls to be sold for sex.

2.3.2   Enforcement and Convictions of Perpetrators

While it will never be clear whether peacekeepers are aware of the conditions under which the sex workers they use are being forced to work, the United Mission to Bosnia in 2002 (discussed in Olsson et al., 2004) claimed that 25% of women and girls working in nightclubs and bars in Bosnia during the peacekeeping mission were trafficked. With figures this high it can reasonably be assumed that at least some of those troops paying for sexual services were aware that the sex workers were not there of their own volition.

The buying of sex is forbidden to all UN peacekeeping troops, yet little is done to enforce this rule or to hold rule-breakers accountable (Olsson et al., 2004). Picarelli (2002) discusses how peacekeepers are provided with no-go lists of specific bars and restaurants that also function as brothels in an attempt to prevent the troops from using sex workers. However, this simply meant either that the bars would change their

names, new brothels would open, or women from the brothels would be brought to

the base (Amnesty International, 2004). This reflects some of the recent charity

scandals where, for example, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

admitted that 21 members of staff had either resigned or been fired after allegations

of sexual misconduct where they were accused of paying for sex, despite contractually

being banned from doing so (Greenfield, 2018). Similarly, Haiti suspended Oxfam GB

operations after claims of sexual misconduct regarding paying for sex while working in

the country (BBC, 2018). Charities, like peacekeepers, are expected to uphold the

highest moral values, which is perhaps what makes their misconduct so shocking.

Although it only concerns a few corrupt individuals, the literature does refer to

peacekeeping troops who are involved, not only in buying sex from trafficked women

and girls, but in trafficking them in the first instance (Picarelli, 2002; Amnesty

International, 2004). Picarelli discusses this in relation to some peacekeeping officers

who, after arriving in a country to assist citizens living in a conflict or post-conflict

zone, have been implicated in trafficking. Examples include officers transporting

victims who are then purchased directly by their contractors. Equally, corruption

amongst officials allowed perpetrators to move women across borders by paying

bribes to the border officials. In contemporary peacekeeping operations, the

international troops are often the main, or only law enforcement, making them

responsible for dealing with crimes of human trafficking. However, holding this

responsibility makes it easier for those corrupt few to circumnavigate the system and

traffic people without consequence. There is evidence that corrupt local police visit

brothels and receive sexual services or bribes. They stamp documents to officially

register the girls working there and are clearly friends with the brothel owners (Human Rights Watch, 2002). Despite peacekeeping troops having been found to have directly trafficked women and/or to have used victims of human trafficking for sex, there is no mention in the literature of any peacekeeping troops having suffered any consequence more serious than repatriation (Human Rights Watch, 2002; Picarelli, 2002; WILPF, 2012); they are simply not held accountable for their actions. They face no legal repercussions when their crimes are detected either in the country that the crime was committed, or once they have been repatriated. Amnesty International (2004) discusses this further in relation to Kosovo where prosecutions were unheard of despite a dedicated police force and a regulation which criminalised traffickers and those who knowingly used the services of trafficked women. By 2004 (when their research went to press) there had been no prosecutions whatsoever.

2.3.3   Summary

The preponderance of discussions relating to perpetrators of contemporary slavery linked to conflict is focussed on peacekeeping missions and, within that, the literature focuses on the trafficking of girls and women for sexual exploitation. There are numerous studies which link an increase in human trafficking directly to the introduction of international peacekeeping forces, with the increase in trafficking proportionate to the number of troops. Once there is word that peacekeepers will be introduced, the trafficking begins as criminal networks identify that a profit can be made through organised prostitution by selling women to the international troops once they arrive. Pre-existing criminal links and transport networks are used to deceive

women and girls into brothels which surround the troops' bases. Although these criminal links, networks and vulnerabilities were pre-existing, it is the impact of the conflict that drives the slavery, through the introduction of foreign troops sent to intervene in conflict and post-conflict situations. The foreign forces, as anticipated by the criminal gangs, begin to pay for sex, despite being forbidden from doing so. It is this disregard from the troops, alongside established corruption and lack of will to enforce punishment, that allows the trafficking to flourish. Corruption allows both the trafficking itself, and the sale of services of trafficked victims to continue, with corrupt police officially registering the victims and accepting bribes from brothel owners, peacekeepers willingly paying for sex, and the police force responsible for overseeing trafficking made up of those who constitute the largest client group of trafficked girls and women. Those troops who are found to pay for sex suffer no punishment worse than repatriation; they are not held accountable for their actions either in the country where they paid for sex, nor once they have been sent home. This lack of punitive measures does little to discourage other international troops from paying for sex and assists in perpetuating the demand for trafficking. Finally, the increased cash flow resulting from the relative wealth of the foreign troops increases local men's disposable income which, in turn, makes visiting brothels a new possibility. This generates a local demand for prostitution which did not exist prior to the peacekeeping mission. Those women who were trafficked initially for the use of the peacekeepers may then remain vulnerable once the mission is over, where they may continue to be used as sex workers for local men. Alternatively, if the supply begins to outweigh the demand, the criminal networks who trafficked the victims will either find another lucrative situation in which to exploit them or abandon them without support.

The most significant issue raised in this section is that the processes and potential for slavery to occur existed prior to the international troops' presence. However, as a result of conflict, peacekeeping troops are introduced, and it is their demand for sex workers that exacerbates the pre-existing vulnerabilities, routes, methods and processes in order to drive contemporary slavery and cause it to flourish.

2.4   Slavery in a Post-Conflict Situation

Peacekeeping missions are not the sole cause of slavery in post-conflict zones. The literature makes regular reference to the vulnerabilities faced by those who continue to be affected by war even after it is over, especially those who are forced to flee because of the conflict. Armed conflicts generate huge numbers of people who must either live precariously as internally displaced persons (IDPs) or seek relief in another country as refugees. The vulnerabilities they face because of war with no fixed home, secure income, legal security or confirmed future places them at severe risk of accepting the offers of people seeking to profit from their exploitation. Much deliberation is also centred on the collapse of political and economic systems following a conflict and how this can cause slavery to occur, if not flourish. Another issue receiving significant attention in the literature on slavery in post-conflict regions is corruption – be that governmental or police corruption – which encourages profit to take precedent over justice.

2.4.1 The Impact of Economic and Political Transition

Limanowska (2005) uses south eastern Europe to illustrate how structural economic changes in conflict zones can generate new vulnerabilities. From the mid-1990s, the transition from centrally planned to market economies in south eastern Europe, which occurred alongside the conflicts in several countries, disrupted numerous societies. The resulting economic reforms failed to anticipate the changes they would cause in social dynamics. These changes impacted on society but were not accompanied by social policy measures which would have assisted in protecting the most vulnerable. The transitions led to the emergence of new vulnerable groups – unemployed women, unemployed youth and Roma; perpetrators of contemporary slavery then had new vulnerabilities to exploit. This demonstrates how conflict may adversely change the intended effects of adjustment policies. Those intended outcomes may be unable to flourish when the societies in which they are implemented are concurrently being torn apart by war and where structural changes result in generating new vulnerabilities. This is a key issue that must be considered during the development of policy recommendations: preventing slavery may not be a governmental priority, and the practicality of implementing new policies is likely to be limited.

Cucumanova (2010) reviews Soviet states to identify how restructuring in post-conflict areas has the possibility of generating new conflicts. The Soviet National Migration Policy generated social-political competition between former Soviet states over control of the local power structures. This led to civil wars and ethnic conflicts in a number of the new republics. Tajikistan was hit by violent conflict in 1992, leading to the

emigration of 300,000 Tajiks and 692,000 becoming internally displaced; this was in

addition to the pre-existing poor security and economic conditions. The Tajiks

commonly paid people to help them escape, thinking them to be smugglers but

discovering them to be traffickers. This is one example of the frequent story of how

conflict can limit the choices of the affected populations; they must either escape in

the hope of finding peace and security, or wait in the conflict zone. Either choice

makes them vulnerable as the mortality rate of displaced persons is second only to

those who remain where the violence occurs (Bellamy, 2017). In such a situation,

neither choice can offer guaranteed safety and, in trying to find paid work, there is an

inherent risk of accepting offers from people whose intention is to profit from the

exploitation of others.

Balkan countries are often used as transit destinations for victims of human trafficking

because conflict in the region has led to the disintegration of social, political and legal

structures and controls (IOM, 2001). Due to the prioritisation of the conflicts, border

controls became a low priority for Balkan states, providing another cautionary example

for the development of policy recommendations. This made for high rates of

unmonitored migration, allowing trafficking to occur unchecked.

This breakdown of law and order as a result of conflict can decrease the power of

states and the ability of authorities to be able to assist victims and criminalise

traffickers. This can be illustrated with the example of Kosovo when, under Serb

control, there was a moral taboo against sex work, and brothels were required to

register with Serb authorities. After the war, both the taboo and the control of

brothels collapsed, allowing prostitution to flourish. This, coupled with a lack of monitoring of the sex workers' welfare, meant that traffickers were able to move in and take control over the sex workers, exploiting them to maximise profit, all because of the impact of conflict.

2.4.2   The Role of Corruption

Human Rights Watch (2002) claim that police and government corruption in post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina allowed trafficking to flourish. They also stress that the Bosnian government has failed, with few exceptions, to prosecute police officers directly involved in human trafficking. This emphasises how a lack of authority or repercussions for crimes, coupled with the poverty of a post-conflict society, can result in an increase in crime, and may even suggest trafficking to be an indicator of instability. This corruption caused by conflict not only allows trafficking to go unpunished but can be the cause of trafficking. For example, displaced persons and NGOs (non-governmental organisations) often claim that governments use low intensity warfare to remove indigenous people from their land in order to support the wealthy elite. Indigenous communities are regularly treated as lesser citizens and are marginalised from political, economic and national domains (Acharya, 2004). The social breakdown caused by conflict then makes it easier for perpetrators of slavery to operate because the underlying factors that cause slavery are exacerbated and corruption allows it to be tolerated.

Picarelli (2002) discusses how government corruption is driven by organised crime. The

criminals are able to infiltrate political and legal systems, finding people who will accept a cut of their profit in return for turning a blind eye to their crimes. In post-conflict areas, this can be relatively effortless because the difficult living situations and extreme poverty causes a point where a need for money overcomes the desire for justice. Similarly, conflict not only increases the number of victims of contemporary slavery, but also the number of perpetrators. This is particularly true in post-conflict areas where employment opportunities are scarce and poverty is rife, leading some to envisage their survival in the exploitation of others (Martens et al., 2003). Understanding conflict in this way also highlights the impact of strain theory (Agnew & Kaufman, 2010), where this competition for limited resources will leave some unable to attain everything they need, including employment, through legitimate routes. In this sense, the economic implications of contemporary slavery are a consideration for both the perpetrators who will profit, and the victims who believe that the perpetrators will help them to find work.

The methods through which conflict can cause corruption and economic and political transition can be emphasised through Durkheim's concept of anomie (discussed in Allan & O'Boyle, 2017), which describes instability as a result of the breakdown of individual or societal standards. A conflict (especially in the sense of war) causes a rapid change in the values of individuals and societies, meaning issues that were once a priority may no longer be so. Societies in conflict become places of transition where new ways of life may not be compatible with previous ideals. The breakdown of political systems during conflict may lead to corruption where people learn to put

profit over justice simply to survive in a society where there is significant competition

for limited resources.

2.4.3   Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons at Risk

Poverty is one of the most commonly cited push factors for trapping people in

perpetrators' false promises (Kaye & McQuade, 2007; Kuhl, 2011; Barner et al., 2014).

Following a conflict, various methods can heighten this poverty, including increased

living costs, decreased wages, privatisation of public services, increased

unemployment resulting from economic restructuring, public spending cuts, decreased

social benefits and the removal of consumer subsidies. Amnesty International (2004)

illustrates this with Kosovo where economic conditions failed to recover after the war

and unemployment rates reached 60%. These issues disproportionately affect women

who are often excluded from the labour market and who are usually disadvantaged

because of the way that economic reconstruction tends to favour men. Further,

declining social services put more pressure on women to support their families and to

look for work in a society that emphasises male employment. As such, women may

begin to look further afield for work and, in doing so, run the risk of becoming

vulnerable to slavery.

Political and economic changes following conflict can emphasise this poverty and

provide the perfect conditions for slavery to thrive. Civil wars and political and

economic transition lead to the breakdown of political and legal systems and border

controls. This makes for an increase in migration which becomes difficult to monitor, and encourages slavery. Klopcic (2004) illustrates this with the example of the fall of the Berlin wall which allowed the movement of people from ex-socialist countries to western Europe. The transition after the fall of the wall meant increased unemployment, increased foreign debt and economic recession. This resulted in both weakened nation states and an increase in refugees and economic migrants whose experiences of unemployment and poverty put them at risk of being enticed by the offers of perpetrators who intended to benefit from their exploitation.

Refugees are commonly from rural or poor urban regions with little education, where a lack of job opportunities cause people to leave in search for work. These vulnerabilities are rarely recognised by governing bodies, as discussed by Pearson (2003) in reference to the trafficking of women in east Africa. The Ugandan armed conflicts in the north and the west of the country resulted in high numbers of internally displaced persons as well as high refugee numbers from neighbouring countries. Although the conflicts became a governmental priority because of the impact they had on the economics and the politics of the country as well as the citizens, the link between conflict and contemporary slavery is commonly overlooked and sometimes remains unrecognised.

Refugees and internally displaced persons are particularly vulnerable in post-conflict situations. Any pre-existing vulnerabilities are exacerbated by the conflict, which commonly leads to poor living conditions, gender inequality, a lack of basic healthcare or education, poverty, xenophobia, a lack of security, unemployment and no certainty of the future. These conditions encourage people to take risks that they otherwise

would not. Suffering such a range of issues may encourage them to move in the hope that they will find a better life elsewhere. However, particularly when there are large numbers of people in the same situation, they will likely find themselves competing for the same available living spaces or employment opportunities. In attempting to escape the problems caused by conflict, some families may choose to migrate away, but language barriers and a lack of awareness of immigration rules can make them vulnerable to slavery, especially if they are from particularly rural areas and are naïve to urban environments or other cultures. This creates an opportunity for perpetrators to make offers of jobs in safe countries; offers that are too good not to accept. Even though some of those who accept these jobs may have had concerns or a degree of scepticism around the reality of the offers, they are really left with little choice but to take the risk.

Nelson et al. (2004) emphasise this effect on refugees. The absence of law and order in a post-conflict situation, coupled with the vast numbers of destitute citizens (homeless, widowed, separated children, refugees, IDPs) provide the ideal setting for slavery. The struggle in this post-conflict stage is heightened for women and girls whose vulnerability to slavery is increased because of their disproportionate lack of access to education and resources. Their search for employment opportunities and a better quality of life, twinned with a lack of knowledge of migration processes, make these women and girls easy targets for perpetrators (Limanowska, 2005).

Similarly, in the Ethiopia and Eritrea conflict, a lack of employment opportunities coupled with an increased demand for sexual services by soldiers meant that many

women turned to sex work as a direct result of the conflict. In conflict zones where law and order are limited, criminal gangs can flourish. If they can control the sex workers then this can be highly profitable to those criminal gangs, and with the lack of police influence, conflict zones become easy places for perpetrators of slavery to make a high profit. Unfortunately, rather than trying to address slavery, the initial governmental response to sex work (if any) is to try and control and limit it (Amnesty International, 2004). This usually involves raids on brothels – including those where victims of slavery are held – and leads to the arrest of victims for immigration or documentation offences; perpetrators of slavery rarely receive punishment. This highlights how there is often a complete oversight in linking prostitution and slavery. Although this is not to claim that all sex workers are victims of slavery (a significant debate within itself which cannot be addressed adequately here), attempts to control prostitution in precarious places such as conflict or post-conflict zones must take into account the possibility that these women should be treated as victims rather than criminals. Well planned policies should be implemented to ensure that these women are interviewed alone to avoid being overheard by those that are controlling them and risk facing repercussions for disclosing exploitation.

2.4.4   The Disproportionate Effect on Women

The effects of war can disproportionately affect women in more ways than just leading to sex work. Wölte (1997) notes how in conflict zones, typical gender relations become unstable. Rape is sometimes employed as a weapon of war, to reinforce male dominance or to punish women for taking on traditionally male roles during the

conflict (Brown, 2012; Kirby, 2012). Domestic violence by men against women increases in war torn countries (de Watteville, 2002), and men may be socialised to violence during the war (Byrne et al., 1995). These issues pose a threat to the women and children to whom these men return. Add to these problems the issues discussed in relation to child soldiers that female recruits are commonly excluded from demobilisation campaigns, and it is clear that post-conflict societies disproportionately affect women in numerous ways.

In many war-torn countries, women are already at a disadvantage to men due to unequal access to benefits, education, healthcare, social services and jobs. Conflicts can force them out of their homes, increasing their disadvantage and leaving them unable to find any way to make a living. Acharya (2004) discusses how, in Mexico, some parents sell their daughters because they cannot afford to care for them and hope that this will provide them with better opportunities. This reflects an earlier discussion of parents asking commanders to take their children into an armed force because they can no longer afford to care for them. Obviously, here they risk selling their children into exploitation and many are aware that this is a potential outcome. Interestingly, in Acharya's research in Mexico, there is no discussion of parents selling their sons.

Men returning from war cause many women to lose their jobs (de Watteville, 2002). This is especially true where the jobs are traditionally 'male' roles and they are offered to the men upon their return, leaving the women redundant. This can have a significant impact, especially for those women who are heads of households due to

their husbands still being at war but who find themselves unemployed when their jobs are offered to other men. De Watteville (2002) exemplifies Nicaragua where around 16,000 women lost their jobs when men returned from war. Many other women were forced to accept lower salaries if they wanted to remain employed.

Alternatively, some women were forced to leave their jobs because their husbands believed working and earning an income were a man's responsibility. In losing their employment by either means, women are left without the financial security required to support themselves or their families (especially if the husband is still at war or is unable to find work). This leaves these women vulnerable to slavery as they begin to seek out other options for employment, sometimes travelling to areas they are unfamiliar with in search of work.

2.4.5   Demobilisation of Armed Forces

While demobilisation efforts might be assumed to assist their participants to reintegrate into society, demobilised soldiers are another group that suffer disproportionately in post-conflict zones. Firstly, demobilisation efforts at the end of a war usually focus only on combatants (Verhey, 2001), which overlooks huge numbers of those involved in the conflict but in non-combat roles. Most of these people are women and girls who tend to be given roles as 'wives', cooks, porters, guards etc.

De Watteville (2002) notes how women may be purposefully misinformed about demobilisation efforts and exemplifies Mozambique where many women missed out

on encampment due to misinformation. Because they missed this stage, they were denied funding for transport home, and the costs for this transport were more than the women could afford. This left them with limited choices: they were either left desolate or forced to return to the commanders who abused them as their 'wives'. As discussed in relation to child soldiers, many women who were taken as 'wives' and raped during war times will be rejected by their families and communities on their return home. They are considered to have disrespected their family, to be a burden, or to be unfit for marriage. Similarly, women who have become pregnant or given birth to children of soldiers will often be left unsupported post-conflict. This leaves these women with the sole responsibility of caring for themselves and their children. For many of these women, prostitution becomes the only form of survival, putting them at further risk. Should they choose to seek work in a brothel or find someone to protect them, they risk becoming exploited, or unable to leave should they wish.

This rejection of girls and women during disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes is further documented in the 2005 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs World Youth Report which emphasises how this rejection leads to a lack of physical, economic and emotional support once the conflict has ended. The lack of support from these programmes, coupled with missed education from time spent in the armed forces, means that many female ex-combatants become locked in a system of long-term poverty. A lack of access to these programmes can lead to homelessness, isolation and being unable to find safe, paid labour. They are left with limited options, which pushes many to remain with their captors, pushed into early marriage or prostitution, or vulnerable to the offers of

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perpetrators of slavery. This reemphasises the impact of conflict on contemporary slavery; if not for the conflict, then demobilisation would not be required and these girls and women would not be pushed to the margins of society.

Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security adopted by the UN Security Council (OSAGI, 2000) calls for increased representation of women at every level of decision making on the prevention, management and resolution of conflict as well as including more women in operations. It calls to provide training to field staff on women's rights, the adoption of a gender perspective in peace agreements, and special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence. As Farr (2012) notes, women are rarely included in the planning and establishment of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes, despite being part of the fighting forces and constituting half of the population.

2.4.6 Summary

The literature highlights a range of issues regarding slavery in post-conflict zones including economic and political transition, corruption, refugees and internally displaced persons, women and demobilisation processes. While structural transformations have brought about required economic and political changes, oversights have been made regarding the impact they would have on the citizens of those states. Some transitions have led to gender or ethnically based reconstruction which, in providing employment for certain sectors of the community, has caused others to become vulnerable to slavery in a way that they would not have been

without the impact of conflict. Other transitions in post-conflict zones have resulted in the development of new conflicts which, again, have created new vulnerabilities in previously stable communities. A further point raised in this section was how post-conflict regions experience a breakdown in the monitoring of systems, be these legal, migratory or employment. Such lack of monitoring allows for the establishment and exacerbation of criminal networks which seek to exploit the vulnerable for profit.

Destitution in post-conflict areas causes the corruption of officials to be bred out of a need for money over an inclination for justice. This corruption allows crimes, including slavery, to go unnoticed and unpunished and can lead to the false penalisation of victims of slavery as perpetrators of crimes.

Conflicts generate refugees and internally displaced persons whose vulnerabilities are already high because of their lack of secure accommodation. However, when this is coupled with weakened nation states, they are faced with severe desolation. The lack of support provided exacerbates poverty, and the displaced are left with little or no governmental support, social services or employment opportunities, alongside poor living conditions. As they begin to strive for the same desired conditions, they must compete with one another for resources, including paid work. This provides the ideal conditions for perpetrators of slavery who are able to exploit these desperate individuals with false promises of well-paid work.

Conflict has a disproportionate effect on women. Many will take up jobs once men have gone to war, only to lose them upon their return. Women are also at a higher risk

of suffering domestic abuse in post-conflict situations as the men may have become socialised to violence, leaving them to choose between staying and risking abuse, or leaving and managing alone. If they choose the latter, they then may be at risk of those looking to exploit them for profit.

Demobilisation efforts also negatively affect women and girls as they commonly overlook any members of armed forces who did not hold combat roles, and girls are often taken as 'wives'. Those who are excluded from these programmes are disadvantaged as they are omitted from reintegration efforts, leaving them with little choice other than to return to their captors or try to survive alone. Again, should they try to provide for themselves, they become a prime target for perpetrators of slavery but if they return to their captors they are often resigning themselves to severe exploitation.

Overall, this section has demonstrated that there is a multitude of methods through which conflicts make people vulnerable to slavery, even once the conflict is over. It emphasises that the risk of slavery does not end when the war does, but the vulnerabilities caused by the conflict continue to put people at risk of slavery for an immeasurable length of time.

2.5   Conclusion

Academic studies that consider the convergence between conflict and contemporary slavery are rare, and those that exist consider conflict only in the sense of war,

overlooking broader understandings. Although it is possible to draw conclusions from the literature as to how war could relate to contemporary slavery, there are few pieces that explicitly address the link, and those that do tend to be made as part of discussions on children during war, gender issues resulting from war, the plight of refugees, conflict interventions and reintegration programmes. Within the literature that does overtly consider the link between conflict and contemporary slavery, the focus rests predominantly on victims or perpetrators of contemporary slavery linked to conflict, or on post-conflict zones. There is even more specificity once these topics are considered in detail, in that discussions of victims relate principally to child soldiers and discussions of perpetrators focus on peacekeepers.

This literature review summarises three key areas identified in the literature as drawing a relationship between conflict and contemporary slavery: victims, perpetrators and post-conflict zones. Before and during a conflict, discussions of slavery generally link to the recruitment of child soldiers and women associated with fighting forces. Simultaneously, attention is paid to people who are trafficked from vulnerable communities including refugees, the unemployed, homeless etc. Immediately after the conflict, the focus on slavery turns to the release of the women and child soldiers and the introduction of peacekeeping forces, but much of the focus remains on women and girls forced into prostitution. Discussions relating to post-conflict slavery consider a variety of issues from refugees and internally displaced persons to demobilisation and reintegration efforts, alongside the corruption caused by the breakdown in law and order as a direct result of conflict.

Child soldiers fit the criteria of slavery depicted by the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines. They are controlled to an extent that is tantamount to possession, and the commanders of the armed forces benefit from the exploitation of these children, be it as combatants, labourers or 'wives'. Although the methods of recruitment vary by child, even those who claim to have joined armed forces voluntarily only became vulnerable to recruitment because of conflict. If the conflict or threat of conflict did not exist, then there would be no need for child soldiers to provide reinforcement to armed forces and they would not be at risk of recruitment. Child soldiers remain vulnerable to slavery even once they have left the armed force, as many are unable to locate their families, have missed out on education, or are physically or psychologically injured. For many, the acts they have committed as soldiers sever any ties with their families and communities, making reintegration into society difficult, if not impossible. This combination of problems leaves these already victimised children vulnerable to slavery once again; if they have no societal protection they must learn to protect and provide for themselves. This means seeking paid employment, often in areas that they are unfamiliar with, which puts them at risk of being recruited by perpetrators of slavery.

Discussions relating to perpetrators of slavery linked to conflict focus predominantly on the impact of peacekeepers in two specific ways: peacekeepers causing an influx of victims of trafficking to satisfy their demand for sex workers, and peacekeepers themselves becoming involved in the trafficking process. Much of the literature identifies a direct and proportionate increase in the trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation in response to the introduction of international peacekeeping

troops. Criminal networks see the influx of foreign troops as an opportunity for profit, trafficking women and girls to the peacekeeping zones where they are sold for sex to the foreign troops. The UN forbids its troops to pay for sex, but this rule is generally unregulated and, where it is, misconduct goes unpunished. This lack of culpability allows trafficking to flourish as the troops generate high profits for the perpetrators. Some peacekeepers have identified this lack of punishment as providing the ideal conditions to undertake trafficking and generate a profit themselves. Further, the influx of wealth with the introduction of foreign troops affords local men new disposable income, allowing them to visit brothels and perpetuating the demand for trafficking victims (though admittedly at a lower rate) after the removal of the troops. Overall, conflict generated a need for peacekeepers, and these troops developed a demand for human trafficking victims that did not exist prior to their arrival.

The final key area addressed by the literature is post-conflict zones, covering situations that continue to be affected by the conflict, even once it is over. It includes aspects from economic and political transition, corruption, refugees and internally displaced persons, to women and demobilisation processes. Structural transformations may have brought about required economic and political changes, but in the process have created new vulnerabilities for the citizens they were trying to help. They commonly exacerbate the extreme poverty felt in post-conflict zones where people are already in precarious situations as they search for secure employment. The poverty that exists in post-conflict zones is also a driving force for corruption as officials turn a blind eye to crimes in return for bribes. This corruption allows slavery to exist unrecognised and unpunished, and once this lack of accountability is recognised by criminal gangs, they

realise that they can generate profit by increasing slavery at little to no risk.

Refugees and internally displaced persons are already vulnerable populations due to the conflict that has displaced them. They are unlikely to have secure accommodation or employment, meaning many make the choice to move in search of these things. With so many people competing for the same resources, they become vulnerable to perpetrators of slavery making offers of well paid jobs, knowing that these people have little option other than to take the risk that such offers are genuine.

Women constitute another particularly vulnerable group in post-conflict zones as they commonly lose jobs that were available to them while the men were at war. Women who are heads of households are then left with no income, but remain solely responsible for themselves and their families. They are then vulnerable to offers of perpetrators of slavery as they begin to look for paid work. Women who have been part of armed forces also become particularly vulnerable after a conflict, because they are commonly excluded from demobilisation efforts. Without such necessary assistance in their reintegration into society, they are left to support themselves which, again, may leave them vulnerable to people looking to profit from their exploitation as they seek help and protection.

The literature focuses on a small number of specific issues relating to contemporary slavery and conflict in the context of war, and considers vulnerabilities before, during and after such a conflict. A key aspect missing from the literature is an understanding of victims of slavery during a conflict that goes beyond child soldiers or sexual exploitation, and an understanding of perpetrators that extends beyond just

peacekeepers. This links with the tendency of the literature to focus on the experience of women and children as victims of contemporary slavery in conflict at the expense of recognising the potential that men have to becoming victims. Whether this is because it is believed that men are less vulnerable, or perhaps because international and academic interest peaks in relation to women or children is unknown, but to suggest that men are immune to slavery in times of conflict simply because of their gender would be naïve and negligent.

Further gaps in the literature relate to understandings of the vulnerabilities faced by those in the journey out of a conflict. Although there is a wealth of literature relating to refugees and the precarious methods by which people travel in the hope of seeking safety in foreign countries (Brekke & Brochmann, 2015; Crawley et al., 2016; Kaytaz, 2016; Kuschminder, 2017; Stevens, 2017), little consideration has been given to how people may become vulnerable to contemporary slavery during these journeys. Commentary is provided on the fact that trafficking and slavery do occur in these situations (Salt & Stein, 1997; Koser, 2000), but there is a lack of focus or understanding on how. This research will bridge this gap by developing an understanding of the methods through which people fleeing conflict are targeted and exploited as victims of contemporary slavery, and how trafficking may be used as a form of migration.

Such oversight extends to the time frame of vulnerabilities. The literature accepts that people become vulnerable to conflict-related slavery before a conflict has begun – especially in the case of the recruitment of child soldiers. It recognises that people

remain vulnerable as the conflict occurs, and it appreciates that people continue to be vulnerable once the conflict has finished. However, literature relating to post-conflict vulnerabilities focuses almost exclusively on slavery within the immediate period once the conflict has ended. There is mention of ongoing insecurities, of refugees who continue to be at risk until they find safety, of men and women who must find methods of providing for their families and of children who seek work outside of their communities because they are unable to reintegrate. However, no consideration is given to whether these conflict-initiated vulnerabilities ever actually end, or whether the impact of conflict ever truly abates. This thesis tackles this gap in knowledge by researching those who have been safe from conflict for varying lengths of time in order to assess whether their vulnerabilities to contemporary slavery can be traced back to the conflict.

It is significant that the literature focuses exclusively on the in-country experiences of contemporary slavery during conflict. There have been calls upon the UN Secretary General "to address and prevent trafficking in conflict" (The Freedom Fund, 2016:no pagination), however, little attention is paid to situations in which people suffer contemporary slavery as a result of a conflict, but after they have left the conflict situation. This overlooks circumstances in which people have managed to reach a new destination in relative safety, but where a lack of knowledge of this new location may leave them vulnerable to people who seek to profit from their exploitation. An obvious example of such a group would be people arriving in the UK and claiming asylum after fleeing a conflict in their home country. Without knowledge of this new country, the language or the asylum system, they may be at risk should they be approached by

strangers who appear to be offering support.

The Freedom Fund (2016) has highlighted how this flawed focus extends to politics, indicating how in Europe, since 2014 (article published November 2016), $17 billion has been spent on curbing immigration and asylum seeking, yet very little concentration has been placed on trying to increase safety and security for those who are moving and are in desperate need. While there is literature on the struggles facing refugees and asylum seekers once they arrive at their destination, there is little to link the specific experiences of those who then go on to be exploited in contemporary forms of slavery. The literature that does exist looks at the lack of support provided by the UK asylum system that puts asylum seekers at risk of labour exploitation (Lewis et al., 2013) and at the methods through which governments shift focus from their policies that exacerbate opportunities for slavery by championing other aspects of their work (see for example Quirk, 2015b; O'Connell Davidson, 2016). This research assesses how specific vulnerabilities put those fleeing conflict - as opposed to fleeing for any other reason such as famine, poverty, natural disasters etc. - in positions where they are vulnerable to contemporary forms of slavery. This then has the potential to be built upon with future research to help understand the risks facing refugees and asylum seekers who have fled for other reasons.

One final major concern throughout the literature is the tendency to focus on the systemic impact of conflict to the detriment of understanding the agentic processes at play. The literature concentrates on a top down approach, identifying how conflict affects large scale structures (such as politics, economics and corruption) which then

go on to impact individuals. This approach overlooks the vast intersectionality of the people who are living through the conflict and how structural inequalities already experienced by individuals (such as gender, religion, ethnicity, etc.) may be exacerbated by the conflict, causing their vulnerabilities to be heightened. While considering this top down understanding of how structures in conflict may lead to slavery, this research also approaches the link from the bottom up in order to understand the impact that agency has on situations of contemporary slavery. By obtaining the stories of individuals who have experienced conflict and contemporary slavery, this research discovers vulnerabilities that existed prior to the conflict and assesses how conflicts can exacerbate these vulnerabilities to drive people towards situations of contemporary slavery.

The most fundamental flaw of the literature is its failing to understand conflict in any context outside of war. This research understands conflict to be 'a set of conditions whereby parties identify and act on mutually incompatible goals. While this act may be violent, the presence of violence is not necessary in order for the situation to be defined as conflict. It is possible to be affected by a conflict without being an active participant.' Using this wider definition of conflict allows for a deeper and more nuanced approach to the interaction between conflict and slavery, and will offer vastly more insight into situations of conflict that are currently overlooked in academia. Having identified the flaws in the literature, the next chapter outlines the methodology for developing a research project that aims to overcome some of these issues.

Chapter Three: Methodology – Reflecting on the Research Process

The previous chapter highlights some of the most prominent gaps in the literature surrounding conflict and contemporary slavery. This chapter uses the findings from the literature review to develop research questions, and then works through the rationale for, and choices behind, the methods used to conduct the research. It considers sampling techniques, data collection methods and means for accessing hard-to-reach respondents, then goes on to address potential bias, limitations and ethical issues. Identifying the most appropriate methods through which to conduct this research was fundamental for generating a research project that is robust, insightful, and which goes beyond the current limited understandings of conflict only as war.

3.1   The Development of Research Questions

The findings of the previous chapter led to the development of the primary research question: *What is the relationship between conflict and contemporary slavery?* This question aimed to tackle the broader definition of conflict rather than focusing only on war, and led to several subsidiary research questions, including:

1. What are the types of conflict that make people vulnerable to slavery?

2. What are the specific features of conflict that cause someone to become vulnerable to slavery?

3. Are certain groups of people fleeing conflict more vulnerable to becoming enslaved than others?

4. What are the methods through which someone becomes enslaved as they flee conflict?

5. How long do the effects of conflict leave someone vulnerable to slavery?

These questions were explored using qualitative research methods - primarily through the analysis of interviews. While respondents were being contacted and interviews organised, background research was undertaken using published narratives and case studies to provide a broad understanding of people's experiences of contemporary slavery. While these narratives and case studies could have been used to contribute to the findings, the purpose for their existence put their reliability into question. Their intended purpose was to sell books and raise funds for charities, meaning the sensationalism behind these documents undermined their objectivity. Although they provided insights into aspects of contemporary slavery which helped shape the interviews (including highlighting topics that people were likely to feel uncomfortable talking about), they were discarded from the findings.

3.2 Research Methods: Statistics or Stories

Research can be divided into two categories: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative research is based on gathering numerical data from a large sample to provide statistical evidence about a specific population. Qualitative research concentrates on a smaller sample size with the intention of gaining more in depth, experiential data from the research subjects (Mason, 2010). Although there is statistical data available relating to both conflict and contemporary slavery, quantitative research played a minor role in this study. Instead, information was gathered on the lived experiences of those who had fled conflict and either found safety or experienced contemporary slavery. Consideration was given to identifying specific factors that contributed

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towards individuals who had experienced conflict becoming victims of contemporary slavery. These experiences were contrasted with those of people who had fled conflict but not experienced contemporary slavery to develop an understanding of the risk factors.

Because the interrelation between conflict and contemporary slavery remains understudied, this research required an approach that allowed for the development of unconsidered motives and meanings, which are difficult to access through quantitative approaches. In short, this study looked to understand the experiences and meanings behind the subjects' pasts, rather than the statistical differences between those experiences.

Lave and Kvale (1995) discuss how, with regards to research, only a human has the capacity to learn about human experience. As such, there may be quantitative figures providing statistics about a particular group, but it takes human interpretation to decipher what these figures truly mean. It is not enough just to state that in 2016, 3805 potential victims of slavery were identified in the UK (National Crime Agency, 2017) and that in 2017 this number was 5145 (National Crime Agency, 2018); we rely on qualitative data to explain why there is such a difference.

For these reasons, and because the research questions relied on information that could only be gathered from individual experiences and first-hand stories, not from numerical data or statistics, qualitative methods proved more insightful than quantitative for this research.

3.3   Sampling Techniques: Reaching the Hard to Reach

Identifying potential respondents to partake in the study required appropriate

sampling techniques. There are two main sampling methods used to select potential

respondents in qualitative research: probability sampling and purposeful sampling.

Probability sampling allows the researcher to use the sample to make wider

generalisations about a larger population, whereas purposeful sampling is about using

data-rich cases to inform an in-depth study (Patton, 2002). On the topics of conflict

and contemporary slavery, a small number of data-rich sources were likely to provide

more information on nuances and empirical experiences than a far-reaching,

generalised, surface-level study. This is predominantly due to the small sample size of

people who fit the criteria of this research. A probability sampling method necessitates

a random selection wherein everyone in the population has an equal chance of being

chosen for the study. It requires random sampling techniques to choose participants

out of the number of people in the sampling frame. Because the nature of this study

was so specific, the sample size was already very limited. This meant that to generate

enough findings to allow for comparisons, interviews needed to be undertaken with as

many people as possible who fit the criteria and were willing and able to partake;

purposeful sampling was therefore more relevant for this study. Following the same

reasoning of trying to maximise the sample size, this study did not limit the

respondents to a specific geographical region; calls for respondents were sent to

recipients across the UK, and this snowballed even further to respondents overseas.

This method was advocated by Raymond et al. (2002) in their comparative study of

women trafficked in the migration process. They chose to use purposeful non-random sampling because of how difficult it can be to obtain random samples of hidden populations. They then used snowball sampling to access respondents via initial interviewees recommending other people who may have been willing to be interviewed.

Purposeful sampling assists in identifying information-rich cases which, in turn, help to get the most material out of limited sources (Patton, 2002). Purposeful sampling considers not only the people who fit the required criteria, but their knowledge and experience (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011) as well as their willingness and availability to take part in the research (Bernard, 2002). After all, finding respondents who have limited knowledge on the topic or who are reluctant to be interviewed may offer nothing to the study.

3.3.1 Snowball Sampling

Snowball sampling is a purposeful sampling technique whereby the researcher identifies a small number of respondents who then assist by signposting to other potential respondents; these respondents can then identify further respondents and so on. This method of sampling provides a way of accessing hard-to-reach, vulnerable groups (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997; Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Snowball sampling is more practical for qualitative research than it is for quantitative, as it assists in accessing respondents from hard-to-reach groups who are unlikely to provide a suitable sample size for quantitative research. Snowball sampling is particularly useful in instances where potential respondents are few, or in cases where there is a required degree of

trust. These points both applied in this research into vulnerable populations, where many are distrusting due to their slavery or conflict experiences.

However, there are several drawbacks associated with snowball sampling. It is common that respondents of snowball sampling may suffer research fatigue because potential sample sizes are so small that they have regularly taken part in other studies on a similar topic (Moore, 1996). Other issues tend to centre on selection bias – that the sample is unlikely to be representative (Kaplan et al., 1987). The sampling method used is not random but is dependent on, and subjective to, the first respondents. This makes it difficult to draw any generalisations from the study; it means it is not possible to compile a complete, accurate sampling frame, and it must be acknowledged that there are limitations in applying generalisations from the survey sample to the general population (Bloch, 1999). However, the purpose of this research was not to generalise the respondents, but to identify the key themes within their stories. Perhaps snowball sampling would make it difficult to find anomalous cases, but without it, identifying respondents would have been much less successful.

The nature of this sampling technique also meant that the samples were biased to include only respondents who interacted with other respondents or gatekeepers. This held the risk of making generalisations, such as interpreting that there was plenty of support in place for people experiencing contemporary slavery. Although such statements may be true for those who received the support, due to the snowballing technique, those who have not received support were unlikely to be identified for inclusion in this research. This highlights how snowball sampling overlooks those who

have not interacted with other respondents or gatekeepers, but also those who have chosen to distance themselves from such a community (Welch, 1975).

There is also the issue of gatekeeper bias. Researchers may rely on front line workers to act as gatekeepers to provide information on, and access to, potential respondents, however these gatekeepers may be protective of their clients and reluctant to encourage them to involve themselves in the research. There may be several reasons that the gatekeepers consider it unsuitable for their clients to take part in the study; perhaps they feel it would cause too much distress, that it's impractical because of geographical or time restraints, or simply that they do not see how the research would benefit their clients. In this project, there were a number of situations in which gatekeepers would not allow access to their clients and this brought to light concerns around issues of agency (addressed further in Chapter Seven). A compromise was reached in these scenarios whereby the gatekeeper provided an account of their client's story in order to contribute to the research while not requiring the involvement of their client. One example of this was Emma, who was Catherine's case worker. Catherine had been trafficked into sexual exploitation in Albania and had escaped to the UK where she continues to suffer severely with PTSD and trauma related issues as a direct result of her slavery experience. Catherine had already had to relive her story so many times with doctors, counsellors, immigration officials, the police and slavery experts. Although Catherine fit the required criteria, Emma felt it would be counterproductive to Catherine's recovery for her to retell her story to another person. Instead, Emma agreed to study Catherine's case notes and be interviewed in her place. Although this meant that there were certain questions about

Catherine's story that Emma simply did not know the answers to, it allowed for the collection of data regarding a particularly vulnerable person, which would have otherwise been inaccessible.

When dealing with vulnerable respondents, snowball sampling was a useful research method as respondents were being referred to the researcher by someone they trusted. This type of sampling provided an ingress to the sample population that, because of the sensitive nature of the research, other sampling methods could not offer. Equally, the initial respondents were able to identify other potential respondents who may be willing to take part in the research and were able to warn the researcher of any prospective issues that may arise when interviewing specific respondents, such as certain topics which could cause distress.

3.4   The Critical Role of Gatekeepers

Knowing that potential respondents could be difficult to locate and contact, gatekeepers were approached at the earliest opportunity to allow for delays in response. Atkinson and Flint (2001) note that in researching hidden populations, some previous knowledge of the community can be very valuable, not only for accessing gatekeepers, but to have an awareness of how best to interact with respondents. Previous front line experience with both support providers and victims of contemporary slavery was hugely beneficial in guiding and influencing this research as well as in accessing potential respondents and advice on the topic.

Chatzifotiou (2000) relates to the difficulty of accessing respondents from vulnerable populations during her study of victims of domestic abuse. She contacted one refuge via telephone, but a misunderstanding led them to believe that Chatzifotiou was a reporter and this resulted in a denial of access. From this, she changed strategy to clarify that she was conducting academic research that would remain confidential. Following Chatzifotiou's experience, initial contact was made with gatekeepers via email. This allowed for the attachment of documents, such as information sheets, which provided the gatekeepers the opportunity to read further on the research project and intended outcomes. This also allowed the gatekeepers time to properly assess whether they wished to participate in the project, rather than expecting an immediate decision over the telephone.

Initial contact was made with gatekeepers where there was a working relationship already in place. As trust had already been built, this increased the likelihood that they would be willing to assist. These gatekeepers were generally very keen to support the research, allowing contact with their clients, or recommending other organisations if they could suggest no suitable candidates. Prior work in the field was hugely beneficial in this part of the research project, as the gatekeepers were aware of previous work with victims of contemporary slavery and therefore were trusting of the capability of conducting interviews in a way that would cause minimal distress to the respondents. The majority of the gatekeepers were also very keen to assist with this research project as it considered the root causes of contemporary slavery; an under researched topic which could be enormously valuable in the development of prevention efforts.

In addition to identifying respondents, it was anticipated that these gatekeepers would snowball the sample of other gatekeepers, mirroring the way Ray (2008) accessed migrant women in Kolkata in her study on vulnerabilities to human trafficking. Whether or not the initial gatekeepers were able to assist themselves, they provided suggestions of other gatekeepers who may have an interest in, or clients they could refer to, the project. Although this second level of gatekeepers could have been contacted at the same time as the first, there was an inherent possibility, that transpired to be accurate, that they would be more willing to assist if there was a personal link. A reluctance to engage was predominantly due to research fatigue; these gatekeepers are approached on such a regular basis for assistance in research projects that it is simply not possible for them to partake in them all. A previous working relationship, or a recommendation from a colleague, therefore increased the likelihood of gatekeepers accepting requests for assistance.

This followed the advice offered by Bosworth et al. (2011), who contacted gatekeepers through their own contacts. They interviewed the gatekeepers as well as the intended respondents (trafficked women) yet commented on how difficult the gatekeepers made it to access victims. The researchers all had considerable experience of interviewing victims of domestic violence and rape, yet none of the gatekeepers permitted the researchers to access their clients, which had a significantly negative impact on their research. Although this difficulty was experienced in this research to some extent, being introduced to gatekeepers by professionals who acted as a common link proved a useful method in overcoming this.

There were some gatekeepers who were interested in the project but reticent to participate. In these circumstances, a training package on contemporary slavery was offered to the gatekeeper and their staff free of charge. This permitted a meeting between the researcher and the gatekeeper, allowing the opportunity for further discussions on the research project and for concerns to be voiced. This was particularly successful in the case of Emma, Catherine's case worker. A specialised training session was developed for the specific field that Emma worked in and this was delivered to her and her colleagues. This session resulted in the staff identifying a number of their clients as victims of contemporary slavery and, after the training session, three members of the team agreed to be interviewed about their clients' experiences. Interviewing the gatekeepers themselves reflected the work of De Angelis (2016) who explored women's stories of agency in human trafficking. De Angelis relied on gatekeepers to assist in finding access to respondents, but she also interviewed some of the gatekeepers themselves because of the insight they had into their clients' stories.

Initial contact was made with service providers in the hope that they would act as gatekeepers and provide links to a small number of potential respondents (Munford et al., 2008). The intention was that from there the snowball would increase. In order to overcome the issue of identifying only respondents from the same network (and therefore likely to have similar experiences), multiple starting points were used to access respondents. This involved using gatekeepers from various organisations in order to identify respondents from numerous networks. In addition to asking the gatekeepers to recommend people who had fled conflict, they were asked if they

would be willing to be interviewed themselves.

Interviewing the gatekeepers provided an insight into the experiences of front line workers who work first-hand with the sample population. This provided information, not only on their experiences of interacting with their clients and the problems they face, but also offered the opportunity to hear their clients' stories through the viewpoint of the gatekeeper. Equally, some of the gatekeepers were able to provide (anonymised) details of the experiences of clients who fit the criteria for the research but who were unable or unwilling to be interviewed. This was the case with Kafu, a lawyer who works with asylum seekers. Kafu was hugely interested in the research after hearing about it through a mutual colleague and had worked with numerous people who fit the criteria. However, in her work, once a case is closed, her interaction with that client ends and she has no method of contacting them. Because of her interest in the project, Kafu agreed to be interviewed herself and to retell the stories of some of the clients she had worked with who had fled conflict (retelling stories only of those who had given permission for their accounts to be shared). Although the interview was originally set to last around an hour, it spanned around three hours across two days, because of the number of clients Kafu remembered who fit the criteria. This one respondent was able to provide the narratives of numerous clients who were simply too hard to reach to be invited to be interviewed themselves. Like Emma, mentioned above, Kafu provided invaluable insights by discussing her clients, whose stories would otherwise have been inaccessible.

3.4.1   Initial Contact

During initial contact, gatekeepers were asked to recommend respondents who may be willing to be interviewed and who fit into any of the following categories:

- People who had fled a conflict zone

- People who had fled a conflict zone and experienced modern slavery

- People who work with either of the above groups

The term 'modern' rather than 'contemporary' slavery was used here, as this is the standard terminology for front line professionals in the UK.

It was hoped that from these criteria, a range of viewpoints from different groups of people could be accessed that would assist in understanding the circumstances that make some people from conflict zones vulnerable to becoming enslaved while others remain unaffected. Including those who work with people who have fled a conflict and/or experienced contemporary slavery allowed for agency workers to be interviewed about clients who were not able to be interviewed themselves. Interviewing this group also provided the opportunity to understand the experiences of agency workers and any struggles they face in assisting victims once they have escaped their exploitation.

The responses were particularly interesting in relation to the notion of conflict. Where the presumption had been made that, reflecting the understandings of conflict in contemporary slavery literature, gatekeepers would put forward potential respondents who had fled war, their definition of conflict expanded much further than

this. While some of the respondents were from war-torn situations, others identified

conflict as a much broader issue. Understandings of conflict expanded to include topics

such as conflict within the family, which comprised topics such as marital breakdowns,

forced marriage, families being unaccepting of sexuality, etc. (Chiku, Francine,

Catherine, Helen, Fredrika) political conflict (Padma, Hasim, Oscar, Imogen, Gamba),

ethnic conflict (Verity, Louise), conflict at work (Hattie) and religious conflict (James).

With such an already limited sample size, disregarding potential respondents from the

study was counterintuitive. Instead, their self-identification of having experienced

conflict led to an amendment of the definition of conflict used for the research.

Initially, mirroring the literature, conflict had been understood in the sense of war, but

after hearing a number of respondents discuss their experiences of conflict that did

not incorporate war, a new definition was developed. The development of the

definition has been discussed in Chapter One, and it states conflict to be 'a set of

conditions whereby parties identify and act on mutually incompatible goals. While this

act may be violent, the presence of violence is not necessary in order for the situation

to be defined as conflict. It is possible to be affected by a conflict without being an

active participant.'

As Noy (2009) states, and De Angelis evidences (2016), most respondents require

multiple conversations with the researcher before committing to partaking in research.

With this in mind, during initial contact, offers were made to attend service user

groups run by agencies. Attending these groups would allow for a meeting between

the researcher and potential respondents whereby the research could be discussed

before any agreement to partake was made. Such meetings would also assist in the

development of rapport, which would ease the awkwardness of the beginning of a one to one interview. Although none of the agency workers requested attendance at such a group, one agency worker, Isobel, suggested that visiting a service group that she worked at could be a useful place to meet potential respondents. This was a drop-in centre that holds regular sessions, and while there are some consistent visitors, their attendance is never guaranteed. Attending this session was hugely beneficial, as Isobel made introductions to some of her clients who clearly had a great deal of trust and respect for her. She explained to them what the research entailed and how they might be able to help and, as a direct result, four participants volunteered to be interviewed who, without Isobel's encouragement, would not have been accessible.

Several other gatekeepers were eager to assist, and it was then a case of identifying suitable times and locations for the respondents and booking corresponding interpreters and rooms as required. Organising suitable dates was time consuming, especially for those who had other requirements on their time, such as English lessons, vocational training and counselling sessions. However, this waiting time provided the opportunity to consider pilot studies and dummy interviews.

3.5   Pilot Studies: Benefits and Drawbacks

Pilot studies are often conducted at the beginning of qualitative data collection. These can serve as a test run to trial specific research instruments, provide warnings of situations when protocols could be impossible to follow, and identify potential problems that could be encountered, thereby providing forewarning for the final

research. They also provide the opportunity to test proposed research methods to ensure that they will work and are the most appropriate for the intended project (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001).

However, pilot studies can cause assumptions to be made on the data gathered within that study, and they also hold the potential to influence the respondents. For example, where there are a limited number of potential respondents (such as in this research project), it is possible, if not likely, that some of the respondents may be required to participate in the final research process as well as the pilot study. In such a case, it is possible that those who have already taken part in the pilot study will be influenced by their participation and amend their answers in the final research. Equally, while it is important to emphasise that, in the interest of accurate research, distressing topics cannot be avoided, it is also evident that unnecessary distress should be averted, and interviewing respondents twice about an experience in which they suffered trauma may be ethically questionable (Chatzifotiou, 2000). To avoid these issues, a dummy interview and an incorporated pilot were used in order to benefit from the positives of a pilot study whilst avoiding causing unnecessary distress to the respondents.

3.5.1   Dummy Interview

The dummy interview involved using the questions and topics intended for the real interviews but posed to someone who works for an agency supporting victims of contemporary slavery. This person had an in-depth knowledge of the experiences of their clients, and knew the topics that could cause distress or discomfort. This dummy interview also assisted in improving the clarity of the questions. Undertaking a dummy

interview with a front line professional overcame the barrier of trying to perform a pilot study without repeating interviews with vulnerable respondents. It also highlighted several other benefits.

Primarily, the dummy interview allowed for a trial run with practical aspects of the interview such as ensuring the recording equipment worked and learning how to alter settings (Brown & Sleath, 2016). Although, in the interests of reliable data collection, it would have been inappropriate to remove questions, this dummy interview was excellent preparation for the most likely reactions during the real interviews. It also led to a reordering of the questions to begin by asking about the respondent's current life as a method of establishing rapport, rather than working chronologically from life before the conflict as was the original intention. Starting the interviews in a way that builds rapport is a point emphasised by Ray (2008) who discusses the difficulties she faced when interviewing victims of human trafficking. She states how, to begin with, she asked respondents quite personal questions and they transpired to be a barrier to generating rapport. She found that the respondents felt much more comfortable if she began by discussing issues other than the exploitation. Following this advice, the interviews in this research project began by establishing rapport before moving on to more challenging topics. The dummy interview also helped to ensure that the phrasing was consistent with the terms that the respondents' case workers were likely to use, such as 'safe house' and 'discretionary leave to remain'.

In relation to her work with female victims of domestic abuse, Chatzifotiou (2000) discusses that interviews caused her a great deal of distress as a researcher. This

distress was not simply down to the content of the interviews, but she also worried about the organisation of them, the order of the questions and whether respondents would understand them. Conducting the dummy interview allowed the opportunity to overcome some of this worrying, by verifying that the interview questions were worded and ordered in a suitable way.

3.5.2   Incorporated Pilot

In addition to the dummy interview, a form of pilot test was also incorporated within the main interviews, allowing initial respondents to influence the questions posed to further respondents. In this way, the risk, as posed by pilot interviews, of exploiting vulnerable respondents through repeated interviews was foregone by studying the initial few interviews to gain insights (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). These insights allowed for the order and content of questions to be altered and developed, whilst avoiding the negative side effect of precluding the initial interviews from the findings, a problem often experienced with pilot interviews. Excluding some of these interviews would have been undesirable, not only in limiting the findings of the research, but potentially for the respondents. For those who have suffered trauma to be willing to relive the experience only for it to be omitted from the thesis could be interpreted as disrespectful, or, worse, that their experience was not considered interesting enough to warrant academic interest. This would simply serve to further exploit those who have already experienced prominent abuse.

It is also key to note, as highlighted by Ray (2008), that although it may be possible to conduct multiple interviews with respondents further down the line, this is neither

guaranteed, nor always appropriate. Given the extreme distress presented in a number of the interviews (particularly in the cases of Hattie and Imogen who had to leave the room to get a mental and physical break from retelling their traumatic stories, and who began to wail and scream upon recalling some of the physical violence suffered at the hands of their perpetrators), it felt too much to expect some of the respondents to relive their stories yet again. As such, it is important for the researcher to gather as much information as possible from the initial interviews.

The potential sample size for this study was notably small for several reasons. It is instantly confined because the number of people who have escaped slavery and been identified is only a fraction of those who remain enslaved (BBC, 2014). This number is condensed when only considering those who have experienced conflict and is reduced even further when taking into account the number of potential respondents who will be willing to take part in the research process. This number is reduced yet again when accounting for those who will be physically and emotionally able to provide a reliable account at a given date and time, and further still, when contemplating the possibility that some respondents who have agreed to take part may change their minds. It is also important to note that while 24 interviews were undertaken, approximately 260 people were contacted in order to access these final participants.

Including a dummy interview and an incorporated pilot within the main research process allowed for the avoidance of the dilemma of either asking vulnerable respondents to undertake multiple interviews, or reducing the already limited sample size by excluding those who participated in a pilot study from the main research

process.

3.6   Interviews: Listening to the Overlooked

Brennan discusses her deliberations over the type of research to use in her studies of victims of human trafficking (2005) and emphasises the daunting challenge of the diversity of contexts of contemporary slavery. Not only are there multiple forms of exploitation, but differences also span victims' age, gender, ethnicity, religion etc. Their experiences can vary drastically during their exploitation, in escaping, and after exploitation. Due to this, and the lack of communities of resettled victims of contemporary slavery, participant observation is not possible in this field of research. This confirmed the suitability of undertaking interviews to access personal answers to specific questions. Having confirmed the choice to use interviews, there was then further deliberation required on whether to use individual interviews or focus groups.

Focus groups have become a prominent form of data collection in the social sciences in the past 10 years, where they were previously rarely used (Morgan, 1997; Stokes & Bergin, 2006). As a form of group interview, they rely on interaction between the respondents rather than a question and answer structure between researcher and respondent. This structure allows the participants to raise their own questions which then offers the opportunity for the researcher to understand what the participants' priorities are, and can lead the discussion into areas that the researcher may not have considered. Focus groups allow for debate amongst participants, which may not be possible (or appropriate) in a one to one interview situation. Perhaps most

importantly, focus groups limit the pressure on each individual respondent by incorporating them within a group. They allow the opportunity for more confident members to break the ice for those more reticent to take part, and they provide a safe space for people to share their experiences with a group of others who have lived through similar circumstances. Relieving some of this attention from individuals, especially those who feel uncomfortable in one to one situations or who are wary of the interviewer, may encourage the participants to be more forthcoming with their answers than they would be in a one to one situation with an interviewer who does not share those commonalities. Focus groups are recognised for being useful in drawing out not only people's opinions and ideas, but why they have those opinions and ideas (Kitzinger, 1995) and they are particularly popular because interviewing multiple people in one setting makes the research process both quicker and cheaper (Stokes & Bergin, 2006).

However, focus groups have their drawbacks. Firstly, although they may reduce time spent on individual interviews, practically gathering the respondents together at a convenient time and location for all can be problematic; this is especially true when the respondents are geographically dispersed. Focus groups also cause issues when they are based on a topic of a sensitive nature. Not only do they require respondents to discuss very personal issues with a group of people they have likely never met before, but they raise issues regarding confidentiality – everyone in the group will have learned their peers' names and stories. The group setting also makes it more problematic for the researcher to probe into individuals' stories. For example, if one respondent offered a comment that the researcher would like to expand on, she may

have to interrupt the flow of conversation to focus on it. Equally, if the topic was of a particularly personal nature, the researcher may refrain from asking any further questions so as to not make the respondent feel uncomfortable talking about a sensitive experience in front of a group of strangers, but in doing so may risk missing out on gaining useful data.

It follows then, that it is also easier to manage questions and responses from one person rather than multiple people (Gibbs, 1997). Further, transcribing a recorded focus group may have a number of barriers, such as being unable to recognise the different voices, or times when respondents are speaking over each other. Focus groups also bring with them the issue of influence. When multiple people are discussing a topic, there is always the possibility that people's opinions may be influenced by others, which may prevent the researcher from getting a valid and honest response from all participants. The reverse may also be true; people who disagree with the majority opinion may remain silent rather than offer their divergent opinion.

Along with the geographical practicalities of organising focus groups, there are other reasons why they may be impractical for the study of conflict and contemporary slavery. The majority of researchers recommend homogeneity within a focus group (Kitzinger, 1995). However, that is incredibly difficult in relation to the topic of this thesis. The respondents are likely to be of different nationalities, therefore raising further issues in relation to language barriers or organising interpreters. Although their stories may share some common themes, they will be vastly different, varying by the

push and pull factors of leaving the conflict, the exploitation they suffered, and their methods of escape. Having considered the benefits and weaknesses of focus groups, the primary concerns over confidentiality and addressing sensitive topics within a group led to the determination that one to one interviews would be more appropriate for this research.

Individual interviews are the most widely-used data collection strategy in qualitative research (Sandelowski, 2002; Nunkoosing, 2005). They provide the opportunity to cover topics in depth to an extent that is not possible in focus groups both because the respondents are the single focus of the interview and because a one to one situation offers the respondent the chance to really scrutinise the reasons behind their thoughts and opinions (Berent, 1966). Interviews also allow for the researcher to dig deeper into specific topics that may be inappropriate in a group setting, because a stronger rapport can be developed during this one to one scenario. There are different types of interviews, each offering the researcher different levels of freedom within the interview process. Structured interviews are the least flexible and most simple to analyse, unstructured interviews are the most flexible and allow the respondent to steer the interview, while semi-structured interviews sit between the two.

Structured interviews are the simplest form of interview and, especially with closed questions, the easiest for a research subject to respond to. They involve having a set list of questions that are posed to all the respondents in the same order (Corbetta, 2003). The questions can be either closed or open, and the choice between these can strongly affect the content of the answers and the analysis of the data collected. With

closed questions, it is easier for the researcher to identify common themes that arise, and to assign a quantitative element to the answers. Open ended answers make these aspects more difficult, however they allow the respondents the opportunity to expand their answers as much as they see fit, therefore allowing the researcher to acquire more detailed information than with closed questions (Turner, 2010).

However, structured interviews have some disadvantages. They are impersonal in their use of the same questions for each respondent regardless of their story. Equally, should a respondent offer an answer to a question that is yet to be asked, the interviewer is still required to ask the question; this can cause the respondent to feel that the interviewer is failing to listen, or could interrupt the flow of the interview if the interviewer stops to offer an explanation for the repetition. Further, structured interviews do not allow the researcher to probe into topics that they feel may offer more information; there is no scope to stray from the set list of questions. This runs the risk of the researcher missing out on useful data and could be interpreted as disinterest by the respondent should they disclose some personal information which is then not followed up on. Adhering to the set of questions could also cause problems for the researcher-respondent rapport during the interview, especially when discussing sensitive topics. If the researcher is required to follow all the questions, then they are prevented from avoiding topics that, upon meeting the respondent, they think may be irrelevant, or which could cause distress. These issues could again imply disinterest on the part of the interviewer, and the respondent may feel betrayed if the interviewer broaches a topic that the respondent has made clear they would find difficult to answer.

Semi-structured interviews involve the researcher establishing the general structure of the interview and developing the topics and main questions that should be covered with each respondent. There is enough leniency in semi-structured interviews for the interviewer to alter the phrasing and order of the questions as she feels appropriate (Gray, 2004). This flexibility also allows the interviewer to alter or remove questions if she feels they will be unsuitable, irrelevant, or cause unnecessary distress to the respondent. However, this gives rise to a potential drawback: the lack of consistency between interviews.

The flexibility over the questions makes it possible for the researcher to reword a question if the respondent struggles to understand, or to ask questions of one that she does not ask of another. This makes the analysis of data much more complicated than that of structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews tend to be conversational and relatively informal, and although these interviews are predetermined to an extent, they can be hugely beneficial as they offer enough adaptability for the interviewer to ask for more information about certain topics, or to probe further into particular responses. While semi-structured interviews offer less opportunity to collect data in a quantitative way, they tend to result in more detailed responses than structured interviews.

Unstructured interviews take the format of an informal conversation. Although there are set topics to cover during the interview, there are no set questions and there is no predetermined order to the progression of them. The purpose of an unstructured

interview is to maintain adaptability in order for the respondent to steer the interview, allowing the researcher to understand the respondent's priorities. This would be particularly beneficial in relation to the topics of conflict and contemporary slavery. With a lack of personal experience of either conflict or contemporary slavery, aspects that may be considered a priority may well not reflect the priorities of those who have actually lived through them.

Unstructured interviews rely on the spontaneity of regular conversation (Turner, 2010). This can be beneficial for accessing topics that the respondent feels are important, but that the researcher may not have considered. In this sense, they offer access to unpredicted themes that structured and semi-structured interviews do not always allow for. Of course, the flexibility of unstructured interviews holds the same drawback as semi-structured interviews in making the analysis of data much more complicated, however the content of the data is likely to be rich and more nuanced, especially than that derived from structured interviews. Another issue with unstructured interviews relates to drawing information from a reticent respondent. If the respondent is reserved with responses, it can be difficult to have no predetermined set of questions to refer to. However, if the interviewer has a good working knowledge of the topic, if necessary, she should be able to develop relevant questions without much guidance from the respondent.

Considering the lack of personal experience of both conflict and contemporary slavery, some level of structure in the interviews was necessary for this research. With limited knowledge on the issues, this would ensure that the key themes would be covered.

However, it was also important to ensure that there was enough flexibility within the interviews for the respondents to be able to expand on answers and for the interviewer to alter questions or change their order. For these reasons, semi-structured interviews were the most suitable choice for this research. They allowed for the development of a list of topics to be covered and, within each topic, a list of suggested questions. The intention was to allow the respondent to steer the interview to some extent, whilst ensuring that each topic was covered.

The interviews used open questions, adhering to the advice provided by De Angelis (2016). They included questions such as: 'Can you tell me what life was like when you were a child?' and 'What has life been like since you left the conflict?' Keeping the questions open allowed the respondents to offer the answers that they felt most suitable, without implying there should be any limit to their responses. This permitted the respondents to assign their own meaning to their experiences rather than making them fit a multiple-choice option.

'Elite' models of interviewing were also employed, following the suggestions of Raymond et al. (2002). This entails deeming the respondent to be the expert on the topic, holding more knowledge than the researcher. This was undoubtedly the case in this research, due to the respondent being the only one with lived experience of either conflict or contemporary slavery. This model was therefore a logical step and is one that is advocated by several academics researching hidden populations (Hogeland & Rosen, 1990; Bosworth et al., 2011).

A number of key themes were covered within the interviews. Evidently, not all the themes were relevant for all three categories of respondents (those that had fled conflict, those that had fled conflict and experienced contemporary slavery, and professionals who work with either of the above categories) and alterations were made to suit the respondent. Such alterations related primarily to the agency workers who were asked about the same topics but in relation to their clients rather than themselves, however there were also marked differences between the topics asked of those who were victims of slavery and those who were not.

The interviews all began with very generic topics that assisted in generating a rapport and relieving any anxiety that the interview setting could cause (Labott et al., 2013). For example, Oscar's interview took place at his work, so began with questions on the location and the posters on the walls. This helped to overcome some of the awkwardness of having never met each other before, knowing that we were about to discuss some very personal topics. All the interviews began with similarly generic topics: commenting on the weather, asking about the traffic, etc. The interview with Hattie was particularly informal and began without any awkwardness because she brought her baby with her. Not only did the baby make for an easy topic to open conversation, but he provided distractions throughout when Hattie was clearly feeling distressed.

After settling into the interviews and establishing rapport, questions gradually became more personal. They were kept as open as possible, prompting the respondent to set the direction of the answers. Early questions concentrated on topics based around life

before the conflict: family, daily life, work and school. This then led on to generating a better idea of how respondents managed to flee conflict, and how those who were victims of slavery became trapped in exploitation. From here, the interviews delved deeper into the more sensitive topics, probing at experiences of contemporary slavery and of the UK asylum system.

The final section of all the interviews considered what life was like now, considering any specific issues that the respondents face, how they are settling in to the community, and what their hopes are for the future. Although this was the generic structure for most of the interviews, there were some instances where it was not possible to follow this plan – particularly where the respondents became distressed. This is discussed in further detail below, regarding ethics, and an example of the interview questions is provided in Appendix C.

3.6.1   The Respondents

Figures 1 and 2 offer a breakdown of all the interviews that were undertaken as part of this research project. Figure 1 provides an overview of all the respondents who had fled conflict and whether or not they experienced contemporary slavery, while Figure 2 lists those respondents who were agency workers. For clarity, a total of 24 interviews were undertaken; 11 of these were with individuals who had fled conflict and 13 were with agency workers. The stories of 16 clients were elicited through the interviews with agency workers and these are detailed in Figure 3.

Figure 1 – Respondents who had Fled Conflict

Pseudonym	Nationality	Experienced Slavery	Type of Slavery	Date of Interview
Barak	Syria	No	-	10/01/2017
Fredrika	Uganda	No	-	28/06/2017
Gamba	Cameroon	No	-	28/06/2017
Hasim	Uganda	No	-	28/06/2017
Hattie	Vietnam	Yes	Sexual	11/07/2017
Imogen	Bangladesh	Yes	Domestic and labour	11/07/2017
Isaac	Congo	No	-	28/06/2017
James	Iran	No	-	11/07/2017
Nadim	Syria	No	-	13/01/2017
Oscar	Palestine(Gaza)	No	-	15/12/2016
Sakti	Bosnia	No	-	08/02/2017

Figure 2 - Agency Worker Respondents

Pseudonym	Organisation Works With	Date of Interview
Andrew	Children	04/11/2016
Carly	Counselling	20/12/2016
Daisy	Victims of Exploitation	16/06/2017
Emma	Counselling	21/02/2017
Esther	Medical Treatment	16/06/2017
Fadi	Refugees	09/06/2017
Gain	Asylum Seekers	20/02/2017
Gloria	Refugees	30/06/2017
Harriet	Victims of Slavery	12/05/2017
Isobel	Vulnerable Women	16/05/2017
Jane	Refugees	23/05/2017
Kafu	Asylum Seekers	22/05/2017
Lusala	Child Soldiers	30/09/2016

All the respondents listed in Figure 1 are referred to in the remainder of this thesis, however, some of the respondents from Figure 2 are omitted. Lusala, mentioned earlier in Chapter Three, is not referenced because a poor internet connection during a video call prevented adequate data collection. Other respondents in this list that are not included in the thesis are those who provided narratives of their clients' experiences.

These narratives were stories of clients where it was either unsuitable (e.g. they were still in a high state of distress) or impractical (e.g. they were no longer living in the

country) for them to be interviewed personally. For those agency workers who retold their clients' stories, it is the stories that are referenced rather than the individuals who provided them. It is also important to note that David's story was provided by his case worker but is omitted from the findings; he fled Bosnia when he was around five years old and had little memory of the conflict, so his account, though interesting, offered limited insight for this study. Figure 3 provides an overview of the narratives that were provided by agency workers.

Figure 3 - Narratives Provided by Agency Workers

Pseudonym	Nationality	Gender	Experienced Slavery	Type of Slavery
Andrea	Uganda	Female	Yes	Domestic
Beth	Uganda	Female	Yes	Sexual
Catherine	Albania	Female	Yes	Sexual
Chiku	Sierra Leone	Female	Yes	Forced Marriage
David	Bosnia	Male	No	-
Edan	Afghanistan	Male	Yes	Labour
Francine	Gambia	Female	Yes	Sexual
Helen	Poland	Female	Yes	Sexual and Domestic
Louise	Armenia	Female	Yes	Domestic
Mahal	DRC	Female	Yes	Sexual
Nadia	Eritrea	Female	No	-
Ofira	Eritrea	Female	Yes	Domestic
Padma	Ivory Coast	Female	Yes	Sexual
Tara	Nigeria	Female	Yes	Sexual

Verity	Somalia	Female	No	-
Zoe	South Sudan	Female	Yes	Sexual

3.7   The Impact of Researcher Bias in Leading the Findings

Having decided on using qualitative data collection through semi-structured interviews, it was then important to consider the possible impact of researcher bias, how it might occur, and how it could affect the outcomes of this research.

Qualitative research is, to some extent, inseparable from the researcher. It may be possible to replicate the research project, but if another researcher was given the same project, the likelihood of reaching the same outcome is minimal. The researcher may be aware of, and attempt to limit, the ways in which they could influence the research, yet it is improbable that any qualitative research can be entirely unaffected by the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). This is true throughout the research process, from the collection to the analysis of data. It is particularly true of semi-structured and unstructured interviews where the researcher has a degree of flexibility and where the questions may vary between each interview with the same interviewer, let alone should the interviewers change. Yet this flexibility within the interviews is only one method through which the researcher could bias the outcome of the research.

The researcher's influence on the topic begins even before the research does, as the choice of topic will, to some extent, reflect her personal interests. Once this topic is

decided, the researcher will then choose the kind of information she wishes to learn and which methods, qualitative or quantitative, will best allow her to access this information. It is clear then that two researchers approaching the same topic may have research heading in vastly different directions even from this early point. The researcher's influence will continue as she develops her research questions, based on 'how' or 'why' for qualitative research, or 'how many' or 'how widespread' etc. for quantitative (Fink, 2000).

The process of finding respondents continues to be influenced by the researcher. For example, if she already knows of potential respondents, she may have background knowledge of their stories, which could result in assumptions being made. Even if the researcher does not know of any respondents herself, she may have links with agencies that could act as gatekeepers and direct her towards potential respondents as was the case in this study. Having previously worked in the field of contemporary slavery, contacts working for relevant services were called upon for assistance and advice; this personal link was hugely beneficial in ensuring a good response rate from respondents. However, a researcher may have no leads and rely on colleagues' recommendations or internet searches to find people to invite to the study; these approaches are likely to result in lower response rates. Further, upon developing a list of potential respondents, the researcher may disregard certain individuals due to geographical distance, language barriers, or time constraints. As such, the researcher will always have some level of impact on the data that is collected, because she will have a degree of influence over the respondents that are chosen.

It is also important for a researcher to acknowledge that respondents may alter their answers to suit what they believe the interviewer wants to hear, or to influence the interviewer's opinion of them. For example, if the respondent thinks that the truth negatively reflects on them, or alters the self-image that they have created, they may modify 'the truth' (Fielding, 1994). While the researcher should be aware of this, it may not be possible to eliminate its occurrence. However, by explaining to the respondent that the research is impartial and that the researcher will make no judgements, there is the potential to limit this problem.

The researcher's influence continues even to the point of data analysis; the epistemological position chosen by the researcher and her level of self-reflection can impact on the outcome of the research. For example, she may make assumptions about the respondents' replies. One researcher may decide that her assumptions are correct, but another may feel it appropriate to verify those assumptions (or at least the ones of which she is aware) with the respondent (Gorden, 1987). However, of course it is also important that the researcher does not become so concerned with her own interpretations that the research becomes a project of self-analysis (Newton, 1996).

Although this danger of over-analysing the interpretation exists, it is important that the researcher continues to be aware of her own influence and how it can affect the project from its implementation to its conclusion. There is a long-standing debate on whether the effect of the researcher should be disregarded or accepted (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000). Still, with it being difficult to refute that the researcher impacts on the research in a variety of ways, especially in qualitative research, it is pertinent to

acknowledge this impact and the bearing it may have, rather than to disregard it on the assumption that the project would have the same outcomes regardless of the researcher (Oakley, 1981; Briggs, 1986; Silverman, 1993).

3.7.1   Bias in This Research

As Glaser and Strauss (1999) acknowledge, a researcher can never approach research as a *tabula rasa*; they will always have unconscious biases derived from "prejudices we have but are unaware of" (McCormick, 2016). These biases will be influenced by a number of aspects including beliefs, motives and context and can impact on a person's understandings and judgments of situations and people (Pronin, 2007). The first step in addressing unconscious biases in research is to accept that everyone has them (Staats, 2014), and then for researchers to identify what theirs may be (Moule, 2009) and how they may prevent such biases from affecting their work. Due to the importance of acknowledging the impact the researcher can have on the outcome of a study, it was vital before beginning this research to undertake some reflection on how unconscious bias could present itself in this research. Evidently, preconceptions would be one of the key issues.

Having worked in the anti-slavery field as a practitioner before beginning this study, a good deal of background knowledge on the subject area had already been developed, both in terms of victims' stories, and in the practical and legal challenges facing them. Evidently, with this knowledge there was going to be a risk of bias when conducting the research. In some senses the experience was beneficial, for example, in

establishing rapport, using the correct terminology and having an idea of the issues that the respondents faced. However, it also meant that the research began with some preconceptions.

It is difficult to approach any piece of research without some idea of anticipated findings, and this was acknowledged before each interview. Having worked with victims in the past, and having read published victim testimonies and narratives before conducting any interviews, one assumption was that similar stories would be repeated through the interviews. This had both drawbacks and benefits. The main drawback was the potential of anticipating that answers would reflect the narratives, testimonies, or the experience of previous clients. However, many had very different backgrounds, ethnicities, and experiences, and allowing the respondents time to think about and develop their answers helped to prevent leading them towards the anticipated responses. While some responses did confirm expectations, this was not always the case.

The main benefit of having prior knowledge was the ability to develop questions around topics that may not have otherwise been considered. This applied most notably to enquiring about the relationship between the victim and perpetrator before the exploitation occurred. Without prior insight into the fact that it is relatively common for victims to know their perpetrators, this may have been overlooked in the interviews. Another benefit of prior knowledge was the opportunity to mentally prepare for some of the topics that were likely to arise. This allowed time to plan and ensure that all evenings proceeding an interview were kept free. This was a hugely

beneficial technique, especially on the final day of interviews. On this day three interviews were conducted, with James, Hattie and Imogen. All three had suffered immense physical and verbal abuse and their stories were deeply disturbing. Imogen and James showed physical scars, and Imogen and Hattie broke down in tears multiple times, because recalling their situation was so upsetting. After the interviews had concluded, the remainder of the day was spent reflecting on them. This time was necessary for processing the distressing issues that had been disclosed.

Unconscious bias was also anticipated in relation to the victims themselves. There was the possibility of relating to the respondents differently depending on levels of rapport or commonalities in language, gender, race, age, or any number of other identifiers. This possibility was acknowledged in advance and, using the insights garnered through the dummy interview, the initial segment of every interview was dedicated to generating rapport in order to overcome any such difficulties.

Although these potential biases were recognised before commencing interviews, the main issue with unconscious bias is evidently that there were likely to be many more biases that had simply not been identified.

The trepidation of commencing an interview with preconceptions relates to confirmation bias, which every effort was made to avoid before beginning data collection. It would have been inappropriate simply to use the interviews to confirm any pre-existing hypotheses, or to endorse the findings from the narratives, testimonies and previous experience of working with victims rather than allowing the

data itself to develop theories. Recording the interviews assisted here. In the interviews, a point may have been considered particularly salient or irrelevant based on preconceptions, but by recording the interviews, it was possible to listen back and reassess those points with a less immediate time frame. Transcribing the interviews was a particularly useful part of the research process as it provided an opportunity to engage in depth with the content in a way that is not possible during the interviews themselves. During the transcription process, pieces of information were identified that had been overlooked during the interviews. Barak's interview exemplifies this, where his recounting of being shot was so distracting that his explanation of escaping Syria by crawling through a tunnel was totally overlooked until the transcription.

One specific bias in this research, which was only discovered after being raised by Andrew, the first respondent, was a cultural bias. When accessing stories, there was always a tendency of imagining life in the subject's position; making assumptions about the emotions the respondent would have felt at the time. This notion was highlighted by Andrew, an agency worker, who commented that while these events may cause feelings of trauma and distress for those listening to them, his clients related to them more objectively. This was a significant point that encouraged more objectivity throughout the interviews.

Another bias in this research was the expectation to hear stories of how government systems had failed the respondents. This assumption was based on knowledge from experience working with victims of slavery as well as insights from narratives and testimonies. While several respondents did highlight this issue in their interviews, a

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conscious effort was made not to lead the questions and to accept the possibility that the respondents could acknowledge such systems as being the sole mechanism in keeping them safe or preventing exploitation.

Because of the personal interest in this issue, there was a possibility of overlooking some interview topics due to being so engrossed in conversations with the respondents. Wengraf (2001:194) refers to 'double attention', meaning:

> that you must be both listening to the informant's responses to understand what he or she is trying to get at and, at the same time, you must be bearing in mind your needs to ensure that all your questions are liable to get answered within the fixed time at the level of depth and detail that you need.

To ensure that this double attention was met, a bullet point list was developed for the interviews. The list was divided into general topics which could be checked with a discrete glance, and sub-topics which were referred to towards the end of each interview, ensuring all relevant points had been addressed.

3.8   Limitations of the Research Process

The key limitation of this study was the sample size. The number of accessible people who have fled a conflict and/or become a victim of contemporary slavery is limited, but this number is reduced further when considering those who are willing to be interviewed, and further still in relation to the practicalities of organising dates, times and locations for the interviews. Having working relationships assisted significantly in

this regard, and including agency workers as respondents helped to increase the sample size.

The sampling technique also generated a limitation. Snowball sampling in this research started with gatekeepers, meaning that the study only included respondents who had received support. Respondents who had not received support were not accessible and therefore not included in this study, however they would likely have provided vastly different insights than those accessed here.

Another significant issue was geography. With the sample size being so small, it was inappropriate to limit the respondents to a geographical region, meaning that they could be located anywhere across the world. Technology helped significantly by making it more convenient to meet with people who have limited time, or where geography prevented a face to face meeting (such as Gain who was working in The Jungle in Calais). As the intention of this research was to learn about personal experiences of a sensitive nature, face to face meetings were the most appropriate method. Such meetings demonstrated to the respondents that their stories were considered important enough to justify the time and expense of travelling to meet with them. However, there was also a limitation on the feasibility of undertaking all the meetings face to face, especially for respondents who were abroad or who faced time constraints which could make it difficult to meet. In these circumstances, to avoid sacrificing this potentially insightful information, video calls were proposed as a preferred alternative, or a telephone call if that was unfeasible (for example if internet access was difficult). These options remained second choice to a face to face meeting,

not only to emphasise to the respondent the importance of their time, but because of the difficulties associated with the alternative methods.

Video calls, although convenient in offering access to hard to reach respondents, risk time delays which can result in stunted, uncomfortable conversation. Clearly this poses a problem to the research process, not only in jeopardising clarity, but in developing rapport. Video calls are also dependent on reliable internet access which, when it falters, can again make maintaining rapport difficult. It can also lead to important pieces of information being missed, or to the interviewer having to ask the respondent to repeat herself which is undesirable when tackling sensitive topics. This was experienced during the research process where a scheduled video call was organised with a respondent, Lusala, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The call was established and the video link connected, but only for long enough for introductions to be made before the call disconnected. After a few minutes, the call reconnected and the process began again, only for the same problem to reoccur four times in quick succession. It transpired it had been raining where Lusala was based, making the internet connection unreliable. The interview was rescheduled for another day, but the same problems occurred and it was eventually agreed that trying to conduct this interview was impractical. Although contact was maintained via email, due to the lack of opportunity for true dialogue, this respondent's story was omitted from the study.

A further issue that meeting face to face helps to overcome is difficulty understanding accents. Being able to see a person's mannerisms and the way their lips move can increase the likelihood of recognising the words being said. This was especially true

with Gain. While it was impractical to organise a face to face meeting with her because of geography, undertaking the interview via video call helped provide context for any words that were clouded by her accent.

Finally, a conversation face to face gives the researcher the ability to respond to social cues which may not be noticeable in a non-face to face meeting. It provides the opportunity to witness body language and expressions in order to understand the implications and emotions behind a respondent's words (Kvale, 1996). Hattie and Imogen's interviews are key examples that highlight the benefit of face to face interviews with respondents sharing disturbing stories. They both experienced extreme distress, crying on several occasions, and Imogen began to wail and shout as she broached some of the most traumatic parts of her story. By being physically close to the respondent, it was possible to offer comfort and reassurance, as well as to provide practical responses like tissues and drinks. These responses would not have been possible over the phone or via a video call. Having predicted that some of the interviews could cause distress to the respondents, those that were recounting their own experiences were interviewed face to face. The only interviews that occurred via telephone or video call were with agency workers where location or time restrictions prevented a face to face meeting.

While the potential difficulties of accents have been addressed, language barriers may go further than this, requiring the assistance of interpreters which bring with them further potential problems. Primarily, finding an interpreter who speaks not only the required language, but the relevant dialect, can be difficult. The researcher should also

pay attention to gender preferences the respondent may have, though accommodating these preferences may not always be possible depending on the dialect. However, the drawbacks of using interpreters go further than this, and can bias the research process. The interpreter may have preconceptions about the respondent's story, or prejudice about the ethnic group to which they belong. Previous experience had encouraged a wariness of this, where an interpreter had been employed who spoke the same language as numerous clients, but when the interpreter learned of the clients' ethnic backgrounds, refused to work with them because of a long standing, cultural prejudice. To overcome such problems in this research, when contacting potential interpreters, they were requested to provide not only their availability and price, but a little information on the ethnicity of the client. Fortunately, no prejudicial comments were made, but had this been the case, such interpreters would not have been offered the role. Further reference to this issue is made below regarding ethics.

Another potential issue with interpreters is a failure to interpret directly between researcher and respondent. For example, an interpreter may not know the intention behind asking a certain question (it may have been simply to develop a rapport) and should they choose to reword it, could potentially change its meaning. Moreover, an interpreter could have an exchange with the respondent, but only interpret the original question and the final answer. This is most likely to be the case when a respondent does not understand the question, but there is the potential that rather than informing the interviewer of this, the interpreter may take it upon themselves to reword the question. Again, this runs the risk of changing the meaning of the question

and could influence the respondent's answers. To avoid this in this research, before the interviews commenced, it was reiterated to the interpreters that they should directly interpret the questions and responses as precisely as possible without altering or adding any information. Essentially, it was made clear that the interpreters should not engage with any of the questions or answers, but only interpret. Although there will always be some risk of bias and misinterpretation with interpreters, this does not preclude the importance of continuing to undertake those interviews.

Five respondents required interpreters; practical reasons led to two of the interviews being undertaken with a face to face interpreter and the remaining three with interpreters on the phone. While telephone interpreting held risks, especially in relation to volume and lack of context, they flowed smoothly and these interpreters were better at interpreting direct questions and responses than the face to face interpreter who engaged in occasional brief exchanges with the respondents before interpreting their replies.

The main difficulty with telephone interpreters occurred when the respondents got upset. While the respondents were crying or trying to compose themselves, they were often quiet. On multiple occasions the telephone interpreters mistook this for poor signal and they needed regular reassurance that the line was still active. Of course this was not a problem with face to face interviewers as the interpreters were part of the situation.

A final point to note on interpreters is that their input can cause confusion in

transcriptions as there is a tendency to fluctuate between pronouns. A quote from Imogen's interview states that "while she was in that house doing the housework, the person's brother rang her one time and said do you want to work and I said yeah I do." In this example, 'she', 'her', 'you' and 'I' all relate to Imogen. This is a common theme throughout all the interviews using interpreters (Barak, Nadim, Imogen, Hattie and James); the interpreters commonly switch between pronouns, but in all cases are referring to the respondent rather than themselves.

3.9   Ethical Considerations

These issues posed by interpreters gesture towards some of the ethical considerations of this research. An ethical approval process was undertaken, and approval was granted by the university before the fieldwork commenced. Some of the necessary ethical considerations taken into account during this process are discussed below.

The sensitive nature of the topics raised in the interviews was evident from the outset of the project, and a number of respondents were anxious about confidentiality. In acknowledgement of this, all respondents were assigned a pseudonym and were reassured of anonymity. Telephone interpreters were selected from the National Register of Public Service Interpreters and only those with a Criminal Records Bureau check were contacted. They were informed of the sensitive and distressing nature of the interviews and agreed to retain confidentiality. The same face to face interpreter was used for both Nadim and Barak's interviews. The interviewer was also their case worker and, as such, had an excellent rapport with both respondents and already had

strict confidentiality agreements in place.

As the interviews related to upsetting topics, it was also likely that there was going to be some extent of distress for all parties involved. It was crucial to have processes in place to deal with this, should it occur. Although, as mentioned previously, it would be unsuitable to remove upsetting topics, because this research was based on traumatic subjects it was pertinent to limit potential occurrences of distress (McCosker et al., 2001). For this reason, when interviewing, if there was a topic that a respondent became upset about, the structure of the interviews was slightly altered. Focus would remain on the distressing topic until all the questions had been covered (allowing the respondents plenty of time and offering them breaks if necessary). The interview would then move on to the next topic and the distressing subject would not be revisited. This approach was more appropriate than sensing distress and moving on, only to revisit the topic again later, or removing it from the interview.

Regarding the instances in which a respondent became visibly upset, it was necessary to deal with each situation individually as a blanket approach would have been inappropriate. When distress occurred, as it often did, the respondents were asked if they needed a break. Some, like Hattie and Imogen, experienced extreme distress during their interviews and took regular breaks. Fredrika, however, preferred to carry on when she got upset. The information sheet provided to all respondents made it clear that they were in control of the interview and were not required to answer any questions they preferred not to, nor were they required to provide an explanation as to why. The only instance where a respondent chose not to answer a question was

with Isaac who, when asked about his hopes for the future, requested to move on from that question. Moreover, the information sheet explained that the respondent could stop the interview at any point without explanation. As noted, there were several instances where an interview was paused because a respondent became too distressed to speak, however, nobody asked to end their interview.

Chatzifotiou (2000), discusses the topic of researcher distress during a study into abused women. She notes how she had given considerable thought to the distress that the interviews might cause her respondents, but very little to how they might impact upon her. This is reinforced by Ray (2008) who describes her experience after listening repeatedly to stories of trauma. She was unable to discuss the stories over fears of confidentiality and consequently developed a chronic headache. Considering this, an agreement was made that any issues causing distress would be discussed with the research supervisors. Because the supervisors were identified in the information sheet provided to respondents, sharing details with them would not break any confidentiality agreements. Indeed, situations where the interviews became personally distressing were more difficult to deal with than when a respondent became upset. Personal feelings implied that not only would it be unprofessional, as the interviewer, to visibly show unease, but that if the respondents who had lived through the trauma were not upset, then no one else had the right to be. In these circumstances, amendments were made to the interview by staying on topic but slightly altering the angle. For example, when hearing of David's grandmother being beheaded, rather than asking more about the occurrence, focus turned to whether his grandfather still lived in Bosnia; this provided enough space to regain compose before revisiting the

topic of the murder. In addition, time was set aside after every interview to allow for reflection on the discussions that had taken place.

Due to the topics covered, the interviews held the potential to generate information that required reporting such as illegal activity, issues with support workers, or mishandled asylum applications, though such disclosures would be unlikely due to the number of agencies that the respondents would have encountered prior to the interviews. However, an agreement was made that should any such issues arise, they would be discussed with the research supervisors as a matter of urgency and a decision would be made on the best course of action. This situation did not occur in any of the interviews, however some of the respondents showed confusion over some aspects of their current life (for example, Imogen was unsure what her case workers were able to help her with). It was then possible to take these questions back to the respondents' case workers so they could discuss the questions with their clients.

Related to this, there was also the possibility that respondents would have misinformed expectations of the interviewer, anticipating assistance beyond just research. Such a situation would present an ethical dilemma and the negotiation of two differing roles: practitioner and researcher. This was experienced by Ray (2008) who felt that some of her respondents expected her to be able to help them with practical issues they were facing. However, in this research all the respondents were referred through gatekeepers with significant professional experience, making it unlikely that any new advice or support could be offered. To provide protection from such expectations, after allowing the respondents time to read the information sheet,

it was reinforced that the interviews were being undertaken purely for research purposes, and no practical advice could be offered.

3.10   Data Analysis: Letting the Findings Speak

The analysis of data from the interviews centred on grounded theory, one of the world's most prevalent research strategies (Strauss & Corbin, 1997; Birks & Mills, 2011). Rather than beginning with a hypothesis, grounded theory is the process by which the analysis of data leads to the construction of theories by focusing on a question with no expected outcome. As the researcher collects data, they concurrently analyse it and, with the progressive collection of more data, themes become identified until they can be grouped into categories. These categories are then used to construct or develop theories. This stands in contrast to the traditional positivist approach of the social sciences whereby a researcher will gather data to show how the topic under question relates to pre-existing theory. Simply put, grounded theory methods "consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves" (Charmaz, 2006:2). Grounded theory is promoted for studies relating to culturally sensitive topics, as it allows the researcher to discover from their respondents how they understand their own experiences (Sammut-Scerri et al., 2012).

The essential components of grounded theory research are initial coding and categorising of data, the simultaneous collection and analysis of data, writing memos, theoretical sampling, constant comparative analysis, theoretical sensitivity, intermediate coding, core category selection, theoretical saturation and theoretical

integration (Birks & Mills, 2011). These elements were followed throughout the analysis of data in this project, using NVivo primarily, followed by an analysis by hand to ensure there were no key topics that had been overlooked. Significant points of the analysis process are highlighted below.

Grounded theory promotes the simultaneous collection and analysis of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1999) which is ideal for encouraging the notion of multiple rather than singular truths and, by analysing each interview in isolation, researchers are less likely to be influenced by pre-existing ideas. Analysing interviews as they were conducted was useful not only for establishing key points arising from individual interviews, but for assisting in the development of interview questions. By immediately analysing the interviews, it was possible to use the information gathered to better structure the proceeding interviews. It is key to note here how effective snowball sampling was in relation to the grounded theory approach of this research. As gatekeepers were contacted and meetings with respondents were organised, it was possible to generate a list of further leads for potential respondents to take part in interviews. By analysing data as it was collected, under-represented topics could be identified, and focus could be placed on filling any gaps. An example was how, at the beginning of the data collection period there were far more respondents who were agency workers than respondents who had fled conflict or been victims of contemporary slavery. The list of leads was then referred to and interviews organised to fill that gap in data.

With each set of data collected, by identifying key words and labelling them in a useful and relevant way, initial codes were generated for topics that regularly occurred. From

these, categories were developed, which are groups of related codes (Holloway, 2008). Categories continued to be generated until no new categories were arising.

The writing of memos was conducted at each stage throughout the research process and simply involved noting down comments about findings. These memos sometimes related to findings in the data but were also useful in making note of issues such as questions that made a respondent feel uncomfortable, topics that caused distress, or questions where the wording caused confusion. Some of the memos were used to draw out ideas for moving forward with the research: teasing out ideas to expand on, making notes of topics that related to other interviews, and identifying ways in which the findings could be grounded in theory.

Once initial codes and categories of data had been developed, patterns, similarities and anomalies could be identified. From here, the patterns were developed and small generalisations made (whilst maintaining the notion that there is not one generalisable truth for all victims of contemporary slavery who have fled conflict, but multiple, equally valid, truths). This led to the identification of five core categories; those who:

- had experienced contemporary slavery during conflict

- had experienced contemporary slavery in the UK after fleeing a conflict

- had experienced contemporary slavery in an interim country after fleeing conflict but before arriving in the UK

- had fled conflict to the UK in relative safety

- continued to experience risk factors in the UK after fleeing conflict.

These five categories were then used to structure the findings, and the key themes

arising within these categories are discussed systematically in chapters Four and Five.

3.11   Conclusion

To summarise, this study was based on qualitative research collected from one to one, semi-structured interviews with people who had fled conflict, people who had fled conflict and experienced contemporary slavery, and agency workers who worked with either group. Respondents were identified using snowball sampling, with initial contact made via gatekeepers. Prior to conducting the interviews, a dummy interview was undertaken with an agency worker to determine the relevance and suitability of the questions before they were addressed to respondents. With such a limited sample size, to prevent repeated interviews with the respondents, rather than conducting a pilot study, each interview was used to inform proceeding interviews. The research followed the format of grounded theory which formed the basis of the research and encouraged the simultaneous collection and analysis of data. This method is particularly useful in developing data collection techniques as the research progresses, but also in guaranteeing that the researcher has minimal preconceptions before conducting the study. This helps to ensure that any theories that are developed are based entirely on the data. The data was then used to identify several key themes that occurred throughout the interviews, and these themes were grouped into five core categories, as discussed in the following findings chapters.

Chapter Four: Findings – Fleeing Conflict to Contemporary Slavery

The previous chapter provided a framework for conducting a rigorous research project informed by the principles of grounded theory. The following two chapters discuss the findings that were achieved using these methods. The findings have been divided into two to reflect the differences between those who fled conflict and experienced contemporary slavery and those who fled conflict to safety.

The first chapter addresses understandings of conflict and the importance of acknowledging it as broader than war. It then introduces the respondents before going on to discuss the experiences of those who fled conflict and experienced contemporary slavery. By analysing in-depth interviews with such individuals, this chapter addresses the methods by which people became victims of contemporary slavery. It considers experiences of slavery within the conflict situation, after fleeing the conflict situation to the UK, and after fleeing the conflict situation but before arriving in the UK. Each of these issues provides insights into how vulnerabilities are developed, and how these vulnerabilities lead people into situations of contemporary slavery. With these understandings, this chapter moves away from the current tendency of homogenising victims of contemporary slavery as having been 'vulnerable in some way' prior to their exploitation and considers precisely what those vulnerabilities are and where they derived from.

4.1   Expanding the Remit of Conflict

One of the most significant developments in this research project resulted from the sampling method. After agency workers were approached and asked if they had any clients who had experienced conflict and would be willing to be interviewed, respondents were suggested and interviews arranged. The notion of conflict had been confidently understood as war up to this point, and it was expected that respondents would originate from countries such as Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. However, the notion of conflict was not so limited for many of the respondents. Although some had come from regions at war, others determined conflict to be much more diverse. Respondents presented in relation to familial, political, ethnic, religious and employment conflict. Understanding the reasons they defined these issues as conflict led to an expansion of the definition, beyond the very narrow concept of war, to include a much broader set of issues as defined in the introduction. While this wider understanding of conflict means that UK nationals will also experience conflict, the original call for respondents targeted gatekeepers who worked predominantly with foreign nationals. The broadening of the understanding of conflict occurred only after identifying and arranging interviews with all the respondents answering this original call, and therefore no UK nationals are included in this study.

Following the methods of grounded theory, upon completion of each interview, transcripts were generated and subsequently coded and analysed using NVivo in order to identify recurring themes. It was clear from the outset that no two people's stories were the same, however there was a common thread running through many of the

stories, relating to a lack of choice or alternative options. As might be anticipated, those fleeing conflict situations are commonly so desperate to leave that they are willing to take risks that they would not normally take. While for some these risks might be beneficial and lead them into more secure situations, for others they may lead to situations of contemporary slavery.

The findings are divided into two chapters following these themes, with the first chapter focusing on those who fled conflict and experienced contemporary slavery. There are three significant parts to this chapter, relating to where the slavery took place. The first section considers those who experienced slavery as part of the conflict, followed by those who experienced slavery in the UK after fleeing conflict, and finally turning to those who escaped a conflict but experienced slavery before arriving in the UK. Each of these parts is divided further into the reasons that the slavery took place; these topics relate to slavery triggered by conflict, by some form of structure, or by a combination of the two. This chapter uses the accounts of those who have experienced both conflict and contemporary slavery to identify the factors that put those fleeing conflict at risk of slavery.

Due to some of the interviews requiring interpreters and some stories being provided by agency workers rather than the subject of the story themselves, there is some discrepancy regarding the use of pronouns in quotes from the interviews. Unless stated otherwise, pronouns used in quotes are indicative of the subject of the story. Further, for clarity, throughout the rest of the thesis where interview respondents are referenced, their names will be emphasised using bold text.

4.2 Victims of Slavery in Conflict

As noted above, the first findings chapter considers those who have experienced both contemporary slavery and conflict. Attention is initially paid to the respondents who became victims of contemporary slavery while still in a situation of conflict, however, the factors causing the slavery were different. **Chiku** and **Mahal** suffered slavery as a direct result of conflict, while **Louise**'s experience of slavery arose due to a combination of the conflict and the structures at play.

4.2.1 Slavery Triggered by Conflict

Chiku was from Sierra Leone. Her and her father were the only family members that survived the civil war. **Chiku** was the youngest of four daughters and was still a child when the war ended, but with no one else to support them and a lack of job opportunities in the wake of the war, her father thought it best to marry her off and sold her to the man who was to become her husband.

> When the war ended, and she had been raped quite a number of times during the conflict, there was not very much left and her dad decided that the best thing to do for both of them would be to have her married to a man she described as being very very very old…she described him as being incredibly unpleasant and very violent towards her and kept her in his house as his wife and also as his slave.

It is not possible to identify the intention behind her father's choice to have her marry a much older man; perhaps he sold her to this man purely for the money, but it is equally possible that he believed she would be safer with a husband if he was without the means to care for her himself. Although it may be unlikely that it was **Chiku**'s father's intention for his daughter to end up in a violent marriage, by forcing her to marry this man against her will, he led her into a situation of contemporary slavery. However, the reasons that **Chiku** became a victim were larger than just her father and related back to the circumstances caused by the civil war. The war had led to a limiting of the options available to her father. There were no other family members left alive who could help support the two of them, and job opportunities were severely impacted by the conflict. While it is impossible to know with certainty, it is unlikely that **Chiku**'s father would have made the same decision to marry her to a violent older man without the impact of the conflict limiting his options.

Mahal's story is another that demonstrates how conflict can directly lead people into situations of contemporary slavery. **Mahal** was a girl of about 15 years old from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, living in an area that was badly affected by armed war. One day on returning from school, she discovered that her parents had been killed. Due directly to the loss of her parents, **Mahal** found herself as a child with no family and no one to support her. With the assistance of an NGO that supported refugees in the region, **Mahal** moved to Kinshasa to live with extended family there. When she arrived at Kinshasa, a member of her family offered to support her in going to school. **Mahal** had always gone to school. She was very proud of her achievements and had always wanted to be a teacher, so she gratefully accepted this offer. However,

it transpired that this offer of schooling was merely a method of deception and she was, instead, forced into a situation of sexual slavery. **Mahal**'s story exemplifies how the impact of the conflict – in her case armed war – can directly lead someone into a situation of contemporary slavery. If it had not been for the conflict then **Mahal**'s parents would have been alive to continue supporting her and she would not have had her choices limited, forcing her to move.

4.2.2   Slavery Triggered by Conflict and Social Structures

While **Chiku** and **Mahal**'s experiences of contemporary slavery were brought about via a direct impact from the conflict, other examples highlight how pre-existing structures can exacerbate vulnerabilities caused by conflict, and it is the interrelation between the two that increases the likelihood that someone will fall victim to contemporary slavery. From the interviews, **Louise**'s experience of contemporary slavery exemplifies the devastating result of this interplay between conflict and restrictive structures; in her case, ethnic discrimination.

Louise was an ethnic Armenian living in Azerbaijan and, when she was about 10 years old, violence towards ethnic Armenians in Azerbaijan became widespread.

> She described that one evening a mob of people arrived outside her
> house, shouting that all ethnic Armenians should be killed, and that
> they were going to cleanse the country of Armenians. And she said
> that her dad looked at this mob of people with weapons outside,
> burning neighbours' houses and said they were our neighbours,

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we've always lived with them. He went out to try and talk to them

and they killed him.

This obviously left **Louise** and her mother in a very vulnerable situation, knowing that

they were also at risk of being killed. With the help of a neighbour, they managed to

escape, seeking refuge with one of the neighbour's contacts where the pair undertook

domestic chores for an Azeri woman and her violent son. It soon became clear that

they were not considered staff but were unpaid and being treated as victims of

slavery. This became particularly evident when they tried to leave the situation.

> Eventually, the mother said we're going to have to leave. We're
>
> going to have to get out of this and tried to leave the house and was
>
> very badly beaten up by the son of this woman, who wanted to
>
> prevent them from leaving.

This situation of domestic slavery continued for six years and was a huge life change to

a woman who had been a doctor and was now, with her 10 year old daughter,

exploited and controlled.

The prevalence of the ethnic discrimination in **Louise**'s case was particularly evident

when she required hospital treatment.

> So they [**Louise** and her mother] went into the hospital under an
>
> Azeri name, and helped, gave the client some kind of treatment. And
>
> then some people from the hospital came to see the mother and said
>
> we believe that you are Armenian and the mother denied it. And
>
> then they persisted and said we think you and your daughter are

> Armenian. And by the time the client came out of surgery, she
>
> described this as something had happened and I was no longer able
>
> to walk.

After leaving the hospital, **Louise** and her mother found work as cleaners with a different Azeri family, again lying about their ethnicity. Over time, **Louise** formed a romantic relationship with the son and disclosed to him that they were Armenian. The man was not concerned with their ethnicity but wanted to disclose it to the rest of his family as their relationship was becoming more serious. When **Louise** and her mother next came to the house to work, the neighbours were called, and a group of people began to attack them. The son took **Louise** to safety and returned to find his neighbours kicking her mother's dead body. The son returned to **Louise** and together they managed to escape to the UK.

When considering the impact of conflict and social structure on causing people to become vulnerable to contemporary slavery, **Louise**'s story is particularly interesting because the conflict and social structure are inseparable. In this example, the conflict is the ethnic discrimination where Armenians were considered and treated as inferior by Azeris. For **Louise** and her mother, the height of this conflict was when their neighbours killed **Louise**'s father and left her and her mother without support. As a direct result of this conflict, **Louise** and her mother were no longer safe and needed to escape the area if they were to survive. However, this is where the interplay between the conflict and the social structures becomes evident. In **Louise**'s case, the conflict of the neighbours attacking her family was generated by a macro structure in Azerbaijan: ethnic discrimination against ethnic Armenians. This makes it difficult to truly separate

the conflict and the social structure to identify the individual roles they played in generating vulnerabilities to slavery.

While the conflict was caused by the structural discrimination, it culminated in the murder of **Louise**'s father. Without the immediate danger in which this placed **Louise** and her mother, they would not have needed to flee the situation. However, despite escaping the immediate danger, there was no safe place to which **Louise** and her mother could turn because of the widespread structural ethnic discrimination. As such, the conflict left them with no choice other than to stay where they would be murdered or leave in the hope that they could find safety. They chose the latter option, but the structural ethnic discrimination meant that they were quickly trapped in a situation of slavery. Even after escaping this, there were no safe options and they continued to move between exploitative situations. For **Louise** and her mother, the immediate impact of the conflict was exacerbated by wider social structures and it was a combination of these issues that led them into domestic slavery.

4.2.3   Summary

These examples of **Chiku**, **Mahal** and **Louise** all demonstrate very different stories: an exploitative marriage, sexual exploitation and domestic servitude. However, there are two common factors that contributed towards causing slavery in all three stories: the loss of family support and a lack of alternative choices. **Chiku** and **Mahal** both lost family to armed conflict, and **Louise** lost her father because of ethnic conflict. The resulting lack of familial support caused them all to make decisions that led them

towards exploitation. While all three examples demonstrate a lack of options, they did all have some degree of choice. **Chiku** had the 'choice' of marrying the older man or living with no one to support her, **Mahal** had the 'choice' of living alone as a child with no support or moving to be with family, and **Louise** had the 'choice' of staying in her home which her neighbours were attacking or risking the support of a neighbour that she trusted. All faced significantly limited options, meaning that their choices were no longer autonomous. In each of these stories, while the lack of familial support and viable options were the vulnerabilities that led to situations of slavery, these vulnerabilities were present only because of the impact of conflict.

4.3   Victims of Slavery in the UK

This section illustrates multiple cases from the findings where people had fled conflict to the UK, but whose experience of slavery did not occur until after they arrived. Although none of the cases are the same, there are clear identifiable themes which provide the structure for this section: those whose experience of slavery was a direct result of fleeing conflict, those whose experience of slavery occurred in an attempt to avoid conflict, and those whose experience of slavery occurred because of the impact of UK government structures.

4.3.1   Slavery Triggered by Conflict

Of those themes identified, the majority of cases of slavery in the UK experienced by respondents after fleeing a conflict were triggered by that conflict. That is, the individuals were fleeing the conflict and the process of fleeing involved interaction

with another person or persons who intended, or had already organised, for them to arrive into a situation of slavery. While this section relates to those who experienced slavery in the UK, **Beth**'s experience must be highlighted here as she suffered slavery both during conflict, and after arriving in the UK.

Beth was from Uganda where:

> her family had been farmers in a village somewhere in the north.
> They had been very badly affected by the conflict in Uganda. And like
> a lot of people from that area, the LRA [Lord's Resistance Army] had
> come and taken all the children, the boys to be soldiers and the girls
> to be wives in the LRA. She'd been quite young when that had
> happened and been abducted. And she'd lived as the wife of an LRA
> commander for about four years.

Relating back to the literature review, **Beth**'s experience of being held in sexual exploitation by a commander of an armed force is one that is, unfortunately, commonly cited by young girls in Uganda. She was kept in this situation of slavery for around four years before she was able to escape and move to Kampala. Clearly, this example of contemporary slavery was one that resulted from a lack of options. However, while the other examples of slavery discussed so far have highlighted a lack of options, for **Beth**, her situation constituted a complete removal of options; she had no agency in joining the LRA as she was kidnapped rather than deceived or coerced. Notions of agency are addressed further in Chapter Seven.

When **Beth** moved to Kampala, she found accommodation living with someone she

met there. This person then suggested that they could find **Beth** some work in the UK where she would be better paid. With no support, a very low level of education, and few opportunities to earn a wage other than through prostitution, **Beth** felt fortunate to have been given this opportunity. She was brought to London, however, when she arrived, she was forced to work as a prostitute, receiving no pay. "She described it as a big house with several other women and it was quite cold. People used to come." **Beth** was kept in this situation for two years before she managed to find a way to escape by climbing out of a window.

For **Beth**, both of her experiences of slavery were a direct result of conflict. Her experience being held as the 'wife' of an LRA commander after being kidnapped by armed forces was undoubtedly so. While the cause of her experience of slavery in the UK is perhaps a little less clear cut, it also links back to the same conflict in which she was kidnapped. If she had not been kidnapped by the LRA, she would have had a family and support network. However, she was removed from her family and, after escaping the LRA commander, had to find somewhere to live where she could remain hidden. Therefore, because of the initial conflict, she was left in a situation where she was living in a new city without support. This left her vulnerable to an offer of work which transpired to be a situation of contemporary slavery. Again, for **Beth**, the conflict had limited her choices and it was the result of this lack of options that led her to experience slavery. While her experience in Uganda exemplified no choice at all, the offer of a job in the UK represented an active choice, but not an entirely autonomous one. In Kampala, **Beth**'s options were to stay in the city where she had no support network and where her only realistic job opportunity was to work as a prostitute, or to accept this offer of work abroad. While she may have anticipated that the latter held

some risk, it was a situation in which there was realistically no valid alternative.

The remaining stories from the interviews that exemplify people fleeing conflict and experiencing contemporary slavery illustrate situations in which the slavery only occurred after arrival in the UK. The following examples reflect **Beth**'s story in that their experiences of contemporary slavery were triggered by conflict.

Andrea was born in Uganda where her parents were killed during the war. "She had moved to Kampala on her own. Was living in some kind of church type community, but she didn't have any family and was just told I can help you get a job abroad." **Andrea** was told that the job would be secretarial work in the UK, and she was keen to start. However, upon arrival, there was no job, and she was instead kept in a situation of domestic servitude. She was held in this exploitation for six months before a friend of the family exploiting her helped her to escape.

Andrea's, choices were limited because of the conflict. If not for the war, her parents would have still been alive to support her, and she would not have needed to find a way to survive independently. As it was, being offered a job abroad was tempting because it offered the opportunity both to earn more money and escape the conflict. For her, the alternative was to stay in Uganda and do whatever she could to make enough money to survive. **Andrea**'s case worker described her situation as a:

> perfect combination of problems, of conflict plus family being killed
>
> plus having no other support network. This just made her extremely
>
> vulnerable to this offer.

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Zoe's story is another that highlights how escaping conflict can lead directly to contemporary slavery. **Zoe** grew up in South Sudan before it gained independence. Her parents were killed in the war and, as a result, at seven years old, **Zoe** and her siblings fled to Uganda to live with an aunt. The aunt was strict with the children, encouraging them to forget their Sudanese lives, their Islamic religion and their Arabic language and to do everything they could to become Ugandan. The aunt highlighted the importance of learning English. When **Zoe** was about 18 years old, this aunt then sold her to a man who brought her to the UK and forced her into prostitution where she was held for about 18 months. Because of this, **Zoe** became pregnant and, towards the end of her pregnancy, found the opportunity to escape out of a window. A member of the public became concerned about this evidently anxious, heavily pregnant woman wandering around the city. He approached her, heard her story and assisted her to the police station where she was able to disclose her situation.

Zoe's story highlights again how conflict triggered her experience of contemporary slavery. As a result of the war, her parents were killed and, at seven years old, and the oldest of her siblings, she was not able to care for herself and her remaining family and there was no one else to support them. Without her parents, **Zoe** had little choice but to travel to Uganda to live with the aunt who sold her into slavery.

Tara's story reflects **Zoe**'s. She grew up in the north of Nigeria during a war and, because of the conflict, became a refugee in the south of the country. She had left everything behind in the north of Nigeria and had travelled alone with no one to support her. When she was living as a refugee, she was approached by an older

woman offering her work; **Tara** accepted the offer and worked for this woman as a cleaner for a few months. "And then the woman said I'll send you to an aunty in England and you can earn a bit more money from going abroad."

Tara gratefully accepted this offer; she had no family to stay in Nigeria for and, like **Zoe**, a job abroad with a higher salary would be a huge help to her. **Tara** was granted a visa and travelled to the UK to meet with the person who was to employ her. However, upon arrival, she was forced into a brothel where she was made to work for around nine months. Like **Zoe**, **Tara** became pregnant because of this situation, and eventually one of her clients took pity on her and helped her to escape.

Tara's story again emphasises the impact that conflict has on choice. While it might seem that she had more agency to make the decision between whether to stay and work in Nigeria or move to the UK, those choices would not have presented themselves if not for the conflict. If the conflict had not occurred, she would still be living in the north of Nigeria within a community that she knew and who supported her; she would not have become a refugee in the south, faced with the option of earning very little as a cleaner or with the opportunity to move to another country for a better salary. If she had not had to choose between these options, she would not have been sold into prostitution.

Padma was another woman who fell victim to contemporary slavery because of conflict. **Padma** was from the Ivory Coast and was Dyula, an ethnicity badly targeted in the Ivory Coast civil war. Her husband was a political activist who was murdered for

expressing his views. Without her husband, **Padma** was left with no support; she had no children and no other family, and was directly at risk both because of her ethnicity and by association with her husband. Picking up on this vulnerability, she was approached by a man who offered to assist her in escaping the Ivory Coast, explaining that he could get her into the UK if she acted as his wife. The ethnic conflict and civil war had left **Padma** with little other choice; her options were to stay in the Ivory Coast where she would likely be killed, or take a risk by accepting the offer of this man. She took the risk and posed as this man's wife, but when they arrived in the UK, it became clear that he had never intended to help her. The man locked **Padma** in a house and sexually exploited her for two years. If not for the conflict causing her husband's death, **Padma** would not have needed to escape the Ivory Coast. Although she was already vulnerable because of her ethnicity placing her as a target during the conflict, it was the exacerbation of this vulnerability by the murder of her husband leaving her with no support that led her to accept the assistance of this man who went on to hold her in a situation of sexual slavery.

Hattie's experience of conflict involved disagreement with her employers after she fought for better worker rights. She had grown up in a poor family in Vietnam and gained a college education but was unable to find any relevant work, so became a factory worker.

> At that time my company, the factory company had to find more
>
> contracts with other partners and they weren't good. Therefore we,
>
> the workers had to work for longer hours. Of course we also didn't
>
> get paid enough. Our salary was low and we didn't get paid enough

for the hours we worked so we, the workers, often striked, put on strikes. There was a workers' union in the company, the factory, however we didn't get a lot of support from the union at all. They didn't do anything. Through a friend, a colleague in the factory who actually belonged to a Vietnamese labour worker organisation that supports workers' rights and fair treatment. And through this I realised that this organisation could help the workers.

Hattie joined this organisation and encouraged a number of her colleagues to do the same.

I also offered support and help and took part in some negotiations from the workers to the factory owner asking for increased salary and fairer treatment and working conditions. However, most of the meetings did not go very well. They often ended with someone being fired…I was requested by the factory security guards to attend a meeting as a representative for the workers to negotiate some deals. But when I attended, the Director wasn't like what they promised me for the meeting, but it turned out that inside of the office I was told I was fired and my case would be referred to the police to deal with me. And my case was sent to the police to be dealt with and I was charged with affray and opposing the local authority, causing public disorder. I was charged for encouraging the workers to form demonstrations. I received the form where the charges were put out to me, together with a letter from the other workers and my father had to bribe the police. I was released two days after. And I was

released on bail with the condition that I had to report every Monday

of the week once a week on a Monday and that they would carry on

investigating the matter and they would prosecute me with those

offences.

Hattie went to report twice, but then heard that one of her friends who was in the

same situation had not been released after reporting on the third week. **Hattie** was

afraid and fled to another region of Vietnam. As a result, a warrant was issued for her

arrest.

I went to the south of Vietnam and stayed with some relatives at

their home for about five months and also during that time I talked

to some of my friends who also informed me that some of my friends

were arrested and not released at all so they advised me that I go

abroad because I couldn't hide like this for long in Vietnam and I

wouldn't be able to do anything.

However, **Hattie** came from a poor background and could not afford to pay for a

journey out of Vietnam. She confided this to her friends, and they told her of an agent

who could help her leave the country and she could pay off the debt by working once

she arrived at the destination. **Hattie** contacted the agent and asked about the kind of

work that would be expected of her when she arrived. She was told she would be

caring for children or for the elderly or disabled. **Hattie** was happy to do such work and

signed up to an arrangement with the agent. A week later, she crossed the border into

China and then was loaded into the back of a lorry where she stayed for around a

month as it travelled through Europe, though **Hattie** was unaware of the countries she

was transiting through. She eventually arrived at a house, still with no knowledge of which country she was in.

> I was told to work and the work I was forced to do was sleep with different men but I didn't want to do it. I had to after a few weeks…When I refused to carry on doing that I was assaulted, beaten up and I was left to go hungry. Then I was locked into a room in the basement… And after a few weeks a man came along and told me I would be moved somewhere else where I would be able to do another job and the job wouldn't be like the one I was forced to do, so I agreed to go. And then I was put into a lorry inside some wooden compartments, boxes and I was told to stay silent, not to make any movements or noise. Because at that time I didn't want to stay in that house any longer so I agreed to follow the man. So when I arrived in the UK I was forced to do the same job again but I didn't want to. So I asked the people who controlled me to speak to that man and they told me that I was sold to them by that man now. And then of course I wanted to leave, I wanted to run away but I was threatened by these people that if I dared to run away they would chase my family and kill my family. And so I had to work for at least two years for them, paying off the debt which was 25,000 euros.

After over two years of suffering rape on a daily basis, **Hattie** realised that she was pregnant. When she disclosed this information to the perpetrators, they moved her to another house where she was left to care for babies. In this job, **Hattie** was left unsupervised and was able to climb a wall to escape. She kept running until she found

strangers who spoke Vietnamese and asked them for help.

Hattie's story is clearly incredibly distressing and is one that demonstrates the extreme exploitation of a vulnerable and desperate individual. It is also a story that exemplifies the devastating impacts of conflict. The conflict highlighted in **Hattie**'s case was between herself and the factory owners when they became displeased at her attempts to fight for better wages and workers' rights. **Hattie**'s options were severely restricted because of this conflict after learning of others in her situation being arrested and not released. Her choices were then to stay in Vietnam and be arrested, or find a way to leave. She chose the latter. To avoid this unfair arrest, **Hattie** had to remove herself from her support network, and she escaped the conflict by employing the services of a smuggler who led her to believe she would gain a legitimate job upon arrival. However, **Hattie** was forced into sex work to pay off her debt. Her story exemplifies the direct correlation between conflict and contemporary slavery. **Hattie** would not have had to flee the country, or employ a smuggler to help her do so, if not for the conflict.

Like **Hattie**, **Francine**'s experience of conflict was not of war; hers was of familial conflict. **Francine** grew up in a very strict family in Gambia and her father had organised an arranged marriage for her. Her sister was living and studying in the UK and **Francine** had told her father that she wanted to do the same because she did not want this marriage, but he was adamant that it was to go ahead.

After visiting her sister in the UK, **Francine** returned home where she met a Nigerian man who was visiting Gambia on holiday. She told him about her sister studying in the

UK and how she wished she could do the same to avoid the marriage that her father had planned.

> He befriended her. He started over a period of several months I
> think, meeting her in secret. He told her not to tell her family about
> them. And said that he could get her to the UK and he could find a
> place for her to live and he could help her to study. So she developed
> a friendship with him over time. And then she agreed to go to the UK
> with him. She was told not to tell anybody about where she was
> going. So she essentially fled her family to get away from this
> arranged marriage. And she went to the UK. She must have been
> about 18 when she fled. 18 or 19. She came over to the UK and his
> sister met them at the airport. They went and stayed with his sister
> for a while – everything was alright. And they then moved into a
> place of their own and were in more of a relationship at that point.

For **Francine**, the main reason that she accepted the offer of this man to bring her to the UK was to escape the arranged marriage that her father was organising for her. If not for the conflict caused by this intended marriage, she would not have been so eager to leave Gambia. Once they were in the UK, the man told her:

> that he wanted to marry her and that he wanted her to convert to
> Christianity. So she said because she loved him she would convert. So
> she converted to Christianity and then he told her she had to tell her
> family what she'd done, so she phoned up her family in Gambia and
> her dad was furious because everybody in Gambia was Muslim, her

family was Muslim, so she said that her dad disowned her. She said

that he said she could never come back to the country.

This conversion from Islam to Christianity caused further conflict between **Francine**
and her family to the extent where she was no longer able to return home and her
support network was severed. This meant that she had no option other than to remain
with this man in the UK. However, she described how once she had told her family of
her conversion and witnessed the resulting fall out, this man changed towards her.

He started being violent towards her and he raped her several times

a day. And then on her birthday he said that he'd got a surprise for

her and he got three other men to come to the house and they all

raped her as well. And then she said that there was a lot of money

around and that he was paying people [people were paying him].

Always Nigerian men that came to the house and he was paying

them [they were paying him]. And that continued. They moved at

one point and that continued for ten years...He locked her in so she

couldn't get out. He went to work, I think he had a job in London, but

he would continually bring men back who paid but would rape her.

Francine's initial experience of conflict related to her going against her father's wishes.
This led to a limiting of options in that she must either go ahead with the arranged
marriage, or accept the invitation from the man who offered to bring her to the UK.
However, another conflict situation arose when she informed her family that she had
converted to Christianity. The main impacts of this conflict were a removal of both
familial support, and of options. Without her family to turn to, **Francine** had no other

choice than to remain with this man in the UK. As such, without the initial conflict, **Francine** would likely not have been so eager to pursue the relationship with this man who had intended to exploit her, and without the second conflict, **Francine** would not have experienced such a dramatic removal of agency. It was a combination of these two issues that caused her to become caught in a situation of contemporary slavery.

4.3.2 Slavery Triggered by Avoiding Conflict

The deception experienced by **Francine** can also be seen in **Helen**'s story, though rather than being a result of conflict, **Helen**'s situation of contemporary slavery was triggered by avoiding conflict.

Helen was from Poland and grew up in the country during the fall of communism. She described a "very oppressive environment, there being a lot of fear." **Helen** was a single mother living in a country at a time where such a status was severely stigmatised. She was working in a bar to support herself and her child when she met a British man who was very friendly to her. Over time, her friendship with this man grew and eventually became a romantic relationship.

> He bought her and her family lots of gifts and her family were of the
> impression that she wouldn't be able to find anyone else because
> she was a single mother and she was almost damaged goods and
> what have you, and that was what they made her feel.

Helen's family encouraged the relationship, indicating to her that, as a parent, she should have a partner and that, because she already had a child, she was lucky that

anyone was paying her any interest. Although **Helen** liked this man, it is unlikely that she would have encouraged the relationship to progress so quickly if not for the influence of her family and her desire to avoid generating conflict through familial disapproval.

The man suggested to **Helen** that they visit Britain on holiday, and she agreed. However, when they arrived, he changed towards her. He forced her into prostitution and held her against her will in a basement for seven years.

> She was locked up in a room, forced to urinate in a bucket and she
> didn't see daylight for those seven years. She was locked in a room in
> the day and prostituted out and sold to various clients. So it was, so
> he basically, the person who trafficked her became her pimp and
> sold her to various clients and she was one of several women as well
> who were caught up in that.

One of the ways in which this man ensured compliance from **Helen** was through forcing her "to take drugs and yeah he paid her in drugs so she got addicted."

However, towards the end of the seven years in which **Helen** was held by this man, she began to resist. She soon became too difficult to handle, and the perpetrator sold her on to someone else.

> This other person was kinder to her but was still exploiting her and
> would force her to get drugs for him. But did treat her nicer in the
> sense that she'd be allowed out of the house for 25 minutes every

week to get groceries. But yeah she left the first one because she got sold to someone else. And she was basically exploited to take care of this other man who was quite unwell.

Despite the extreme exploitation that she continued to experience in this second situation, **Helen** recalled it as preferable to the first. While he "would force her to have sex with him and would beat her when she wouldn't have sex with him", she preferred this situation because "he didn't sell her to anyone else."

She was kept by this man for a further ten years. He did grant her permission to return home to visit her family, but when she arrived, they had disowned her after being informed that she had been working in Britain as a prostitute. They would not believe **Helen**'s version of events, and with nowhere else to turn for help, **Helen** returned to Britain and to the man who had been exploiting her. After ten years, this man died and **Helen** was left with no support. She went on to form a relationship with another man, but:

> he exploited her for benefit fraud and also sexually exploited her. But because she'd suffered such a severe level of abuse under the first person, what she suffered under the others, as much as it was suffering, for her it was a lot more freedom than she'd had before and she said it was like a holiday in comparison to the first person so it was sexual exploitation for her but it was a much better life.

A women's support agency eventually reached out to **Helen** and they managed to help her out of the situation.

The above quote demonstrates the severity of **Helen**'s initial experience of exploitation; it was so extreme that her subsequent experiences, although still constituting contemporary slavery, were acceptable to her. This brings back into question O'Connell Davidson's problem in defining contemporary slavery raised at the beginning of this thesis, that "the so-called 'modern-day slave trade' often serves to transport people into conditions that are safer and/or otherwise more desirable than the conditions they left" (quoted in Martins, 2016). **Helen** was moved from one situation of slavery to another, with each more acceptable to her than the previous. However, simply because the third experience of contemporary slavery was preferable to the first does not negate it as slavery. There is potential for further research on this concept, as discussed in Chapter Eight.

Helen's exploitation was not a result of conflict, so much as a result of the avoidance of conflict. She described how "her mum was very pushy and wanted her to be in a relationship and have a father for her kids" because that would lead her to be considered much more respectable than she was as a single mother, and women were expected to rely on the support of a man. **Helen** only met this man because her support system had broken down and she had to find work in this bar to support herself. Although she did initially like the man who went on to exploit her for seven years, it is unlikely that she would have entered the relationship so quickly if not for the familial and societal pressure to receive a man's support. By pursuing the relationship, she was avoiding any potential dispute that could have been caused if she had chosen to end the relationship and remain a single mother. Again, **Helen** was left

with limited choices. She had the option to remain a single mother in a society which frowned on this status, or pursue a relationship with this man - the only man at the time who showed an interest in her - which led to significant pressure from her family that she should accept his advances.

Having been forced into sexual exploitation for over seven years with this man only to find herself in a similar situation with another man, **Helen**'s opportunity to reunite with her family was ruined by further conflict. When she returned to Poland to discover that her family had disowned her because they believed she had been working as a prostitute, new conflict was generated with her family. This left her with no support and no other choice but to return to the man in Britain who was exploiting her. This familial conflict therefore generated limited options for **Helen**: stay in Poland where her family had disowned her and where she had no one else to support her, or return to the man who was exploiting her, but who at least provided her with food and shelter. This example demonstrates how, for **Helen**, her initial experience of contemporary slavery was a result of an avoidance of conflict with her family and the pressure to succumb to societal expectations, but her subsequent experiences were caused directly by the conflict she experienced with her family after reuniting with them in Poland.

4.3.3 Slavery Triggered by Statutory Structures

The above examples demonstrate situations in which people became victims of contemporary slavery in the UK due to conflict or the avoidance of conflict. However,

there are also examples of people fleeing conflict to the UK and becoming trapped in contemporary slavery because of the statutory structures in place. **Imogen**'s story exemplifies this.

Like those discussed above, **Imogen** came to the UK because she was fleeing conflict, but for her, the conflict was political. **Imogen** was a politician in Bangladesh and had a disagreement with her political opponents. They made a false report against her, but her genuine counter claim was provable, so she opened a case against them in retaliation. As a result, she was beaten badly by members of the opposing party and they threatened to kill her. Here, **Imogen**'s support network broke down as her husband divorced her because of the trouble her situation was causing.

> She used to be harassed all the time in Bangladesh by the other party saying you need to withdraw the case otherwise we'll kill you and do this to you so she couldn't actually go anywhere. Because obviously her husband didn't help so she didn't know where to go because there was no one to help her.

Imogen knew she needed to leave Bangladesh but did not know how. She went to her father's village in the hope that someone there could help her, and a person she knew offered to take her to Dakar where he introduced her to someone who could help her leave the country.

> The guy in Dakar said I can send you to England and save your life, but to do that you need to give me £5000. She said I don't have that money and he said without that money I can't help you. So she had

to go back to her village and try and find £5000. Her father gave her

some land and she sold it to her brother for £2500 and her sister had

some jewellery so she sold that and got the rest of the money and

she gave that money to the person who helped her.

This man arranged a visa for **Imogen** and organised a flight, explaining that she would

be chaperoned by a man who would help her find housing and work when she arrived

in England. However, when they arrived, this man disappeared, leaving **Imogen** alone

in a country she was unfamiliar with, unable to speak the language.

So then she was crying in [the train station] and she had no one and

she was lost and this Bengali person said why are you crying for? And

she told him her story and he said come on I'll take you to the job

centre and maybe they can help you. So that person was really nice

and took her to job centre. When she went to job centre they said

you have got a visa so would you work and she said yes. But when

her visa ran out they couldn't keep her because the visa expired.

When the job centre informed **Imogen** that they were no longer able to continue

working with her, they offered her no advice as to what an expired visa meant, how

she might go about applying for asylum, or what other agencies could offer her advice.

As a result, **Imogen** remained wholly unaware of the asylum system and, not knowing

what else to do, returned to the train station where she had originally met the man

who introduced her to the job centre.

When she was there she saw some Bengali people and asked if they

knew of any jobs going, I really need a job. And they said you can

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come to my house and do some work at home and you'll get food. So

she went and did that for a month and got free food and somewhere

to stay. While she was in that house doing the housework, the

person's brother rang her one time and said do you want to work

and I said yeah I do.

She worked in this brother's house, cooking, cleaning and doing all the domestic work

for around six months without pay before she was asked to start working in their

restaurant as well.

She was then in this habit that he wanted her to go to the restaurant

every day, so she'd get up and work in the house from 8 til 4 and

then go to work in the restaurant 4 til 2 in the morning. Then she

didn't know what to do. She didn't want to be in the house any

more. She asked to get dropped back at the job centre but they

wouldn't. They said if she carried on they'd go to the police.

These people threatened **Imogen** by explaining that, because her visa had expired, she

was in the UK illegally, and that if the police found out she would be returned to

Bangladesh. Because she was so afraid of being returned due to the likelihood of being

murdered if she returned to Bangladesh, these threats kept **Imogen** compliant. She

also explained how the man controlling her would quickly lose his temper and become

violent towards her, leaving her with permanent scars that she showed during the

interview and which recalling caused her to become uncontrollably upset. After the

beatings, **Imogen** would beg for a day off to let the cuts and bruising heal, but she was

allowed no respite and was forced to continue working these 18 hour days. One day

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she refused to go to the restaurant and cook. When the man controlling her found out:

> he took his belt off his trousers and started beating her with it… He
>
> was bruising her, kicking her. Then he was dragging her saying come
>
> on, I'll take you to the police station now and she said no don't take
>
> me, I'll work.

Imogen lived in fear of this man and his family because of both the physical threats and violence, but also through the psychological control of threatening her with being returned to Bangladesh. This kept her compliant for three years, where she worked these 18 hour days without pay. The situation finally became so distressing that **Imogen** decided she would rather take a risk with the police than continue to live in these conditions. She left the house, walked to the nearby post office and told them of her story; the staff at the post office called the police who came to meet **Imogen** and supported her through an investigation and into long-term support.

Imogen's story is one that demonstrates how slavery can occur as a direct result of government agencies. At the beginning of her time in the UK, **Imogen** was in the country legally, and the job centre – a statutory organisation – was willing and able to help her. Once her visa ran out, however, they no longer had a duty to support her. When the job centre ceased to engage with **Imogen**, they considered themselves no longer accountable for her welfare and failed to offer any advice or signposting as to where she could go for support. As such, this statutory organisation left her unsupported in a new country where she could not speak the language. As a direct result of this failure by the job centre, **Imogen** became vulnerable to deceitful offers of help which transpired to be a situation of slavery comprising labour exploitation and

domestic servitude which she suffered for three years.

While **Imogen**'s situation of slavery was triggered by a breakdown in communication with an agency that should have provided her with information to help keep her safe, her story also further demonstrates vulnerabilities caused by conflict. For **Imogen**, fleeing Bangladesh would not have been a consideration, let alone a necessity, if she had not experienced conflict with the opposing political party, however, the conflict led to a lack of options for her: stay in Bangladesh where her family had abandoned her and where she was likely to be killed, or find a way to leave the country. However, while the conflict led to this lack of options and the need to flee the country, it was not the conflict that caused the situation of slavery. If **Imogen** had received more suitable support, or even advice, from the job centre then she would have not been left vulnerable to offers of employment from strangers. It was the failing of this statutory agency that led to **Imogen**'s experience of contemporary slavery.

4.3.4   Summary

This discussion of people experiencing contemporary slavery after arriving in the UK links several stories which, on the surface, may appear very different, but on closer inspection hold some distinct similarities. Whilst most of the stories identified relate to those whose slavery situations occurred as a direct result of conflict, there were also examples of those whose slavery was triggered by an avoidance of conflict, or because of statutory structures in place in the UK. However, one common link between all these stories is that the conflict limited these people's choices. They were left in

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situations where there were choices (other than in **Beth**'s experience of kidnapping), but where these choices had been limited to only undesirable options. In some situations it was these choices that led directly to experiences of slavery, but for others it was this lack of choice coupled with the common theme of a lack of support that led people to make risky decisions which resulted in cases of slavery.

4.4   Victims of Slavery in Interim Countries

The discussions so far have focussed on those who experienced contemporary slavery either in the same country they experienced conflict or after fleeing conflict to the UK. However, there are also examples from the interviews demonstrating how some people have fallen victim to contemporary slavery after fleeing the conflict, but before arriving in the UK. **Edan** and **Catherine**'s stories exemplify this.

4.4.1   Slavery Triggered by Conflict and Social Structures

Edan was from Afghanistan and he and his father were the only family members that survived the war. With his father, he fled the conflict, seeking safety in Iran, but when they arrived they were forced into a bonded labour situation in a factory where they were prevented from going outside. They were kept in this situation for around four years until **Edan**'s father fell ill and subsequently died. Upon his father's death, **Edan** was told that he was to be sent to Syria as a fighter. He was desperate not to let this happen and with no one else to turn to, managed to find a way to escape on his own before he was sent away. After hearing people talking about the UK offering a place of safety, **Edan** chose it as his destination and began his journey to get there. He is

currently in the UK, waiting to hear if the Home Office will repatriate him back to Afghanistan.

Edan's story is one that highlights the vulnerabilities caused by the interaction between conflict and certain social structures. The conflict was the sole reason that **Edan** fled Afghanistan, meaning that without it, he would not have been placed in a situation where he was vulnerable to exploitative labour. However, these vulnerabilities were exacerbated because of the high rate of refugees in Iran who have fled the war in Afghanistan. This means that structural changes have led to situations in which the exploitation of such refugees is not uncommon. Although this is an issue relating to social structure, it is particularly interesting because this structural change has also been caused directly by the conflict. For **Edan**, the main issue that led him to wanting to escape the exploitation in Iran was when he was told he would be sent to Syria as a fighter. While, again, this is a direct result of conflict – if not for the Syrian conflict, there would be no cause for him to go there – this is also a situation that is becoming systematic in Iran. **Edan**'s case worker, **Kafu** described that there:

> is evidence to suggest that people are recruited from Iran to go to
>
> Syria. You know, I didn't have any problem with that. I did ask an
>
> expert for a view on that story because it sounded very odd and they
>
> were like yeah no that's fine, that happens, and people like that are
>
> really vulnerable to that forced recruitment.

Edan's story exemplifies how the interaction between conflict and social structures can exacerbate vulnerabilities to contemporary slavery, but it also highlights how the removal of legitimate choice can lead someone into a situation of slavery. For **Edan**,

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conflict removed the voluntariness of his choice. While he and his father made an active choice to move to Iran, they would not have considered doing so if it had not been for the conflict in Afghanistan and the immediate danger and lack of support that threatened them as a result. If their choices had not been limited in this way, then it is unlikely they would have found themselves in a situation of contemporary slavery.

Like **Edan**, **Catherine**'s experience of contemporary slavery occurred in an interim country. She grew up in Albania in a close, supportive family where she gained a high level of education including a university degree – something very rare for women at the time. Although Albania is a patriarchal society, her upbringing showed her a form of family life that was different to the norm. When she did get married, her experience of married life was neither what she had expected, nor what she had hoped. Once she was married, she moved with her husband to live with his parents in Greece, but unlike her parents' marriage, there was no equality in the relationship. She felt that she:

> had no rights, and everything was the woman's fault. Like for
>
> example, she...it was just the culture, from how she described it, that
>
> the status of men was much higher than women, so when she and
>
> her husband first got pregnant, she had a girl and there was lots of
>
> shame that it was, because it was a girl...But it was all, all the blame
>
> was located on the woman...And with any relationship problems, the
>
> culture was all the woman's fault as well wasn't it. So if there were
>
> problems in the relationship it was the woman's responsibility to stay
>
> with them and sort it out.

Catherine described how there was so much societal pressure on women being in

relationships that it was expected that women should accept the way their husbands treated them – no matter how unfairly – because the shame of being divorced was far worse. However, **Catherine**'s husband treated her badly. She was shamed for giving birth to a daughter, and she was expected to do all the domestic work for her husband, daughter and for her parents-in-law. Finally "she left her husband because there was another woman who claimed to be his wife. The relationship had been quite emotionally neglectful. She'd been unsupported and isolated." Having seen relationships differently because of her upbringing, **Catherine** was not willing to continue to accept this mistreatment from her husband, despite the societal pressure to tolerate it, and she left him. It is at this point that **Catherine**'s story begins to reflect **Helen**'s, discussed earlier.

Because **Catherine** had left her husband and no longer had anyone to support her, she needed to find a job. She found work in a café where she began to make friends with a man who became a regular customer. Over time they became friendlier and the relationship became romantic. Like **Helen**'s experience of being a single mother in Poland, **Catherine**'s situation of being a divorced woman meant that she was flattered by the attention of this man when her divorced status would deem her a pariah to most. She described this man as kind and charming. He knew she would be earning a low wage at the café and offered her a job where she would be able to earn more; she gratefully accepted. Unfortunately, this transpired to be a situation of contemporary slavery in which **Catherine** was taken back to Albania and forced into prostitution. "So men would come. And it was very high powered men. So it was people in government. People in the police."

Because of the types of people who were paying to rape **Catherine**, police officers and government officials, there was no one she could turn to for help, or to report the situation to. She had to find her own way out and eventually managed to escape in the back of a lorry. She has been in the UK since, but has not tried to contact her family out of fear of the people who trafficked and raped her. **Catherine** continues to wait for a decision about her asylum application in the UK.

Catherine's story is one of marital conflict which caused her to leave the relationship, resulting in a lack of support, but it was the societal expectation of women being subservient to their husbands that exacerbated her vulnerability. If not for the conflict with her husband, she would not have needed to find work in a café to support herself, but if not for the structural disapproval of single, divorced women, she would have been unlikely to be so quick to accept the advances of the man in the café who went on to exploit her. Again, this highlights the way that the interaction between conflict and social structures can make someone vulnerable to a situation of contemporary slavery, but it also emphasises how a lack of legitimate choice can make a person vulnerable. **Catherine**'s choices were to remain in an abusive relationship, or to leave and receive societal judgement for doing so. If not for the pressure caused by these choices or, more accurately, lack of choices, then **Catherine** would not have ended up in a situation of slavery.

4.4.2   Summary

Edan and **Catherine**'s stories highlight the ways in which the result of conflict can

interact with pre-existing social structures to an extent that leads to migration and heightens people's vulnerabilities towards becoming victims of contemporary slavery. While they experienced different types of conflict – war and marital conflict – and different forms of slavery – labour and sexual exploitation – there are similarities between their stories. Both experienced limited choices because of the conflict, both found themselves lacking support (both within and after fleeing the conflict) and both chose to leave the conflict to try and find safety. Without the conflicts, neither would have needed to leave their current situations, but it was social structures that exacerbated the vulnerabilities caused by the conflicts. For **Edan**, fleeing conflict in Afghanistan led him to Iran where the structural inequalities of refugees led him into a situation of slavery. For **Catherine**, fleeing marital conflict resulted in her needing to find work to support herself, but the patriarchal structures of women being expected to rely on support from men meant that she accepted the advances and offers of a man who went on to force her into sexual exploitation. It was the result of the conflict limiting the choices and support available combined with the impact of pre-existing structures that caused **Edan** and **Catherine** to find themselves in situations of contemporary slavery.

4.5   Conclusion

This chapter discusses the findings from the research that identified situations of contemporary slavery. It includes examples in which the slavery occurred in the country of conflict, after arriving in the UK, or in an interim country. While all those who suffered contemporary slavery had vastly different experiences, there were two

underlying themes that linked them all, regardless of the form of exploitation or the country in which it occurred. These were a limiting of choices and a lack of support. While this limiting of choices was evident in the stories of all of those who experienced contemporary slavery, the cause of the limited options varied. For some, their choices were restricted as a direct result of conflict, and for others, it was the combination of conflict and overarching structures that limited their options.

For the former, the conflict reduced their previous autonomy, meaning that while they were physically able to make decisions, they were able to choose only between options which held considerably more risk than those they had prior to the conflict. Those whose choices were limited by underlying structures such as widespread ethnic discrimination or structural discrimination against refugees, had already suffered a restriction of options because of conflict. The lack of options facing them as a result pushed them towards situations in which structural problems negatively impacted on them and exacerbated their vulnerabilities. It was a combination of the impact of conflict and of structural issues that triggered their situations of contemporary slavery.

The other main impacting factor leading people towards situations of contemporary slavery was a lack of support. For some, this lack of support caused vulnerabilities during the conflict, such as those whose family members were killed. For others, the lack of support came after arrival in the UK. In some instances, this related to familial rejection causing a break of ties with family and therefore preventing the ability to return to family and potentially to safety. In other instances, the lack of support related directly to situations in which UK statutory agencies could have reasonably

been expected to provide assistance which would have likely prevented these people from experiencing contemporary slavery. The next chapter moves away from those who experienced contemporary slavery to examine the findings relating to those respondents who fled conflict but without suffering such exploitation.

Chapter Five: Findings – Fleeing Conflict to Safety

5.1   Fleeing to Safety

The previous chapter discusses the findings from the research that relate to those who fled conflict but went on to experience contemporary slavery, and it identifies some of the key vulnerabilities that put people at risk of such situations. This second findings chapter focuses instead on those who escaped a conflict and fled to the UK without experiencing contemporary slavery. Two prominent themes are identified here: firstly, those who fled to safety, and secondly, risk factors that continue to cause vulnerabilities in the UK.

This chapter identifies some of the populations that are most vulnerable to becoming victims of contemporary slavery after arriving in the UK and why they are vulnerable. The first section, looking at those who fled conflict to the UK and remained safe from slavery, considers whether their safety was a result of successful government systems, or in spite of their failings. The second section discusses some of the risk factors that continue to affect people who have fled conflict to the UK and how these risk factors generate vulnerabilities, including vulnerabilities that could lead to situations of contemporary slavery. The findings from both sections are important in generating accurate understandings of the successes and failures of UK policies that face those arriving in the country. Such understandings are crucial if any intervention to reduce the number of people becoming victims of slavery in the UK is ever to be successful.

5.1.1 UK Government Intervention: Stories of Success

Theresa May claims that her government will "lead the way in defeating modern slavery" (May, 2016), and some of the respondents provided stories in which it was clear that interaction from the UK government prevented them from becoming vulnerable to situations of contemporary slavery. There were three main methods highlighted in the interviews through which the UK government successfully supported people. These are the safety provided by resettlement programmes, the input of the Border Force, and the lack of chartered removal to certain countries. These topics are discussed below using examples from the interviews.

Resettlement Programmes

The UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), advocates three long-term, durable solutions to support refugees: voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement. The intention of all these solutions is for the long-term self-reliance of refugees (UNHCR, 2017).

Voluntary repatriation is suitable for those in a situation where it is safe for them to return home. Local integration may be appropriate for those who have fled their home to a nearby country and are able to settle there. Resettlement is for those who are in a situation where it is unsafe to return home (e.g. the conflict is still ongoing, or they may be at risk of persecution), and who are unable to integrate into another local area (e.g. unable to claim asylum, or have specific needs that this area is unable to support).

Resettlement is often the only way for refugee families who have been separated to be reunited in safety. "Resettlement is the transfer of refugees from an asylum country to another State that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent settlement" (UNHCR, 2017).

The UN resettlement programmes involve identifying refugees who are most at risk in the country where they have sought protection, and moving them to one of the countries that participates in the programme. Most resettlement programmes offer participants permanent resident status, but a refugee can only qualify if it is not possible for them to safely return to their home country or settle in the country of asylum.

At the end of 2016, there were 17.2 million refugees of concern to the UNHCR, and yet, in that year, there were only 145,568 submissions for resettlement and 114,916 departures (UNHCR, 2017). Due to the huge volumes of people applying for resettlement, the submissions are prioritised according to the urgency of the case. No states have an obligation to receive refugees for resettlement, but instead, volunteer as receiving countries to support the international community. There are 37 resettlement states: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea (Republic of), Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America and Uruguay.

Resettlement is intended to be a durable scheme, allowing the refugees to gain long-term self-sufficiency. For this reason, it is important that the resettlement process involves more than just the movement of a refugee from one state to another. As such, the receiving states are expected to provide support to help the refugees integrate into their new society. The resettlement programmes expect that any refugees taking part in the schemes will be afforded the same rights as any other citizen of the receiving state. It is beneficial not only for the refugees that they integrate, but also for the receiving state. By assisting the refugees to become independent, working members of their new society, the state then benefits through their social and economic outputs and helps to prevent a divide between members of society. To ensure integration into the new state, the resettlement programmes provide cultural orientation programmes as well as assistance in training and accessing education and employment.

The UK resettlement programme is called the Gateway Protection Programme. The scheme works by UNHCR identifying refugees who require resettlement and sending details of potential candidates to the British government which then decides who will be accepted. Once the successful refugees have been notified, flights and visas are organised and they are brought to the UK, greeted at the airport, and taken to their new home. Support in the form of vocational training, education, assistance in applying for employment, cultural programmes etc. continues for a year to help the refugees to settle into their new community. The Gateway Protection Programme offers refugees indefinite leave to remain, meaning that they are able to start their life anew without worrying when they will have to move away again.

There is currently another resettlement programme in place in the UK to specifically support people fleeing Syria. This is the Government's Vulnerable Person's Relocation Scheme which offers refugees five years' protection (the same rule that applies to spontaneous route asylum seekers). The government hopes that, because of the short amount of time that Syrians have been displaced, they will be able to return home at some point in the future.

These resettlement programmes offer a great degree of protection that is not afforded in cases of asylum (Refugee Council, 2018). Those who come through the programmes are supported for a year after they have arrived in the UK, while those seeking asylum receive minimal assistance, as discussed in more detail below.

Barak and **Nadim** were both Syrian nationals who received support through the Government's Vulnerable Person's Relocation Scheme. Because of the scheme, their lives settling into the UK were drastically different to a number of the respondents who did not receive equivalent support.

Barak recalled the extreme violence in Syria. He had lived there all his life and brought up a family, but it soon became so dangerous that he sent his wife and children out of the country so that they could be safe. **Barak** stayed in Syria and continued to work. He described how civilians were protesting the president, Bashar al-Assad, and government soldiers were sent to retaliate. The soldiers looted from people's homes and set up check points in the town which made it both difficult and unsafe for people

to come and go. "They [the government soldiers] got an order from the officer that anyone who was Muslim, kill them. It doesn't matter how old he is, or a man or a woman, it doesn't matter."

The soldiers gradually became more violent, indiscriminately killing men, women and children by shooting them in the street. **Barak** was shot twice and survived, but his 12 year old cousin was killed by the soldiers. The war had meant there was no water, electricity, medical supplies or hospitals, and injured people had to rely on voluntary doctors or nurses. Because of the lack of medical support and the likelihood of being shot again, he took his chance to escape by crawling for seven hours through a tunnel that was used to bring in aid supplies.

Barak reached the border to Lebanon, however, there were guards protecting the checkpoints, preventing anyone from leaving who may have been able to help fight against the president in Syria. He managed to circumnavigate the checkpoints and enter Lebanon illegally. The rest of **Barak**'s family had fled to Saudi Arabia and they had all arranged to meet in Jordan. However, to be able to enter Jordan, **Barak** needed to prove that he had entered Lebanon legally, so returned to the border to bribe the officials to stamp his passport, making it appear that he had entered legally. "They take the money, they give you a stamp, and then you have entered legally from both sides. And that way he can fly to Jordan."

Once they legally crossed the border into Jordan, **Barak** and his family were automatically registered with the United Nations. This registration doubled as an application for resettlement, and **Barak**'s family were required to renew this

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application every six months. It is not possible to apply to be relocated to a specific country, so the family did not know where they would be resettled if they were successful. In 2015, after three years of waiting, **Barak** got a phone call notifying him that his family had been accepted onto a resettlement scheme. "Are you happy to travel to America?' The first choice [option] was to travel to America. I want to go wherever! Even Somalia!"

Barak was taken for an interview and was required to bring identification to prove he was Syrian. Following this, his wife and three children were required to attend an interview to corroborate his story. **Barak** described how lucky he was that both interviews were within a month of each other, when some of his friends had to wait nine months between interviews. After the second interview, he received another phone call to inform him that they were entitled to travel to the UK. The family accepted the offer, received visas, and were travelling within 15 days.

Nadim's story is heavily reflective of **Barak**'s. **Nadim** was also from Syria and had brought up his family there. He ran a successful business and owned his own home, but after the war destroyed them, he and his family fled to neighbouring Lebanon. However, **Nadim** described a similar problem to **Barak** in that there was no way for him to legally cross the border into Lebanon. Eventually, **Nadim** and his family "paid money for the government in Syria as well Lebanon" for them to be able to cross the border and have their passports stamped to make it appear that the crossing was legal. It was at the point of this 'legal' border crossing that **Nadim** and his family were registered with the UN and, simultaneously, for a resettlement programme.

While **Nadim** was working in Lebanon, he received a phone call to invite him for a resettlement interview "where they asked him [about his life] from the date he was born to the current day." Later in the week, **Nadim** received another phone call asking the whole family to come for an interview. After this interview, the family were assigned a place in the UK as it was the most appropriate destination to be able to offer support for the medical conditions that **Nadim** suffered. It was three months between being accepted on the resettlement programme and boarding the plane; in that time, the family were taught about life in the UK – aspects including laws, cultural traditions and the way of life.

Barak and **Nadim** both described how lucky they felt to have been accepted onto the scheme, stating that they knew people who had been waiting much longer than they had. They were provided with visas and flights to the UK and were met at the airports on arrival where they were then taken to their new, funded, fully furnished homes. Their children had school places waiting, and the adults had ESOL (English as a Second or Other Language) lessons and vocational training sessions organised for them. A support worker was assigned to each of their families to work with them for the first year to ensure that their resettlement ran as smoothly as possible. This support worker was there to answer any questions, interpret letters they received, and keep the families informed of their entitlements. They both had a very comfortable transition from life in the interim country to life in the UK and feel settled here.

Barak and **Nadim**'s stories highlight a clear flaw in the system for registering for resettlement programmes. Both **Barak** and **Nadim** were automatically registered for a

resettlement programme once it appeared that they had legally crossed a border. However, neither of them made the border crossing legally, but bribed officials to stamp their documents. It was this bribing of officials that allowed them and their families to be registered with the UN and the resettlement scheme, when thousands of others in the same situation who could not afford bribes could not register for the programme.

Nadim describes how easy life has been for him since arriving in the UK. His children are in school and he attends ESOL classes three times a week. He engages well with the community and attends the local mosque once a week, making friends with people there and people he meets in the street. Similarly, **Barak** feels settled in the UK and has made friends. He has booked to take his driving theory test in the hope that he will be able to find work as a taxi driver. Both **Nadim** and **Barak** stated, in relation to life in the UK, that "this is my country now." They both feel settled with their families in the UK and hope that they will be able to find jobs and continue providing their children with a good education.

However, the experiences of **Nadim** and **Barak** who arrived in the UK through a resettlement programme differ drastically from the experiences of the respondents who claimed asylum, as evidenced by several of the agency workers. **Jane**, whose job is to help welcome and provide orientation for refugees arriving in the UK discussed how the resettlement programmes create:

> a two-tier system because like clients that come through the resettlement programme, they're met at the airport straight away,

they've got a friendly face, support and they're allocated a project

worker who supports them through the whole [process]. They've got

people to work with them to help find school places, they're given a

house straight away. They've got support with access to benefits.

Any issues to do with the house or school they can go and see them.

All kinds of support there that doesn't exist for anyone that makes

the journey themselves because they rock up in a town then they've

got to find everything out for themselves which is completely

different. Yeah completely different level of support and yeah it's

very different.

Gloria, who works in an ethnic minority support service, corroborated this.

The Syrians are so well provided. When they come, they immediately

have a house, access to benefits. We are obliged to provide ESOL

classes, whereas anyone else is almost prohibited from joining them.

So obviously that makes a huge difference to how quickly they're

going to adjust and settle…I mean it's incredible support really.

Compared to a refugee from anywhere else in the world.

This difference in treatment for those on a resettlement programme compared to

those claiming asylum was also highlighted by **Roger**, who works for a refugee advice

service.

I still feel like it's a two-tier system. It's like you've got good refugees

and bad refugees. Sometimes I say to myself ok it's a good model

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don't get me wrong. I like the model but why don't we do this for

everyone?... You've got people who have got nothing at all, that are

going through all this horrendous situation then you've got some

people who come and everything is ready for them.

Roger notes how the difference between the two systems is not only unfair for those

who do not get supported through a resettlement programme, but that it can cause

strain within communities that contain both people claiming asylum and people on a

resettlement programme. "Unfortunately it's a good model but unfortunately if they

could do it for everyone it would be fine. But that creates also tension within the

community."

The consensus amongst the agency workers is that the resettlement programmes are

excellent and provide much needed support to help people fully integrate into their

new society. However, by providing such a high level of support, the programmes

cause disparity between groups of people who are leaving the same countries and

same situations. Evidently, it would be too costly to provide this service to every

asylum seeker that arrives in the UK, but the effect of this two-tiered system should be

considered in relation to its negative impact on communities of refugees. This issue is

addressed further in Chapter Six.

The support that the resettlement programmes provide to those that are accepted

onto them is incomparable to that offered to other refugees and asylum seekers in the

UK. The programmes ensure that there is support from the point of departing

whichever country the refugee is leaving, and this support continues in the UK for a

year. The support provided, especially in language lessons, vocational training, assistance looking for a job and in a named support worker is invaluable in helping those refugees to settle and integrate into their new society. It is this reliable help that no doubt helps prevent people on resettlement programmes from becoming vulnerable to situations of contemporary slavery. They do not need to turn to strangers for advice or offers of work or accommodation, because they have long-term assistance in place. Although their choices may be limited to the extent that their accommodation is chosen for them, overall, they maintain their agency in making decisions because they are not placed in a situation of desperation where they need to find employment or accommodation via any means in order to survive. This is a situation faced by many asylum seekers who do not receive support comparable to the resettlement programmes and must do what they can to survive; for some, this will lead them into situations of contemporary slavery. This is discussed further in Chapter Six.

The Border Force

Nadim and **Barak**'s stories highlight how the UN resettlement programmes provide support to refugees significant enough to prevent the development of vulnerabilities that may lead to situations of contemporary slavery. **James**' journey to the UK was very different to that of **Nadim** and **Barak**, and yet he also benefitted from the input of statutory systems that kept him safe when he could have otherwise become vulnerable to slavery. His story is one that involved the intervention of the Border Force upon his illegal entry into the UK.

James grew up in Iran with a good education and was a member of the national wrestling team. He had been wanting a tattoo, but described how some Sunni Islamists consider them to be against Islamic law. Despite having always contested religion and having a disregard for Islamic laws, it was simply not possible for him to get a tattoo in Iran. However, when one of his wrestling tours took him out of the country to Georgia, he was able to get the tattoo.

> But when I got back to Iran for another competition, there was a team of supervisors to make sure that everything in the competition was happening according to Islamic means, they call it. One of the people who was controlling came to me noticing the tattoo I had and said you understand it is against Islamic law to have a tattoo that was in public. I said I don't believe in that stuff and that's why I got it and I like the tattoo. But he carried on, saying that you can't and you're not supposed to have a tattoo, you can't have a tattoo in Iran. So things got bad, they arrested me and kept me in custody and detention basically, a detention centre. They were torturing me, questioning me.

During the interview, James rolled up his sleeve to reveal a tattoo on his upper arm, covered by what appeared to be a large burn.

Realising the situation James was in, his father managed to find the money to pay James' bail of around 14 thousand pounds, but "after a month of my release I found out that they had been back to my home and were asking for me and my whereabouts,

saying stuff like there was a sentence for me to be hanged because I was offensive towards Islam."

James realised then that it was not safe for him to stay in Iran as, should he be found, he would receive the death penalty for getting his tattoo. For **James** then, his conflict was not one of war, like **Nadim** and **Barak**, but was a conflict with religious law. The conflict then limited his choices – his options were to remain in Iran where he would be hanged, or to find a way out. Knowing he was sentenced to be hanged, **James** and his family put together enough money to pay a smuggler to get him out of the country. This smuggler took **James** illegally from Iran to Turkey, where he was then left to find his own way.

It is interesting to highlight here the difference between **James** and **Hattie**'s experiences of using smugglers. **James** had the money to pay the smuggler up front and, once he was out of the country, all contact with the smuggler ended. **Hattie**, however, did not have the money to be able to pay the smuggler, and so agreed to work upon arrival to pay off the debt. While she had agreed to undertake care work for the smuggler, at the destination she was forced into prostitution. These are the only examples of respondents using smugglers from the interviews, but further research would be insightful in identifying whether there is a generalisable rule of those who cannot afford to pay a smuggler up front becoming victims of contemporary slavery.

After he arrived in Turkey, **James** paid another $500 to get a boat to Greece, but found

he could not get status there. From Greece he walked for about 19 days until he reached France where he stayed in Calais for around nine months. **James** described how he desperately wanted to get to the UK because he was able to speak the language and without those language skills, he felt he would really struggle anywhere else.

> I had to find my way to hide in the lorry obviously. Unfortunately, I had to make an incision. I tore the cover of the back of the lorry in order to get into the lorry. Obviously once the driver found out when we were in the UK that there was a tear in the back of the lorry, from there he informed the immigration officers who came and removed me from the lorry and took me to a deportation centre in Portsmouth and was kept for a while then in a hostel in Cardiff. I was arrested by the immigration officers.

Although **James** was initially arrested by the immigration officers, they helped him to begin the asylum process and, because of his experiences and the fact that he could not safely return to Iran, **James** was granted leave to remain.

James faced similar issues to those who did go on to experience contemporary slavery, including living through conflict and experiencing the resulting limitation of choices. This was particularly evident when he was faced with the choices of either staying in Iran and facing the death penalty or trying to find a way out of the country. While he was lucky in that he managed to find a relatively safe route to the UK, upon arrival, his choices were removed entirely after being identified and arrested by immigration officers. However, for **James**, unlike other respondents, this removal of choices led him

to safety. The immigration officers successfully engaged with **James** and supported him to begin the asylum process. Their recognition of his situation, coupled with successful partnership work helped to ensure that **James** remained safe and did not need to seek employment or accommodation which could have left him vulnerable to contemporary slavery.

Restricted Repatriation

James fled Iran because he was sentenced to be hanged. After arriving in the UK, he was granted leave to remain because of the danger he would have faced should he have been repatriated. However, there are many whose asylum claims are unsuccessful and, with a negative asylum decision, are returned to the country that they fled. With the knowledge that repatriation is always a possibility, many live in constant fear of being repatriated and are unable to settle or integrate into their lives in the UK (to comment on the choice of terminology, 'repatriation' or 'removal' are used throughout this thesis where others may use deportation. In legal terms, deportation is a process of repatriation used only in cases where the person in question poses a danger to the public). This fear was something that **Nadia** and **Ofira** faced, but because they were both from Eritrea where there is a forced military conscription, the Home Office rarely repatriate Eritrean nationals.

In Eritrea, everyone is subject to a draft to the military service. Children - both boys and girls - begin to get called up in the last year of school. They will go on to finish their education at the military camp, which is in the middle of the desert. "And then you do military service for a number of years and then they are on the reserve list for life, but

it can be extended and extended and extended." Some children will drop out of school in order to avoid the draft, but without finishing their education they find it difficult to get employment.

Ofira was recruited in Eritrea to undertake domestic work for a family in Qatar and saw the job as an opportunity to avoid the military draft. The family brought her to London with them to work as their maid. **Ofira** did not like the family and was unhappy with the way she was treated, however she feared returning to Eritrea because she was subject to the draft. In this case, conflict with her employers caused **Ofira** to flee her employment, but the structures in place in her home country meant that she was too afraid to return home. Although **Ofira** was not sure of her employment rights when she arrived in the UK, the description she gave implied that she held a domestic worker visa, meaning that she did not have the option to change her employer. In this sense, the government visa system limited **Ofira**'s choices, as her options were either to stay with her employer or return to Eritrea. Neither of these were options that **Ofira** wanted and both would have left her in a situation of exploitation. However, because of the military draft in Eritrea, the UK Home Office rarely repatriates Eritrean nationals and it is likely that **Ofira** will be able to remain in the UK. As such, a lack of chartered removal to Eritrea was a government policy that prevented **Ofira** from being returned to her home country where she would be exploited, and it allowed her to circumnavigate the restrictive and potentially exploitative aspects of the tied visa system.

While **Ofira** was lucky in that, because of her nationality, she was not repatriated after

leaving the employer to which her visa tied her, many others under this visa system are not so lucky. Under the tied visa system, employees do not have the option to change their employers, meaning that should they become unhappy with their employment, for example if it becomes exploitative, their only options are to remain in the exploitative employment, or return to their home country where many may face exploitation. This system is one way through which the UK government risks encouraging exploitative working conditions and is an issue covered in more detail in Chapter Six.

Like **Ofira**, **Nadia** was also from Eritrea. She had the choice of accepting the conscription or finding a way to escape Eritrea; she chose to flee the country to Italy. However, once she was in Italy, she was raped by an Italian police officer and fell pregnant with his child. Out of fear, **Nadia** felt unable to stay in Italy and continued her journey until she arrived in the UK. It is unlikely that **Nadia** will be returned to Eritrea because of the military draft, however, because asylum seekers are required to apply for asylum in the first country they reach, she is awaiting a decision on whether she will be returned to Italy, even though she was raped by an officer of the law there.

Nadia's initial reason for fleeing was to avoid conscription – a structural issue that is inextricably linked to conflict. Fleeing caused her to become vulnerable as she was no longer in a country that she knew, she had no support and she did not speak the language. Although this did not lead to a situation of contemporary slavery, the police officer took advantage of her vulnerabilities. The lack of chartered removal to Eritrea means that it is unlikely that **Nadia** will be returned there, and this is a positive step as

it means that the government is not returning her to a situation of military exploitation. However, should the Home Office choose to remove **Nadia** to Italy, they would be putting her at risk of repercussions relating to her rape. Although **Nadia** has not suffered contemporary slavery, she has certainly suffered, and should she be returned to Italy, her experience of the police there is likely to encourage her to avoid anyone in a position of authority. Such a situation would leave her to rely on strangers for assistance, a position in which she would be highly vulnerable to contemporary slavery, and whereby her fear of authority would limit her options for seeking statutory support.

The above section refers to stories from the interviews in which the respondents fled to the UK after experiencing conflict, but who did not suffer contemporary slavery. It relates to those who could have been at serious risk of contemporary slavery, but where the intervention of UK government systems and agencies successfully reduced these risks (although, while **Nadia** is currently safe, the outcome of the Home Office's decision could put her at risk).

5.1.2 Searching for Safety in the Wake of Failing Systems

The following section reviews more respondents who fled conflict and came to the UK without experiencing contemporary slavery. However, it concentrates on those respondents whose risk of slavery was reduced *despite* UK government policies placing them in vulnerable situations. It considers how strangers and non-governmental organisations stepped in to assist in situations where the UK statutory agencies should have been providing help.

Strangers Offering Support in the Wake of Statutory Failings

The following examples are of respondents who remained safe in the UK due to the assistance of complete strangers. For **Sakti**, this assistance came both in fleeing conflict and after arriving in the UK, while for **Oscar**, the assistance came purely after arriving in the UK. The assistance received by both respondents helped to significantly reduce the danger they faced, but particularly for **Oscar**, this assistance reduced vulnerabilities to contemporary slavery.

Sakti was Serbian. She grew up in Bosnia and was working as a surgeon when the war broke out. She recalled growing up in a calm and peaceful country until the war started and it became dangerous for anyone living there.

> Then suddenly here all Serbs are taken on [to a] stadium. Half of
>
> them is killed. There were some of my professors who were Serbs.
>
> They were brought, killed. They, there were things which were awful
>
> you know.

Although it was extremely dangerous, **Sakti** stayed in Sarajevo to work in the hospital because there were so many casualties due to the war and not enough surgeons, with most of them fleeing the conflict.

> I was general surgeon also so I could help them. I didn't have most of
>
> the doctors left. Most of the doctors had left and they didn't have
>
> enough so they made three shifts so in every shift they wanted

someone who would do general surgery, meaning chest and abdomen, but who will do orthopaedics. Most injuries are legs and arms. But because I was trained in military hospital, just by chance, because that was the best hospital, academy in [local town], I did specialisation there. That's, they called me and said can you help us. Of course I can help. But then I work 48 hours meaning I spent all 24 hours in trauma centre dealing with everything, children and adults, and then another 24 hours I would go on paediatric ward. In between I was the one who had to go with the bandages and you know do all the review of all wards. And you know it was very dangerous because you're going between hospitals and shelling is all the time. You never know when something can come down and kill you. I survived.

Sakti recalled one time working in the hospital when there was no water or electricity and it was minus 25 degrees. She described there being an abundance of journalists harassing the hospital staff and taking photos of operations, to the point where **Sakti** chose to operate by lamp light so as not to attract their attention. However, there was one journalist "who really helped us a lot. And then he started bringing us food and he looked after us and he was the one who told me that it's after two years he said you really don't have chance to stay any more, your life is in danger." It was at this point that **Sakti** began to realise that there was not much more she could do for the people she was helping. People were coming to the hospital less often, and the situation had improved since the beginning of the war.

The journalist offered to help **Sakti** to leave the country, but her mother still lived in Sarajevo and she refused to leave without her. She applied to the government twice to get permission for her mother to leave, but both times she was refused on the premise that if her mother left, **Sakti** would likely leave too, and the government wanted her to stay and work. Here, **Sakti** realised that the war had restricted the options available to her: she could stay in Sarajevo, working in the hospital, or accept the assistance of this stranger to escape – a possibility that would likely never occur again.

She accepted the assistance of the journalist but explained that she could not leave without her mother, so he smuggled her mother out of the country in the boot of his car. The next day, he came back for **Sakti**, collected her in his car and took her to the airport as bullets were flying past them. There was an empty plane that had been used to supply aid to the area, and the journalist managed to convince the pilot to take **Sakti** back with him. He paid the pilot $760 for the journey, never asking for anything from **Sakti** in return. The plane flew to Italy and from there she travelled on to London where she had friends. **Sakti** did not go on to be exploited in any way, and it was only with the help of this journalist that she was able to leave Sarajevo.

Once **Sakti** arrived in the UK, she was lucky enough to be given a reference by the journalist which led to her being granted leave to remain. However, after receiving leave to remain, **Sakti** received no support or guidance from any statutory agencies. She had a skilled profession but had to turn to strangers for advice on where she should look for work and how to apply. She was lucky to find legitimate work, but it is clear to see how other people in **Sakti**'s position might be more vulnerable. Relying

on strangers to help find work could easily lead to exploitative situations, if not contemporary slavery.

Unlike **Sakti**, **Oscar** did not rely on anyone's help to get him to the UK. However, once here, he found himself in a vulnerable situation and it was the assistance of a stranger that helped to keep him safe. **Oscar** was from Gaza and had moved to the UK to complete a Master's degree. He then returned to Gaza to take up his old, high status job, but was refused the position he had previously held and was unable to find alternative employment. Along with struggling to find work, **Oscar** and his family had no safe housing. He described how he had a house, but because of the bombs, it was safer to live in a tent in a refugee community. He recalled going back to his house and narrowly escaping before it was bombed.

> I went to my home to bring some things [back to the tent] and I got a
>
> call on my landline to say you have to leave your home within five
>
> minutes. Leave everything and just go. And I said ok and I did that
>
> and in five minutes it was destroyed.

Oscar knew that he and his family could go and stay with his parents, but he commented that he felt uncomfortable asking for help in the long term, and that even though they had housing, it was still unsafe. "I have parents and they invited us [to] go but we already went there and it was very dangerous, there were car bombs everywhere, so I preferred to stay in a tent so I lived there."

Oscar was left in a very difficult situation where he must decide whether to stay in Gaza where he had no safe home and no prospects of work, or flee the country in the

hope of a safer life. He chose to flee Gaza, leaving his wife and children living in a tent in the hope that he could come to the UK, find safe housing and employment, and bring them across to be with him. He had previously been a student in the UK, meaning that his English was fluent and he knew a few people in the country. However, he described how his priorities had drastically changed when he came to the UK for the second time.

> For me, because I came here like asylum seeker this time. So when I first came [when he was coming to be a student] my hope was to finish my study and get my qualification and that happened and I was hoping to come back again for PhD but it's different now. I don't want PhD now I want to get documents, because if I get documents I can find a job and work and invite my other family. Otherwise I will stay here for unlimited time and have nothing. I can't leave. I can't. So the first important thing for me was to get documents.

Oscar was clear in his interview that his previous goals were irrelevant when he arrived in the UK for the second time. This time all that mattered to him was that he found work so that he could bring his family out of danger and that they could all be reunited.

Oscar's language skills were hugely beneficial to him, as he was able to find out first-hand what was required of him and what he was entitled to. This language barrier can leave asylum seekers vulnerable, as evidenced by **Imogen**'s story in Chapter Four. When **Oscar** arrived in the UK, he was able to ask around for information on what was required of him, which led him to contact the Home Office straight away to apply for

asylum. After his asylum interview, he was provided with documentation that allowed him to live in the UK for five years, "but once I've got my document from the Home Office, just go."

Oscar was provided with no advice on where he should go or information on any agencies that may have been able to offer him support. He was lucky that he spoke English and had lived in the UK before, because he had acquaintances that he was able to contact, however he was only able to find somewhere to stay for two nights before becoming homeless. He continued applying for jobs, both those which were relevant to his Master's degree and those that were not, but he continued to be unsuccessful. While he was applying for jobs, he encouraged his wife and children to make the journey so that they could join him in the UK.

> They know nothing about the situation here. They knew nothing that
>
> when they came here they'd be homeless like me. And I needed
>
> them to come, to help me be not homeless…And when I collected
>
> her from the airport I had nowhere to go, even with children. So I
>
> collected her with a warm welcome and then take them, with no
>
> place to go.

Oscar described his experience of greeting his wife and children at the airport in the knowledge that he had no home to take them to and no money to support them. This was six months after he was granted asylum by the Home Office. **Oscar** and his family sat on the street.

I had nowhere to go with luggage, with children, no. And she [Oscar's wife]…was crying but I had nowhere to go. And we were there an hour, two hours, three hours, then there was a lady who just came two or three times and she asked us what are you doing here? I've seen you here for hours now. And I said we have nowhere to go. She took me to a masjid, a mosque.

The people at the mosque showed **Oscar**'s family generosity, with some offering money and others offering a place to stay for the night. The family went home with one of the men from the mosque who provided beds and food for them all overnight and took them to the council the next day so that they could apply for housing. From this meeting, **Oscar** and his family were granted space in a homeless shelter.

Because **Oscar** had been given no information when he received his documents from the Home Office, he knew nothing about applying for housing until this stranger offered him support and assistance. It was only because of the chance meeting with the woman in the street taking the family to the mosque that **Oscar** and his family eventually found accommodation in this shelter. Frustratingly, with fluent English, **Oscar** felt confident that he would have been able to have had this meeting with the council himself if only he had known that was what was required of him. If he had been informed of this upon receiving asylum, he would not have become homeless. Because he was offered no information with his documentation from the Home Office, without this intervention from a stranger, **Oscar** would have remained unemployed and homeless even though the Home Office had recognised him as a refugee and granted him asylum.

This shelter then assisted **Oscar** in applying for his own house, which he was eventually successful in. His children were accepted in local schools, his wife attends college, and **Oscar** now has a job supporting other refugees who are going through similar situations to his own.

Oscar's story exemplifies how having status does not necessarily equate to safety in the UK. Although his language skills meant that he could communicate, he still struggled, not knowing where he could go for assistance, and finding himself homeless even though he had interacted with government agencies. Being homeless and looking for work is a position in which many may become vulnerable to offers of labour which transpire to be situations of contemporary slavery. People in **Oscar**'s position may be so desperate to find work and accommodation that they are willing to accept offers from strangers which could be exploitative. **Oscar** was lucky in that the stranger that offered to help him provided him with legitimate assistance, but this is not always the case, as **Imogen**'s story exemplified in Chapter Four. He was lucky to have received help from the strangers in the mosque, but if the asylum system had offered him better support, or even more information on what he was entitled to and where he could go for help, **Oscar** would not have been at risk of homelessness.

Non-Statutory Support in the Wake of Statutory Failings

The above discussion focuses on the stories of **Sakti** and **Oscar** who benefitted from the support of strangers when government systems failed to keep them safe. The

following section considers those respondents who turned to non-statutory agencies for support in the UK when the statutory agencies were failing to provide the assistance they required.

Verity was from Somalia and was of Bajuni ethnicity, an ethnic group that faces severe discrimination in the country. There are often cases of "majority clans coming by boat to their territories and saying this is now our land, you're coming to work for us. Or being taken from traditional Bajuni territory back to other bits of Somalia."

Verity had a relative who had managed to escape Somalia to Europe and knew of the terrible situation that remained there. Because **Verity** was the oldest daughter in the family, she was deemed to be the most at risk, and this family member paid for her to leave Somalia and get to the UK. For **Verity**, this meant leaving the rest of her family, including her child, back in Somalia.

Like many of the stories recounted above, **Verity**'s highlights a lack of choice. Her options were to remain in Somalia with her family, where she would continue to suffer repeated rapes and extreme violence, or leave and try and make a life for herself in the UK. While it was surely difficult to leave her family behind, as the oldest daughter in the family, **Verity** was the person most likely to be targeted while she remained in Somalia, making any risk associated with leaving the country and getting to the UK worthwhile.

Without the support of this relative, **Verity** would never have been able to escape this situation. However, once she reached the UK, she had a hard time making government

authorities believe her story. "She claimed [asylum], was comprehensively disbelieved and told you're Kenyan, we don't believe a word you're saying."

Verity turned to a legal charity to support her through her case. **Kafu** was **Verity**'s case worker and recalled **Verity**'s story being particularly harrowing.

> [T]his woman appeared and said she was Bajuni from one of the
> Bajuni islands, her family had been very badly attacked, she had been
> raped about 100 times by members of one of the majority clans…
> She had horrific scarring. Kind of burns everywhere.

Kafu explained how in **Verity**'s initial Home Office interview, she was provided with:

> a male translator from Kenya who had tried to claim that Bajuni is
> the same as Swahili, which I'm told it is not, and [she] had felt very
> very inhibited about talking in front of a man and particularly about
> bits that had happened to her.

This lack of understanding or empathy from the Home Office caused **Verity** further unnecessary stress after she had fled a horrific situation in the hope of finding safety. Eventually, with the support of **Kafu**, **Verity** got through the legal process and was successful in claiming asylum in the UK.

Verity's vulnerabilities were evident, yet the inappropriate actions taken by the Home Office in their choice of interpreter only served to cause more distress and confusion relating to her story. If the statutory response had been more suitable, **Verity** would not have had to rely on a non-statutory organisation to assist her in gaining legal

status.

Gamba, Fredrika and Isaac were also reliant on charity because they were unable to survive on the assistance provided to them by the UK government. All three were receiving support from the same drop-in centre and were clear in their interviews that without it they would be very vulnerable.

Gamba was from Cameroon and his father was a university lecturer and part of a political dissident group that Gamba was also a member of. Gamba was preparing to go to the UK to study at university and had applied for a visa when his father was taken into hospital. When Gamba went to visit, his father told him that, for his own safety, he must get the next flight to the UK, leaving him with no time to say goodbye to anyone. After being in the UK for two weeks, Gamba got news that his father "died in the hospital under military guard, making sure that he was not administered until he died." His mother fled to Nigeria and warned Gamba that he was also wanted for his political activism.

It is pertinent to note here a point raised by Gamba who was able to pay for his own plane ticket to leave Cameroon. He commented that for many, money may not be the problem when it comes to leaving a perilous situation – the issue is legality. Where Gamba was able to obtain a visa to travel to the UK, several of his friends were denied visas, which meant that they could not buy a plane ticket. As a result, they must either pay a substantially higher price to risk the hazardous journey across the Mediterranean by boat, or simply try to hide.

I could say for sure that me flying to England was the cheaper option.

The people who take the Mediterranean Sea pay four or five times

what I have paid. So if you are not well off you can't make these

journeys and you actually trek to the next village or to the next

country if it's close by. If not you might just find yourself hiding in

Cameroon or somewhere.

This means that those who cannot obtain a visa are more likely to suffer exploitative

conditions as they do everything they can to leave their country under the radar via

illegal methods. For those who can afford it, like **James**, discussed above, this may

mean an upfront fee for smuggling, while those who cannot afford this fee might, like

Hattie, also discussed above, make a deal to work to pay off the debt and find

themselves in a situation of contemporary slavery on arrival.

After hearing of his father's death and getting warning that he was also in danger,

Gamba applied for asylum so that he could stay in the UK, knowing that if he went

back to Cameroon he would likely be killed for his involvement in the same political

dissident group. He discussed how difficult it is to be an asylum seeker in the UK.

Although he is fluent in English, and this has no doubt eased the process, he had no

family or friends to meet or support him when he arrived. His mother had fled

Cameroon to Nigeria for her own safety and, although they tried to keep in touch,

sometimes this was very difficult.

[As asylum seekers] we are given a budget of £35 [now £37.50] per

week. That is for breakfast, lunch and dinner and whatever else you

might need, so that's like £5 per day…That's it, just like £5 a day of

food. So at times you might need to sacrifice food to call her.

Gamba described how he was grateful to be safe from the trouble he faced in

Cameroon, but that he felt that the asylum process was there simply to try and find

flaws in claimants' accounts.

> At least I'm safe, but to say that it's been fine is a lie…You still have
>
> many people going through the asylum process which is a fault
>
> finding mission where your case worker is supposed to be there to
>
> help you but just picks faults up in what you said and whatever you
>
> say you need to prove it. Now who runs away from their home and
>
> thinks about carrying proof along?... That would be the last thing you
>
> think about bringing along. But whatever you say you need to prove
>
> it. And the burden of proof is so high unlike court where you are
>
> innocent until proven guilty. In asylum you are guilty of telling lies
>
> until you prove yourself telling the truth.

He highlighted how the home countries of many asylum seekers do not have welfare

systems, meaning many are unaware of UK social policy. Their priorities are to escape

danger and find a safe place to live where they can then find work to support

themselves – benefits are unknown to them. **Gamba** discussed how difficult it was to

be an asylum seeker in a system that assumes claimants are lying and which considers

their motivation for being in the UK simply to apply for benefits.

> We don't come from a system where we have a welfare system in
>
> our own countries, so you have to work to earn whatever you have

to eat. So there is no one coming here hoping. We are not travelling

here knowing you get free money. If anyone is coming here they are

coming for safety first and then they will look at ways to better their

lives. So it's really hard to be honest.

Gamba has been in the asylum process for six years as his claims keep getting rejected.

He knows that he will be killed if he returns to Cameroon, so is not willing to give up,

and would rather be homeless and destitute in the UK than risk going back. It is illegal

for him to work or return to his education in the UK, which means that he has learned

to survive on the small government stipend. However, after being detained recently,

Gamba's government support was revoked, meaning that he is no longer provided

with money or housing and, as a result, was set to become destitute and homeless.

Gamba discovered a local drop-in centre and attends for the support and advice that

he requires, but which he has been denied by the statutory agencies that he has

approached. The lack of support provided to **Gamba** has resulted in him relying fully

on this drop-in centre, and he is even living with someone who volunteers there. When

asked where he would be without the support of the drop-in centre and this individual,

Gamba stated:

> I would be homeless, I would depend on charity…I would depend on
>
> charities. There are a lot of people like that, especially people that
>
> come from places like Iraq, Iran, Syria, Afghanistan. The Home Office
>
> knows that they can't support them. They reject their claim and kick
>
> them out of accommodation. And this is just full. If you are caught
>
> working you go to jail.

Gamba went on to describe how communities of asylum seekers tend to work together to support each other in finding work. As it is illegal to work in the UK for most asylum seekers, this work is likely to be precarious and poorly paid. However, for those receiving little statutory support other than £37.50 per week, or nothing at all if their claim has been rejected, then it is clear to see how these offers might be tempting. Of course, there is always the chance that these offers of work are not legitimate and, like **Imogen**, may lead them into situations of contemporary slavery which, because it is illegal for them to work, they then have no way to report or request help without facing punitive measures. However, for those who are homeless and destitute and too afraid to return to their home country, it is understandable that people may choose to take this risk.

Fredrika's experience of being in the UK is very similar to **Gamba**'s. She was from Uganda and originally came to the UK to study, but once here faced family expectation to marry a man. The marriage was arranged for her and **Fredrika** went along with it even though she did not want to marry him. She was married to this man for around four years, during which time he was aggressive and abusive towards her. She eventually left this marriage and disclosed to her family that she was gay. Her family rejected her because of this admission; homosexuality is illegal in Uganda and she was considered to have shamed the family. Because of this reaction, and because of the illegality of homosexuality and the stigma and violence experienced by those in Uganda who identify as such, **Fredrika** was too afraid to return home and instead claimed asylum.

Fredrika's initial asylum claim was rejected, which was devastating for her as she knows that it is unsafe for her to return to Uganda. Although the main reason she wanted to claim asylum was because she is gay and, as such, her life would be at risk in Uganda, she did not include this information in her initial claim.

> Well my first claim was not initially being gay because I was really scared to come out, so now that I have to put in a fresh claim I have to say that it's part of everything, it's part of my initial application is my sexuality and I need to put that out there because I feel like I was trapped in something because coming out in my country and my culture is unheard of and I come from a Christian background so it's a bit tricky. Initially I was scared to come out because you never know what will happen to you.

Fredrika has now been in the asylum system for four years, waiting for a decision. She fills her time by volunteering to support other asylum seekers and refugees which, although she enjoys, can sometimes be frustrating and disheartening as she helps people with their applications and watches them get accepted while she continues to wait for a decision.

> You'd be helping somebody which is coming to the country and got their status in like a month and you've got you've been waiting four years, nearly five and you have to deal with people like that. Well I help them with a big smile on my face but sometimes it's still frustrating because their lives are going to move forwards and mine is stuck.

However, this frustration is only a small part of the emotional turmoil that **Fredrika** faces every day as she lives her life completely uncertain of her future.

After **Fredrika**'s asylum application was rejected, all statutory support was withdrawn. She became homeless and was prohibited from finding employment or continuing with her education. With these restrictions, **Fredrika** was desperate. She had nowhere to live and needed money to survive but was unable to access legitimate employment. These vulnerabilities made her a prime target for people seeking to benefit from her exploitation. Fortunately, she was identified and taken in by a local women's shelter and now survives on £10 a week that she is given by a local charity; she regularly visits the drop-in centre for company. As in **Oscar**'s story, this reflects the kindness of people who have no statutory responsibility to help, but who provide support in a way that significantly reduces the vulnerabilities caused by flawed government policies.

Isaac was another respondent who was supported by this drop-in centre when he was left totally unassisted. His father was a diplomat in Congo where he faced trouble because of his job. As a family, they fled to Russia where they stayed together for several years. His mother died in Russia, and after the troubles began in Congo, his father did not want to take **Isaac** and his sister back there. In 2011, **Isaac**'s father told him and his sister that they were going on holiday to the UK and sent them to stay with someone he knew; **Isaac** had no choice in the matter. That was the last time he saw or spoke to his father. **Isaac**'s sister is still young, and he has had a son since arriving in the UK; he feels a lot of pressure to try and support them, but the asylum system provides him with £37.75 per week and prohibits him from finding employment.

Because **Isaac** has a son and sister in the UK, it was incredibly important to him that he was able to stay in the country; his only other family is his father and he has no contact with him and is uncertain if he is even still alive. When **Isaac** was told he needed to claim asylum, he was unaware of what this meant. He had no knowledge of the system, but his desperation to stay in the UK meant that he felt pressure to provide a version of events most likely to allow him to remain. In doing this he provided false details to the Home Office.

> The day the Home Office, I don't know what is asylum and when I
> came I said ok you go to Home Office and I didn't give my real name.
> I said I came from Congo straight away, but I came from Congo –
> Russia – here. I said all this, but they found out and stopped
> everything, because when they got my son's paperwork, it came out
> my fingerprint which showed when my dad's job finished, we didn't
> have any choice and gave the fingerprints and they found out
> everything that I was lying, this and that, and they got my real name.
> I told them what they found out but by then they wanted a reason.

Because **Isaac** had been given no information prior to his Home Office interview, and was unaware of the purpose or potential outcomes of asylum, he was wary of the system and it was this reluctance to put his trust in strangers that caused him to give false information. Now he is aware of the asylum system, what it means and what is required of him, he has since put in another claim and is waiting for the outcome.

Isaac has been waiting for over seven years to get status in the UK and is rarely provided with any information on the progress of his case. After making his

applications, **Isaac** received no information on what he was entitled to or of any organisations that may have been able to assist him. He described how he uses his weekly £37.50 to support himself, his sister and his baby, but that the money is not enough and he is desperate for more, but prohibited from seeking legal work.

Isaac noted how he knew plenty of people who were working while they waited for their asylum decision, but that because he had previously been detained and released with no explanation as to why, he was not willing to take a risk in working, even though any extra money would be a huge benefit. He described how there were plenty of people willing to help others from their country into finding illegitimate employment. These comments are resonant of Bloch's findings (2013) from research with undocumented migrants living in England. In studying the experiences of 75 young respondents, she found evidence that it is not uncommon for undocumented individuals to receive assistance from co-ethnic networks of undocumented strangers to find work. Dwyer (2005) found similar results in research with forced migrants struggling to survive on the government stipend provided in the UK.

Bloch's research also indicated that those most at risk of exploitation were those who were unable to speak English and working in a co-ethnic enclave. This reflects Imogen's experience (described in Chapter Four) of looking for help from strangers who spoke her language after the Job Centre turned her away. She was unable to speak English but found work with a fellow Bengali family who went on to exploit her for three years.

Sigona's research (2012) is also built on the experiences of people such as Isaac and Imogen, as he describes how an 'illegal' status can permeate every aspect of a migrant's life as fear of detention becomes a constant source of fear and anxiety. Isaac's fear of detention is so strong that it is reflected in the social network he keeps. Equally, Imogen was kept compliant in her exploitation by her exploiter's constant threats of reporting her undocumented status to the police.

When there are people like **Isaac** who has survived on £37.75 per week for seven years, it is easy to understand why some may choose to accept illegal work while waiting for an asylum decision. In these situations, a choice must be made between respecting the law and surviving on this small amount of money, or taking a risk in accepting offers of work which must remain hidden from authority. With the latter there is an inherent risk that this work could be exploitative as the employers hold all the power and there would be no recourse to report it or get support if the conditions were poor. This is an issue which is further addressed in Chapter Six.

Like **Gamba** and **Fredrika**, **Isaac** is supported by the drop-in centre which he attends regularly to get the support and advice that he is not provided by any statutory organisations. He has relied on this non-statutory service to discover information about the asylum system, his entitlements and what he should expect from the system. These are all issues that should have been provided to him upon his asylum application and, without the support of this drop-in centre, **Isaac** would have been unaware of his rights or the restrictions placed on asylum seekers. He may have even sought employment which could have resulted in either detention or exploitation.

5.1.3 Summary

The above discussion considers those who have fled conflict and come to the UK but who have not experienced contemporary slavery. This section of the findings reflected on whether these respondents have remained safe because of UK government policies, or despite them. Those who were kept safe because of government policies were those who were granted permission *and* support to remain in the UK. For some, this was via a UN resettlement programme where successful applicants received a level of support far beyond that offered to other asylum seekers. Others who were kept safe through governmental intervention included **James** who was identified by the Border Force upon his illegal entry to the UK; the Border Force then supported him to begin the asylum process. His story illustrated a successful intervention by this statutory body which identified him and effectively worked with partners to maintain his safety. The final group of people kept safe by government policies were those from countries to which the Home Office has no chartered removal. This meant that structures were in place to ensure that these individuals were not repatriated to a country where they would likely face extreme exploitation. However, on this last point, while the Home Office prevented exploitation occurring in the home country, it was not indicated through the interviews what support these individuals had been provided with and whether UK government policies had successfully kept them safe in the UK.

While all these respondents were kept safe because of the input of government systems, there were also plenty of examples from the interviews in which government

systems put people at risk; this was particularly true of asylum seekers who received support wholly incomparable to that received by those on a resettlement programme. For these people, regardless of whether they had received asylum or were still waiting on a decision, there was a significant lack of support from statutory agencies. This lack of support increased their vulnerabilities towards contemporary slavery, and it was only the assistance of strangers or of non-governmental organisations that kept them safe and informed of their rights.

This section highlights the failings of government policies to support the most at-risk and emphasises how even those who have received a positive asylum decision are not provided with enough information or support to keep them safe. Without this, asylum seekers are finding themselves destitute, homeless, or tempted by offers to break the rules of the asylum system and work to earn enough money to survive. However, because asylum seekers are denied the right to work, should they choose to support themselves in this way, there is a risk that any work they accept could be exploitative. Such labour will not be monitored or regulated, and the employers know that the workers are in no position to negotiate pay or working conditions. Should they find themselves in an exploitative situation, asylum seekers do not have the option to report abuse because, if they are found to have been working, regardless of the circumstances, they will likely be detained.

5.2   UK Risk Factors: Vulnerabilities Caused by UK Statutory Policies

The above section provides some detail on the experiences of those who have escaped conflict to the UK and who have not suffered contemporary slavery. It highlights some

of the ways that respondents experienced and dealt with risk factors associated with contemporary slavery, but there are still many more risk factors that have not yet been covered. The following section considers how those who flee conflict to the UK may become vulnerable, be this to contemporary slavery, or in a more generic sense, once they have arrived. It focuses particularly on the wait for an asylum decision, lying in an asylum claim, the inaccessibility of the asylum system, mental health and hopes for the future.

5.2.1 Waiting for an Asylum Decision: Between a Rock and a Hard Place

It is clear from the discussions above that the support received by those on a resettlement programme differs significantly from the support received by asylum seekers in the UK. A refugee cannot claim asylum in the UK until they have arrived at the border, and there are no safe, legal, guaranteed ways to do this. As such, many often experience long and dangerous journeys in the hope that they will be granted asylum upon application. Those supported through the resettlement programmes receive accommodation, vocational training, access to benefits, ESOL lessons and assistance from a support worker for a year after arriving. However, while those who seek asylum may receive a cash stipend and a bed while they wait for the outcome of their decision, they receive little other support or advice.

Once asylum has been granted, little changes. Refugees have their weekly stipend stopped and may have to leave their accommodation. While they are entitled to apply for welfare benefits or seek employment, unlike those on resettlement programmes, they have no support worker to advise them through these processes. The government

has identified such refugees as vulnerable enough to warrant asylum yet does not

offer support to ensure that those vulnerabilities do not result in the exploitation of

people left unassisted in a country that they do not know. There is no clear reason as

to why the government does not deem itself accountable for these refugees, when the

treatment it offers those on the resettlement programmes is so significantly different.

There is clearly a risk that these people will be vulnerable to offers that may transpire

to be situations of slavery. They must find a way to support themselves but may not

know where to go to find out their entitlements or to apply for legitimate employment

and may be too afraid of repatriation to seek assistance. As such, offers of cash in hand

work or a place to stay may be tempting, but may equally be an entry into exploitation.

However, it is also important to note that by failing to take accountability and offer

support to refugees, the government not only allows them to live at risk of exploitation

but is depriving itself of the social and monetary input that the refugees would provide

if they had support in settling quickly into the community.

The asylum system was discussed in detail by several respondents, particularly in

relation to how distressing they found the process and how it did little to support them

or keep them safe. **Oscar**'s story of receiving asylum and becoming homeless

emphasises how a positive asylum decision does not automatically equate to safety.

Hasim also illustrates the difficulties faced after being granted asylum. He received a

positive asylum decision after a year of waiting but described how he had been wrong

to assume that life would be easier once he was granted asylum.

> I think when you get asylum you think things will change but it's just
>
> more hills to climb. You need to get accommodation, you need to get

a job, you need to know your bearings, you need to understand the

system which is very complex. The benefits system, housing... it's a

lot to sort out. Where do you go to get a job for example? How much

are you paid? What are the multiplications in terms of you for your

entitlements? Even if you do not go through the asylum system you

would still struggle to sort out your entitlements. So it is hard.

Therefore, the status afforded a person once they are granted asylum is just one of

many steps to integrating into a new society, and it cannot be assumed that a person

will be safe, secure or settled simply as a result of receiving a positive asylum decision.

As **Oscar** stated, "it's not fair to give people the documents and just leave them. You

need at least a couple of months or so" of support in order to understand your

bearings and entitlements.

5.2.2   Lying in Asylum Claim: Performing to Expectations

Issues of waiting for an asylum decision have been discussed already to some extent in

relation to **Fredrika**, **Gamba** and **Isaac**. **Fredrika** and **Isaac** were both so afraid of

repatriation that they lied in their initial asylum claims in the hopes that the stories

they gave would offer them the best chance at being allowed to stay in the UK. **Isaac**

had been afraid to disclose his father's job as a diplomat, while **Fredrika** was

concerned to disclose her sexuality for fear of repercussions.

These cases indicate how some people are so fearful of telling their story that they are

unwilling to disclose the whole truth in their asylum interviews. This is understandable

in many situations where people have been through demanding situations with no one to trust or have been betrayed by someone that they did trust. Further, asylum seekers may be particularly wary of disclosing their stories if, like **Isaac**, they were detained and released by government officials with no explanation. For those like **Catherine** and **Nadia** who were exploited by police and government officials, a mistrust of authority and reluctance to engage would be unsurprising. They may fear that the people who were exploiting them may be in contact with other government officials and feel at risk if they were to disclose the truth.

When officials had discovered the flaws in their stories, **Fredrika** and **Isaac**'s asylum claims were rejected, but neither were willing to give up and, like **Gamba**, would have taken the risk of being destitute and homeless in the UK rather than risking their lives by returning to their home countries. **Fredrika** and **Gamba** both became homeless and destitute after the government ended their support, however they were both fortunate to receive assistance from charities, which undoubtedly reduced their vulnerabilities should they have been left to find a way to support themselves. While they are currently living in precarious situations, they have both opened new claims for asylum because they are of the strong belief that they will be killed should they return 'home'.

These examples indicate how fear and distrust of authorities can lead asylum seekers to lie or withhold information during their claims. The result of this is that their claim is likely to be rejected and their support will end. Therefore, a fear of authority can lead directly to destitution, at which point these asylum seekers become vulnerable to

offers of illegitimate and potentially exploitative labour. Clarification is necessary for those undertaking asylum interviews on the reasons that asylum seekers may withhold the truth. However, clarification on the asylum system, the reasons for the interviews, and all the potential outcomes should also be provided to those applying in order to emphasise to them the importance of providing truthful accounts and to reassure them of the intentions of the interviewers.

5.2.3   The Inaccessibility of the Asylum System

It is also important to highlight how those who are unaware of the asylum system may be penalised. **Imogen**'s story is a perfect example of how the failure of statutory agencies to provide information caused her to be extremely vulnerable and eventually led her to accept the assistance of a stranger which resulted in her suffering contemporary slavery for three years. **Catherine**'s story also exemplifies the treatment of immigrants who are unaware of the asylum process.

When **Catherine** arrived in the UK from Albania, like **Imogen**, she did not know of the asylum process. She managed to find some cleaning work by talking to people she met who spoke the same language. Here, there was little difference between **Imogen** and **Catherine**'s situations. They both arrived in the UK, unaware of their entitlements, and approached strangers for help. It was simply chance that led **Imogen** into exploitation but led **Catherine** to sporadic work and finding housing.

However, because **Catherine** did not claim asylum immediately upon arrival, this counted against her when she finally did come to make a claim. As such, for **Catherine**,

a lack of information on the asylum system when she arrived in the UK directly affected her chances of getting a positive decision. If she had access to this information when she arrived in the country, **Catherine** would have begun the application process immediately and would not be in her sixth year of waiting for a decision.

Catherine's claims have been rejected twice as they are considered unreliable, however, she suffers severe PTSD because of her slavery experience and this is widely acknowledged to impact upon memory. **Catherine** is currently waiting on the outcome of her third attempt at claiming asylum. Like **Gamba** and **Fredrika**, **Catherine** fears that she will be killed if she returns to her home country.

Catherine has been in the UK for six years, but the precariousness of her situation, not having status and constantly fearing that she will be returned to Albania, means that she has been completely unable to settle. She feels unable to return to Albania, mentioning:

> about Albania being a small country and the population isn't very big
> so it wouldn't be hard to be found. So she has a huge fear of going
> back. He - the pimp - would find her and get revenge…and because
> there were so many officials that used this hotel [that **Catherine** was
> exploited in].

For **Catherine**, to have had information on the asylum process when she crossed the border into the UK would have been invaluable. The delay in beginning her claim counted against her as she was deemed accountable for discovering and navigating the system herself; the wait has significantly impacted her mental health.

This fear of repatriation is something highlighted in multiple interviews. Although several respondents mentioned that they would love to return home if it was safe to do so, many described how returning home is simply not an option for them because of the risks associated with their return. This causes added stress for them because the result of their asylum claim could essentially be a death sentence. Respondents such as **Gamba**, **James**, **Imogen**, **Fredrika** and **Catherine** are certain that, should they return to their home countries, they would be killed. Waiting on the outcome of their asylum claim generates high levels of stress as, to them, the result is not simply whether or not they will be granted rights to remain in the UK, but is potentially a decision on whether or not they will be killed.

A lack of knowledge of the asylum system coupled with a fear of repatriation can discourage those who fear for their lives in their home countries from interacting with authority. Again, clarification of their rights and the purpose of the asylum system could encourage engagement and decrease the likelihood of refugees being trapped in contemporary slavery as a result of trying to find methods to survive while remaining hidden.

5.2.4   The Psychological Impact of a Dehumanising System

Catherine's case worker discussed how distressing life is for her while she waits for her asylum decision. She knows she is unable to return to Albania safely, so all her hope rests on receiving a positive decision, to the point where everyday situations cause her severe anguish.

To give you an example I got an envelope out with something in one

day to give her and she thought it was from the Home Office to

deport her. That was how…anything that's in a brown envelope or so

now I make sure that I keep it outside of the envelope before. But

when the post comes to the door it's a real trigger for her.

This is a topic that has been dissected by Darling, whose research considers the ways

that the UK government, by using letters, generates a unique bond between itself and

asylum seekers. "Letters are considered as things that hold the capacity to move

individuals in affective and interpersonal ways" (Darling, 2014:486). They are

documents which may be formal, but are often read in an informal space, thereby

allowing the government to infiltrate a space in an asylum seeker's life that would not

ordinarily be accessible to them.

When asked about how a negative asylum decision might affect **Catherine**, her case

worker voiced her concern.

I think her risk would increase…Massively. I think she might run

away. I would also worry about her risk. I think she could be pushed

to a state where she'd rather she died than went back to Albania.

Catherine's story highlights the sense of limbo created by the asylum process as

people wait for their decisions and are unable to work or access education. Knowing

that she cannot return safely to Albania but having to wait to find out if she will be

supported to stay in the UK has caused her severe anguish as her life remains on hold.

She is in her sixth year of waiting for a decision, meaning that she has been unable to

settle or integrate for a significant length of time and, as her status is her priority, has been unable to deal with any of the traumatic effects caused by her experiences.

> I mean she has constant nightmares. She couldn't sleep at all when I saw her…She's hyperactive…She's really thin, really suffering chronically with PTSD isn't she. Her stress is very high and she's very tearful every time I see her.

Interestingly, the topic of negative mental health after escaping conflict and arriving in the UK is discussed by the majority of respondents who have gone through the asylum process, but was omitted completely by those who came through a resettlement programme. This reflects some of the differences in experiences between the two systems.

The impact of the asylum system on mental health was a topic discussed by **Fredrika** who has been in the asylum system for four years and who, as a gay woman, fears being returned to Uganda where she is certain she would be arrested, if not killed for her sexuality. She has struggled to make friends in the UK, stating that she prefers to be alone, and that being destitute makes it very difficult to maintain any type of relationship, because asylum seekers are unable to afford to go anywhere and have no home to invite friends into.

> If you were in my situation, you don't even think about meeting people. When people meet you have to go somewhere have a cup of coffee. But if you don't even get £10, I get £10 from a charity

organisation for a week. How am I going to start to afford bringing

people to my…I don't know, it's hard.

Fredrika described how once she starts to think about her emotions, she can quickly

spiral into despair as she worries about her future – not knowing if she will be

permitted to stay, get a job and resume a normal life, or if she will be returned to

Uganda where she is fearful that she would be killed.

> You can't work. You just can't do anything. You basically go through
>
> phases and things that you'd never experience. You get depressed.
>
> Becoming suicidal which has happened to me about three times. And
>
> then you start thinking about your sexuality, and then you start
>
> thinking oh what's going to happen tomorrow. Because when you go
>
> to sign at [name of office], you might or you might not come back. I
>
> sign every two weeks on a Monday and even the sign in sheet says
>
> you're liable to detention, so you might not come back. What kind of
>
> life is that?

Catherine and **Fredrika**'s experiences of the asylum system had a hugely negative

impact on their mental health. Both women fear being repatriated and expect that

they would be murdered if they were to return 'home', yet they have no influence

over the outcome of their asylum decisions. Though the asylum system may not have

made them immediately vulnerable to situations of contemporary slavery, their fear of

repatriation means that, should they be denied asylum, there is every chance they will

attempt to stay in the UK, searching for illegitimate work to survive in the hope of

avoiding being returned to their home countries. In attempting to remain undetected

by authorities, any labour they find will be unregulated, therefore increasing the likelihood that it will be exploitative.

5.2.5 A Future in the Face of Uncertainty

Fredrika mentioned how she tries to think about her future positively, but her feelings oscillate when she is faced with such uncertainty.

> I just hope for the best. I'm being optimistic, but there's a thin line in between being optimistic and then going down rapidly…Yeah like today I'll be feeling very optimistic. Tomorrow I'll be something different. Completely something different.

This sense of despair was highlighted by **Gamba** when he was asked to think about his hopes for the future. He has been in the asylum system for six years and fears being repatriated as he knows several people from his political group have been killed for their activism. Although he wants to complete his university degree and be able to lead a 'normal' life, **Gamba** struggles to allow himself to think about the future because of the complexities caused by hoping.

> Hope is a very good thing for people to have, but when you hope, especially in my situation, if things don't happen you just get depressed. So most of the time you take it a day at a time and try not to dream. Just accept it.

The uncertainty makes it difficult for anyone to remain positive and some respondents simply did not want to talk about their futures because they found the topic so

unsettling. This was particularly true of **Isaac** who has had an asylum claim rejected after it was discovered that he lied in his interview. He has a son who was born in the UK, his sister is in the UK, his mother has died and he has no information on the location of his father, or whether he is even still alive. He is originally from Congo, but has very few memories of living there and has no contact with anyone there. **Isaac** fears being repatriated to a country he does not know and having to leave his son and young sister in the UK. For these reasons, he prefers not to think about the future and takes each day at a time.

> Interviewer: So what do you hope for your future?

> Isaac: Do I have to say?

> Interviewer: You don't have to say anything you don't want to say,
> it's fine and we can move on if you don't want to talk about that.

> Isaac: Maybe move on.

Fredrika, **Gamba** and **Isaac** are all still waiting for the outcomes of their asylum claims. For them, the asylum system has constituted a removal of agency whereby they have no control over their futures. They must wait for the government to make the decision as to whether they will be granted asylum, and their only alternative options would be to voluntarily return home or try to find a way to survive in the UK by illegally seeking work without being identified by authorities – a risk that would increase any vulnerabilities towards experiencing contemporary slavery. This has left these respondents in a state of uncertainty while they wait to receive the results of their asylum decision. During this time, they are unable to make any plans for their futures,

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not knowing how long they will have to wait, or where they will have to live once they get the results. This prevents asylum seekers from being able to deal with any mental health issues they are already facing, as demonstrated by **Catherine**, yet it also serves to further impact on applicants' mental health. It prevents asylum seekers from wanting to, or even being able to, integrate into their current society, therefore exacerbating any pre-existing societal divides. However, this distress regarding thoughts of the future is not limited to those who are still in the asylum process; some respondents who have been granted asylum still feel this way when thinking about their futures.

Hasim fled Uganda for political reasons and has been in the UK for seven years. He was granted asylum in the UK, but his family are still in Uganda and, although they are safe now, he never knows how long that will last. Worrying about his family was an added stress on top of the difficulties associated with claiming asylum in the UK. "The asylum system is hard. Finding opportunities, jobs is hard. It's a struggle. Life is challenging. It's not easy."

Despite the fact that **Hasim** has been granted asylum and has been in the UK for seven years, he still finds it difficult to contemplate his future.

> I use religion as a way of building hope [however]…I don't want to be
> really ambitious and hopeful. It's hard, you cannot hope for your
> future in a different world. I would easily answer that question in my
> own country but how do you answer when you're not in your own
> country? It becomes hard to see yourself where you want to see

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yourself with that future...To ask what you hope for your future is a

hard question.

The future **Hasim** has now is not one he had ever considered before he had to flee

Uganda. He still sees Uganda as his home and he would love to return there, but

knows he is unable to because he would be at risk. This makes it difficult for him to

think about his future, because the future he wants for himself is not available to him.

This example of a refugee in the UK who has been granted asylum, lives in safety and

has a successful job that he enjoys, yet who continues to feel distress about his future

and when thinking of his family, reinforces the fact that not all asylum seekers are

economic migrants who see the UK as 'paved with gold' as the media often claims.

Hasim's experience emphasises how unsettled life can feel even after being granted

leave to remain and that a lucrative life in the UK is still, for many, less desirable than

their previous lives in their home countries.

5.2.6   Summary

This final section of the findings considers the risk factors that those seeking and

granted asylum continue to face after fleeing conflict to the UK. It highlights the huge

discrepancy between those arriving in the UK as part of a resettlement programme

and those who arrive and claim asylum. The former receive notable support for twelve

months and the latter, if their claim is successful, receive entitlements but little other

support or advice. The risks that continue to face asylum seekers and refugees include

situations which may put them at risk of contemporary slavery, such as destitution or a

lack of support when the government no longer deems itself accountable for their welfare. This forces them to turn to strangers for help, advice, accommodation or work. While some asylum seekers experience genuine support in these situations, others risk accepting offers that emerge to be situations of contemporary slavery.

While these are clearly serious risks which can be traced back to the input – or lack thereof – of the government and statutory agencies, other risks are associated less with generating vulnerabilities towards contemporary slavery and more with impacting on mental health. These risks include the wait for asylum decisions generating feelings of uncertainty in which claimants are reluctant to put down roots, and which can cause fractures within a society. For some, the stress of the wait is exponential, as a rejected claim may mean repatriation which, for some, equates to a death sentence. Such levels of fear may encourage some to attempt to remain hidden in the UK, trying to find a life for themselves away from authority. Of course, such situations hold inherent risk of leading to contemporary slavery when the only employers that will take such workers on are those willing to employ people illegally, knowing that the workers are in no position to negotiate pay or working conditions or to raise a complaint against the employers.

Some refugees and asylum seekers may feel safer in the UK because they have escaped their situation of conflict. However, while they continue to be unable to settle or make a life for themselves in the UK, not only are they not contributing economically to the UK, but they are unable to think positively about their future. They continue to reminisce about the stability they had prior to the conflict and worry about

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family and friends they left behind. The lack of stability available to them in the UK only consolidates these feelings of despair and makes them question statutory intentions. Any feelings of distrust generated as a result could again encourage attempts to avoid detection by authorities, leading people to search for illegitimate labour with intrinsic risks of leading to contemporary slavery.

5.3   Conclusion

This findings chapter has discussed two key issues regarding people who have fled to the UK to escape conflict: the ways in which people have remained safe from contemporary slavery, and the risk factors that continue to face them.

Two key methods have been highlighted through which the respondents who did not experience slavery were kept safe from it: the support of the government and statutory agencies, and the support of strangers and NGOs. While the former exemplified ways in which government structures had been successful in identifying and protecting potentially vulnerable people, the latter related to situations in which those systems had failed and the respondents remained safe only through interventions by strangers or NGOs. Despite this, reflecting the findings of Chapter Four, the stories continued to indicate a lack of options. In these cases, like those who experienced contemporary slavery, their options had been limited by the conflict, but were then further impacted after arrival in the UK.

For some, the restriction of options led to safety as government agencies successfully

intervened in situations that could have resulted in slavery. For others, the limited

choices coupled with the failings of government systems exacerbated their

vulnerabilities, for example by causing homelessness. In these situations, despite the

statutory failings, the individuals were lucky enough to be kept safe through the

support of a non-governmental third party.

This impact on agency and choice is also experienced throughout the asylum process

as asylum seekers are left with limited support and options. Although a lack of support

is felt widely amongst asylum seekers, it is particularly prevalent for those whose

governmental support has been revoked and who are left with no housing and no

stipend. For those who are in the asylum system, their choices are restricted to:

voluntarily returning to their home country, trying to make a life in the UK illegally and

remain hidden from authority, or embracing the asylum system and accepting that

they have no control on the timings or the outcome of the decision. This limiting of

agency and resulting uncertainty about the future has a significantly detrimental

impact on mental health for asylum seekers, for some of whom the outcome of the

decision equates to a potential death sentence should they be repatriated. For many,

this can cause a sense of hopelessness and despair, where thinking about the future

becomes futile. For some, such hopelessness could encourage an avoidance of the

system, leading to a life hiding from authorities and seeking to remain in the UK

illegally, finding illegitimate work which holds the inherent risk of being exploitative

because of its lack of regulation.

Overall, it is the restriction of options, coupled with a lack of support - be that familial

or governmental - that most significantly increases the likelihood that someone will experience contemporary slavery. While each of these aspects can cause vulnerabilities in themselves, it is often the interconnection between the two that exacerbates any pre-existing vulnerability. For those who experienced restricted options and an initial lack of support but did not go on to experience slavery, it was the intervention of support further down the line that ultimately prevented them from experiencing slavery when, otherwise, their stories were profoundly similar to others who had gone on to become victims of contemporary slavery. The following two chapters ground the findings from this research in the relevant literature, with the first analysis chapter focusing on the structural impacts relating to contemporary slavery.

Chapter Six: Structure and Slavery – Intersectionality, Policies and Exploitation

The two previous chapters summarise the research findings. They address the vulnerabilities caused by conflict and how these vulnerabilities may lead someone directly into contemporary slavery. They also consider the role that UK policies play in either exacerbating these vulnerabilities or keeping people safe after they have fled conflict and arrived in the UK. The two chapters highlight several key issues that indicate when a person may become vulnerable to a situation of contemporary slavery, focusing predominantly on a removal of choice and a lack of support.

This chapter puts meaning to these findings and situates them within the current literature in order to identify how they corroborate or contradict current thought. It addresses the impact of structure on generating the conditions that allow contemporary slavery to thrive by considering the roles of intersectionality and structural dynamics as well as the impact of UK government systems in generating vulnerabilities. Understanding the impact of structural conditions on creating such vulnerabilities is fundamental in assessing how effective structural changes can be made to limit the likelihood that an individual may become vulnerable to contemporary slavery in the UK.

The chapter then considers the much-debated difference between slavery and exploitation by evaluating forms of exploitation that are often described as straddling this binary. This is important in assessing whether generating a distinction between the two is either possible or necessary.

6.1   Intersectionality and Structural Dynamics

At the outset of the research, it was anticipated that the interviews would generate data that could be categorised to form generalisations about people's experiences, offering insights to suggest that certain situations are more likely to lead particular individuals fleeing conflict into contemporary slavery than others. However, the simplest thing to derive from the findings discussed in chapters Four and Five is that no two people's experiences are the same, and that it is simply not plausible to make generalisations. Different backgrounds, choices, and identities lead to different experiences, and it is here that notions of intersectionality should be discussed.

Intersectionality was developed in response to feminist discourses which grouped women by gender alone. Such a grouping was criticised by black feminists for failing to understand how the experiences of race significantly separated black and white women's struggles, where, like white women, black women were subordinated by their gender, but also, unlike white women, by the colour of their skin. Their claims were that feminism suggested that all women's experiences were the same, citing the white woman's experience as representative, and overlooking the further struggles faced by non-white women.

Crenshaw (1989) highlighted that black women's experiences were different to white women's and that, as such, they should not be categorised together. Instead, she purported that the experience of black women was to be found where racism and

sexism intersected. This began the conception of intersectionality whereby gender is no longer considered an isolated category, but attention is now given to the way it intersects with other categories of identity as a method of understanding inequality (Conaghan, 2009). The purpose of intersectionality was to show that people could have multiple identities at the same time – such as being young, black, female and disabled – rather than each of these identities existing in independence of the others. By understanding this co-existence of identities within one person's experience, intersectionality is able to go beyond analyses of discrimination that are based only on a single identity trait. Intersectionality is no longer concerned only with the experiences of women, but is used to highlight how the intersections of different identities can lead any group to experience inequality.

To relate intersectionality to this research, it can be used to highlight the intersections at which people are most likely to experience inequality to an extent that leads them into a situation of contemporary slavery. However, when considering who may be vulnerable to situations of contemporary slavery, the literature tends to stay vague, claiming that people become victims of contemporary slavery because they had previously been vulnerable 'in some way'. This is not a helpful assertion and fails to highlight any specific vulnerabilities; it could reasonably be said that everyone is vulnerable in some way.

Contemporary slavery studies often tend to focus on the end result of the slavery rather than the root causes (e.g. Craig et al., 2007; Bales & Trodd, 2008; Kara, 2009; Murphy, 2014; Human Trafficking Foundation, 2015; 2016; Anti-Slavery International,

2018). They concentrate on individual forms of slavery, such as child slavery, sexual exploitation or labour exploitation, meaning that the reasons that the slavery occurred are often overlooked. There is, of course, also literature that focuses predominantly on root causes (e.g. Phillips, 2015, LeBaron et al., 2018). However, there is a dearth of research of conflict as a driver of contemporary slavery; especially notions of conflict that extend beyond war. This research overcomes this flaw by looking at conflict as a start point of the development of vulnerabilities as opposed to using the end point of the experience of slavery as the focus.

In academic literature on contemporary slavery, intersectionality is rarely a key focus. Prominent exceptions are Yea (2015) and Strauss (2016) whose work respectively provides an overview of how intersectional identity markers can create a distinction between trafficked and non-trafficked persons, and insight into social and political categorisation leading to vulnerabilities. These examples focus on labour exploitation, however most references to intersectionality relating to contemporary slavery refer to the sexual exploitation of women and notions of victimhood. Baker (2013) and Russell (2014) both consider intersectionality in reference to the usefulness of the victimhood placed on those who have experienced slavery in the form of sexual exploitation. Baker focuses on paternalism and rescue narratives, highlighting how the implication of the word 'rescue' inevitably implies that the 'victims' are passive and lacking agency. Russell mirrors this point with regards to the use of the term 'victim', and both authors indicate how this passive victim terminology clouds the other aspects of each individual's identity, instead grouping all 'victims' as women with the same experience. These criticisms highlight how framing women in this way serves to overlook the vastly

different constituent parts of their identities and is a clear reflection of Crenshaw's criticism of white feminism. Agency and the impact of victim terminology are issues discussed further in Chapter Seven.

To use intersectionality in the context of this research involves considering the intersecting identities of the respondents in order to understand what it was about their identities that led them to be discriminated against in such a way as to become victims of contemporary slavery. To consider the individuals in simple categories such as gender, race, ethnicity or religion alone would be to consider only one aspect of their identities and therefore overlook any other facet which may have also had an important impact on their experiences of inequality. It would also suggest that all those of the same broad category, women for example, would have similar experiences in leaving their conflict and would be just as likely to experience contemporary slavery as one another. As the findings from this research show, that is not the case. Eighteen of the stories accessed through interviews were those of women, all of whom had fled conflict, and yet some of them had experienced contemporary slavery while others had not.[1] This exemplifies how considerations that focus only on how the vulnerabilities of being a woman might lead to contemporary slavery are flawed and, to truly understand the situations, analyses must delve much deeper than this, as advocated by intersectionality.

Intersectionality would encourage the researcher to take each individual and assess how different aspects of their identity intersect. A comparison could then be made

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[1] The reasons for the gender imbalance were not evident, but could range from the gender of the researcher to the client groups working with the gatekeepers that were initially approached.

between individuals with the same identity intersections to consider whether they had similar experiences. To take the example of women, from the interviews, **Imogen** and **Mahal** were both women fleeing conflict and both experienced contemporary slavery. However, this does not mean that being a woman fleeing conflict necessarily makes someone vulnerable to contemporary slavery; intersectionality encourages such an analysis to be taken further to consider other aspects of an individual's identity that could cause them to be vulnerable. **Imogen** was a woman with a high status job as a politician who fled conflict. **Louise**'s mother was also a woman with a high status job (a doctor) who also fled conflict; both these women experienced contemporary slavery. However, **Sakti** was a woman who had a high status job (a surgeon) and fled conflict, yet she did not experience contemporary slavery. Again, this means it would be invalid to claim that women with high status jobs fleeing conflict are necessarily vulnerable to contemporary slavery.

It is clear from these examples how easy it could be to keep adding more aspects of identity into the comparison in order to identify precisely which intersections cause people to be most at risk of contemporary slavery. However, such comparisons would quickly reach saturation and lose comprehensibility. As discussed by McCall (2009), intersectionality can get caught between scale and coherence. This occurs when, in order to fully compare people's experiences, the intersections of multiple aspects of people's identities must be considered, but doing so can quickly lead to incoherence when those categories become so specific and include lengthy lists of constitutive categories of identity such as race, ethnicity, religion, class, age, gender, education level etc. Further, while comparisons might suggest that people with the same

intersections of identity have similar experiences, it is not possible to identify precisely which intersection causes the vulnerability.

To illustrate this point, take for example a group of women who have all experienced contemporary slavery after fleeing a conflict. They have all lost their families and all have a high status job. For some of those women, the intersection causing the vulnerability could be between gender and loss of family, while for others it could be between having a high status job and fleeing a conflict. It is not possible to identify which intersection causes the vulnerability in a small-scale research study such as this, as there is restricted potential for comparison. While a larger scale qualitative study of the experiences of people who have fled conflict and suffered contemporary slavery may help overcome this issue of comparison, it would still struggle with the issue of scale versus coherence. This research suggests that it is not possible to generate specific enough categories that both incorporate all the intersections of a person's identity whilst keeping the intersections broad enough to make valid comparisons.

To provide further examples from the interviews, **James** and **Imogen** had both fled their home countries because they faced threats against their life. From the surface it seems that they have very similar intersections within their identities: both were adults, were close with their families, were well-educated and were working in jobs they enjoyed. Both went on to pay agents up front to help them escape their home countries, but **Imogen** went on to be enslaved while **James** did not. It could be argued here that these categories are still too large and fail to take account of further differences such as age and gender. However, if the intersectionalities discussed here

were to delve into deeper categorisations (male, young adult, relatively wealthy, well-educated and close to family as opposed to female, older adult, relatively wealthy, high status job), then the categories soon become so specific that it is not possible to undertake reliable comparisons between people in the same category because there will always be further differences between each constituting member to the extent that categories will soon cease to exist. Ehrenreich (2002:267) refers to this issue as the "infinite regress problem: the tendency of all identity groupings to split into ever-smaller subgroups, until there seems to be no hope of any coherent category other than the individual." As such, using intersectionality to understand what might make someone vulnerable to contemporary slavery soon hits barriers and pushes the researcher to consider, instead, individual experiences rather than categorical or collective experiences, because each situation of contemporary slavery is caused by a combination of multiple factors. This makes comparisons unfeasible.

It is here that Hunter and de Simone's (2009) assertion must be introduced. They argue that it is more productive to concentrate on the context or structural dynamics of a situation than on identity categories (an idea corroborated by Cameron and Newman, 2008 and Blazek et al., 2018). Such standpoints claim that while aspects of people's identities may make them more susceptible than others to situations of contemporary slavery, it is the overarching structures of society that are most responsible for generating those vulnerabilities in the first instance. This is one of the key findings of this thesis, particularly in relation to the impact of conflict and of UK government systems in limiting choices and leaving people in situations where they must make risky decisions.

To use **James** and **Imogen** again as examples, they shared a context of needing to flee their home countries because their lives were at risk. They were both wanted by the police, meaning structural dynamics limited their options and prevented them from fleeing legally, so both paid agents to help them escape the country. Structural dynamics then began to differ on arrival to the UK, where **James** was reported to immigration officers while **Imogen** did not receive the same statutory interest. It was this difference that allowed **James** to remain safe while **Imogen**, unaware of her entitlements or where she could access help, turned to strangers for help. Those strangers went on to deceive her into a situation of forced labour and domestic servitude which she suffered for three years.

However, although the context and structural dynamics are important in understanding the circumstances of a situation, they do not necessarily negate the importance or impact that identity has on that situation. To use a further example from the interviews to highlight the importance of considering context and structural dynamics *in addition to* intersectionality, **Andrea** was a Ugandan woman who experienced contemporary slavery, but it was not her status as a woman that led to the exploitation exclusively. Her family had been killed several years previously, which left her without her familial support network and, as a result, she was living in the capital city on her own. It was this intersection of being female and without any family support that led her to accept the offer of a job in the UK which transpired to be a situation of domestic servitude.

Mahal's story reflects **Andrea**'s, in that she was living in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo when her family were killed during a conflict. This vulnerability of being a female left without her family's support led her to move to be with other members of her extended family, but here she was deceived into a situation of sexual exploitation. Similarly, **Padma** was a woman left without family support after her husband was killed. She was in danger by association and accepted an offer from a man who claimed to be able to move her to safety in the UK; instead he locked her in a basement and sexually exploited her.

These three stories all indicate that the intersection of being a woman and having no family may be likely to cause someone to experience a situation of contemporary slavery. While this claim may have some validity, it overlooks the context of each of the stories. It would certainly not be accurate to claim that all women without families are at risk of contemporary slavery; the context of their situations must be taken into account in order to assess the likelihood of such a vulnerability. For **Andrea**, the loss of her family left her without the support network she was used to; this was an aspect of her identity that made her vulnerable, however it was the context of looking for a job that led her directly into the situation of slavery. Similarly, **Mahal** may have been vulnerable as a female living alone after the death of her family, but it was the context of moving to be with extended family that led to her exploitation. Equally, for **Padma**, though she may have been vulnerable as a woman alone after the death of her husband, it was these intersecting vulnerabilities in addition to the context of being offered assistance to leave the situation that steered her into a situation of slavery.

It is in this light that the links between conflict and contemporary slavery should be approached. This echoes the assertions of Conaghan (2009) who argues that discussions of identity and experience should be mirrored with those of systems and processes in order to provide a balanced approach that does not overestimate the impact either of identity categories, or of context or structural dynamics.

Even though inequality continues to be complex, intersectionality has reached the limit of its practicability when considered in isolation. It faces the restrictions of being unable to provide both scale and coherence, and it overlooks the impact of external factors. To consider only the vulnerabilities established due to intersecting aspects of a person's identity is to overlook some of the significant differences experienced by members of the same groups in relation to context and structural dynamics. It is only by considering all these aspects together that a true understanding of any one person's story can be fully grasped. This will mean that it will rarely be possible to make comparisons between people's stories, because the likelihood that individuals will have the same intersecting aspects of identity and live through the same contexts and structural dynamics is extremely limited.

This thesis has discovered that it is not possible to understand risks to contemporary slavery using intersectionality alone. There is no single or intersecting identity trait that makes one person more vulnerable to becoming a victim of contemporary slavery than another. Instead, it is the context of the situation that should be prioritised in order to identify risk. Contexts that limit people's choices and reduce their agency are those that are most likely to generate a risk to contemporary slavery; this is regardless of the identity of the person in question.

6.2 The Restrictive Policies of the UK Government

While advocating the importance of considering context and structural conditions alongside intersecting identities, it must also be recognised that intersectionality *is* contextual in the sense that inequalities caused by identity are structural conditions. However, it is common that the identities of foreign nationals in the UK are overlooked. While migrants' identities are vastly different, ranging in age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion and any other number of factors, once they have reached the UK they are regularly referred to as a homogenised group, as 'refugees', 'asylum seekers' or 'migrants'. This highlights the way that the UK's asylum system is essentially generating a new class of (non) citizen (Sales, 2002). The focus here is on their identity after arriving in the UK, an identity which is limited purely to their migration status. While victims of contemporary slavery in the UK are also commonly branded by their victim status as opposed to by their identities, when aspects of their identities are considered, they are usually in reference to their pre-UK selves: their levels of education, economic standing, gender or nationality. In referring to these individuals' identities in this way, emphasis is placed on how vulnerabilities may have existed before their arrival in the UK, and attention is drawn away from the ways in which the UK government's systems generate new identities and contexts which encourage vulnerabilities and put people at risk of contemporary slavery.

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the UK government's system for identifying, counting, and offering support to victims of 'modern slavery' and human trafficking (England and Wales refer to modern slavery, while Scotland and Northern

Ireland look only at human trafficking, hence the discrepancy in terminology).

Although the NRM is flawed in many ways, it provides the most reliable non-estimated set of figures relating to contemporary slavery in the UK. One of the issues with the NRM statistics is that it only counts those who have been identified and adults must consent to entering the NRM, therefore those who do not provide consent are not counted in the figures. Equally, the number referred into the NRM is often the number quoted in discussions of statistics of slavery and trafficking in the UK, despite the fact that a large proportion of those will later receive negative decisions, indicating that they were wrongly identified and should not have been included in the figures (Burland, 2017).

The Modern Slavery Act introduced a duty to notify (gov.uk, 2015), meaning that if an adult refuses consent to be entered into the NRM, the member of staff identifying the potential victim is required to complete a form providing basic details on this person so that this information can be collated. However, as this potential victim may encounter multiple organisations, and the form does not require identifying factors, there is every possibility that individuals will be counted multiple times, making the information unreliable in generating accurate statistics. As a result, despite the flaws, it is NRM figures that are most widely cited in reference to statistics on contemporary slavery in the UK.

The NRM figures (NCA, 2018) show that in the UK in 2017, more than double the number of potential victims referred into the NRM originated from non-EU countries than EU countries including the UK (3677 and 1462 respectively). Perhaps this explains

the government's tendency to look elsewhere for the root causes of contemporary

slavery whilst overlooking its own impact and failing to hold itself accountable

(O'Connell Davidson & Howard, 2015; Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner,

2018b), as discussed further below. As mentioned in Chapter Two, across Europe there

has been a significant focus on limiting immigration; the Freedom Fund notes how $17

billion has been spent within Europe since 2014 (article published November 2016) on

curbing immigration and asylum seeking. In the UK, this focus and money is placed on

reducing the number of immigrants entering the UK as opposed to trying to identify

and support those who have already entered; the government uses this approach to

frame its anti-immigration efforts as a way of tackling human trafficking. As O'Connell

Davidson and Howard (2015) describe, as newspapers report tragic events of migrant

boats capsizing, politicians refer to them as victims of smugglers who are trafficking

people across borders. Although clearly confusing smuggling and trafficking,

approaching these situations in this way allows the politicians to suggest that migrants

moving without the state's consent are putting themselves at risk of trafficking, and

therefore, by limiting illegal immigration the state is offering them protection. This is a

simple way in which the government is able to frame its policies as paternalistic while

it simultaneously fails to accept accountability for the ways in which its restrictive

policies create the perfect environment for contemporary slavery to thrive amongst

those who are in the UK illegally (O'Connell Davidson, 2013a; 2013b; 2016) and who

are too afraid to make themselves known to authorities because of the potential

repercussions.

To be entered into the National Referral Mechanism, there is no rule as to where the

reported exploitation must have taken place. This means that people who have fled a situation of slavery and come to the UK, people who have been enslaved along the journey, and people who have been victims of slavery in the UK are all, supposedly, granted the same protections. Information on the immigration status of those exploited in the UK is, interestingly, not included in the NRM statistics, however there is an enlightening breakdown of the outcomes of decisions based on whether the victims were EU or non-EU nationals.

The NRM is a two step process whereby a specific list of first responders have the authority to complete an NRM form on behalf of a potential victim (it is insightful that the UK Border Force, Home Office Visas and Immigration and Home Office Immigration Enforcement are all first responders and yet the NHS is not). The first responders refer the case on to a Competent Authority which is then responsible for making a decision as to whether that person truly is a victim of contemporary slavery. There are two Competent Authorities: The National Crime Agency's Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Unit (MSHTU) and The Home Office Visas and Immigration (UKVI). The Competent Authorities then have five days to make a Reasonable Grounds decision, that "from the information available so far I believe but cannot prove" that the person referred is a potential victim of trafficking or 'modern slavery' (NCA, n.d.). If the Reasonable Grounds decision is positive, then additional information is gathered on the case in order for the Competent Authority to make a Conclusive Grounds decision. This decision states that on the balance of probability "it is more likely than not" that the individual is a victim of human trafficking or 'modern slavery' (ibid.).

Perhaps it is unsurprising that of the two Competent Authorities, the MSHTU makes decisions regarding any UK national or any European Economic Area (EEA) national without a live immigration issue, while any non-EEA national, or any EEA national with a live immigration issue will be referred to UKVI who will make the Reasonable and Conclusive Grounds decisions. Perhaps equally unsurprising are the results of these decisions.

As mentioned above, in the UK in 2017 there were more than double the number of potential victims of 'modern slavery or human trafficking' originating from non-EU countries than EU countries including the UK (3677 and 1462 respectively) and yet EU victims were over ten times more likely to receive a positive Conclusive Grounds decision than their non-EU counterparts (37% and 3% respectively) (NCA, 2018). This is not necessarily to say that the remaining 63% and 97% received negative Conclusive Grounds decisions, as some will have been withdrawn, received negative Reasonable Grounds decisions, or the decision may still be pending, however it is still indicative of a bias. Rhys Jones (2013) draws attention to another interesting fact that, from 2009 when the NRM was established until 2013 when his article was published, every judicial review conducted regarding NRM decisions was in reference to a decision made by the Border Agency (later replaced by UK Visas and Immigration) regarding potential victims with a live immigration issue; none were made against the other Competent Authority whose decisions did not take immigration status into account. This emphasises bias and poorly formed decisions against non-EU citizens.

These figures resonate with the recent Windrush scandal which revealed that in 2015

the Home Office set a target for the removal of 12,000 undocumented migrants (Crerar, 2018). While it is not clear whether these targets are still in place, there continues to be evident pressure on immigration agencies to ensure that the UK is living up to Theresa May's 'hostile environment'[2] for illegal immigrants. When UKVI is responsible for making Reasonable and Conclusive Grounds decisions for potential victims of contemporary slavery with a live immigration issue, but is also responsible for the UK's visa system, there is an undeniable conflict of interests, and the low rates of positive Conclusive Grounds decisions are arguably a direct result of this. These issues have been raised previously to the formation of UKVI, when the UK Border Agency was responsible for making Conclusive Grounds decisions and it was identified that "[n]ational efforts to fight trafficking are undermined by requiring a potential victim to describe their personal situation to the agency who may at the same time be considering their immigration status" (Rhys Jones, 2013).

Equally, any immigration offence was likely to be considered a priority over the fact that the person was a victim of a crime. Considering the vast differences between positive Conclusive Grounds decisions for EU nationals set against non-EU nationals, it is not a big leap to suggest that the drive to curb immigration and the unlikeliness of receiving a positive Conclusive Grounds decision as a non-EU citizen are linked. It is clear to identify then that there are discrepancies between the government's priorities of tackling 'modern slavery' and reducing immigration (O'Connell Davidson, 2013a).

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[2] Home Secretary, Javid, has recently insinuated a change to the 'hostile environment' following the Windrush Scandal, suggesting a move towards an environment of compliance rather than hostility. However, cynicism remains, and only time will tell if this change in terminology will be reflected in a change in practice.

It is questionable how immigration agencies with pressure to reduce immigration have been, and continue to be, prime decision makers for potential victims of slavery who have live immigration issues. To reduce the bias that is evidenced through the rates of positive Conclusive Grounds decisions, potential victims should not be divided between Competent Authorities based on their immigration status, as this is irrelevant to whether or not they have been a victim of slavery. A more impartial way forward would be to have a single Competent Authority which can make the decisions for all NRM referrals, preferably (though perhaps not practicably) without divulging the potential victim's immigration status.

Positively, the Home Office has identified a way forwards in this regard; in October 2017, the Home Office announced that the MSHTU and UKVI were to be replaced as Competent Authorities by a single unit headed out of the Home Office, and that a panel of experts will review all negative Conclusive Grounds decisions (NCA, n.d.). This is a positive step towards tackling one of the methods through which the UK government prioritises a person's immigration status above their status as a victim of crime. However, this announcement was made over a year ago and the unit remains in planning stage. This reflects how a review of the NRM and proposals for reform were published in 2014 (Home Office, 2014b) and yet many of the issues raised have still to be resolved. While the wait continues for this single Competent Authority, non-EU victims of contemporary slavery will continue to be at a disadvantage. Equally, while it is positive that there is a route through which to review negative Conclusive Grounds decisions, there is still no option to review negative Reasonable Grounds decisions.

Linking back to intersectionality, these discrepancies in the Conclusive Grounds decision figures indicate that the context of a person's experiences and their identity after arrival in the UK is considered less important than their immigration status. The importance of nationality is also reflected in relation to contemporary slavery in the way the UK government's focus continues to be placed on structural issues in source countries as opposed to structural issues in the UK. This is highlighted by the (recently resigned) Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner whose website states that:

> Truly effective prevention must start in countries of origin to prevent vulnerable people from being exploited in the first place. Often this will mean working in collaboration with international partners to develop effective and targeted prevention projects (Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, 2018b).

Comments such as that from the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's office suggest that vulnerabilities to contemporary slavery are most prominent in the victims' home countries. These arguments fail to engage with the information presented in the NRM that, in fact, for many, it is only once they reach the UK that their vulnerability towards contemporary slavery begins. The NRM statistics provide information determining the numbers of people who experienced contemporary slavery in the UK, in the UK and overseas, overseas only, or where the location was not known. Of the 2017 NRM statistics where the location of exploitation was known, the largest group, 56.47%, experienced contemporary slavery only in the UK, with a further 6.85% experiencing it in both the UK and overseas (NCA, 2018). Further, UK nationals were the most commonly identified nationality of potential victims (ibid.). This emphasises a

serious flaw with the UK government's tendency to look to source countries as responsible for causing contemporary slavery when, in practice, the majority of victims identified in 2017 suffered their exploitation in the UK. To focus on source countries is to move attention away from the failings of the UK government when it should be taking accountability for the vulnerabilities it causes. It also serves to allow the perpetuation of UK systems that create and encourage the environment for contemporary slavery to thrive.

If it is the case, as evidenced by respondents such as **Imogen** who did not know how to navigate the asylum system, that vulnerabilities towards contemporary slavery are exacerbated by strict and confusing migration policies after arrival in the UK, then it is hypocritical for Theresa May to claim that her government will "lead the way in defeating modern slavery" (May, 2016) while she simultaneously advocates a "hostile environment" for illegal immigrants. As Quirk asserts, these political agendas are not aligned (2015a) and, as O'Connell Davidson states, it is hypocritical of a government to claim it wants to lead the way in defeating 'modern slavery', when it encourages systems that deny large groups of people their basic rights.

> [T]he liberal democratic states that are so eager to combat 'the scourge of modern slavery' in the form of THB [trafficking in human beings] are equally if not more enthusiastically engaged in depriving many groups of migrants of their freedom through (often for-profit) immigration detention, denying them basic rights, forcibly moving them across borders through deportation, and sustaining a flourishing industry in the prevention and control of human mobility.

In other words, whilst seeking to suppress one form of traffic (THB)

on grounds that it leads to restrictions on human freedom, liberal

states sanction other forms of movement and trade, or traffic, that

produce precisely the same effects (O'Connell Davidson, 2016).

Gamba evidenced this situation in his interview. He described how, for him, travelling

safely by aeroplane was a cheap route to the UK, but it was only available to him

because he was able to get a visa to study. Without visas, his friends were having to

pay four to five times more than him to a smuggler who would sail them across the

Mediterranean. If they could not afford a smuggler, the only options available to them

were to migrate on foot or stay in hiding in their home country for the rest of their

lives. This affirms how strict government policies on immigration are directly pushing

people into dangerous situations. It is not the case that these migrants are so

desperate to get to the UK that they will risk the perilous journey, but that they are so

desperate to survive that they know they must leave their home country by whatever

means possible. If legal restrictions mean that they are unable to travel via safe means,

then the only option left for them is to risk their lives with smugglers. Thus, by placing

restrictions on the movement of people in dire need, governments are encouraging

movement via unsafe means; movements that, without statutory support on arrival,

could well result in situations of contemporary slavery.

The likelihood of receiving a negative Conclusive Grounds decision could also have a

detrimental impact on encouraging other victims of contemporary slavery to consent

to referral into the NRM. If they are hearing of people who have lived through a

situation similar to their own, but who have received a negative decision and who,

without referral into the NRM, would not have come to the attention of the authorities, then it is evident why some victims may choose not to make their situation known. This wish to remain hidden is surely only further strengthened by the renowned discrimination that faces immigrants (Parker, 2015). Especially for those who have fled a dangerous situation, if they believe that making their story known holds the potential to result in their detention or repatriation, then it may be in their best interests to try and remain hidden from the authorities.

Further, it can be argued that there is no benefit to any victim of contemporary slavery being referred through the NRM. Although there is an offer of 45 days in a safe house with support while the Conclusive Grounds decision is being made, it is common that these decisions take far longer, often spanning many months, if not years. Whilst at the outset this may appear beneficial – a longer time in safe accommodation – those in the NRM are made aware that, should they receive a negative decision, they have two days to exit the safe house (regardless of how long they have been there), and if they receive a positive decision, they have two weeks (once the 45 days have expired). This means that people are living on edge; they are aware that they may suddenly have to pack up their lives and move on, and this prevents them from being able to settle, from wanting to learn about the local area, or from making friends. For some, they may believe that had they circumnavigated the system and avoided the NRM, they may well now be in a better position where they could have found work and accommodation through friends or acquaintances.

Even more frustrating is that a positive Conclusive Grounds decision through the NRM does not actually automatically provide anything to the victim other than a confirmation of the fact they have been a victim of 'modern slavery' or human trafficking. The UK Housing Act 1996 states that:

(1)The following have a priority need for accommodation—

(a)a pregnant woman or a person with whom she resides or might reasonably be expected to reside;

(b)a person with whom dependent children reside or might reasonably be expected to reside;

(c)a person who is vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness or handicap or physical disability or other special reason, or with whom such a person resides or might reasonably be expected to reside;

(d)a person who is homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of an emergency such as flood, fire or other disaster (Housing Act, 1996).

Some advocates have successfully argued the case for victims with a positive Conclusive Grounds decision to be considered in priority need of accommodation under section c – for some 'other special reason'. However, without such priority being explicitly stated in the Housing Act, this is not a guarantee, and without an advocate who knows the system on hand to support the victim through the housing application process, it is unlikely that they would be successful. This would leave them homeless and, ironically, at increased risk of contemporary slavery as they seek work and

accommodation through strangers they meet on the street.

Similarly, a positive Conclusive Grounds decision does not automatically grant the recipient discretionary leave to remain (DLR); the Home Office is simply required to *consider* whether people with such a decision should be granted DLR. This is an issue picked up by Patrick Burland who noted of the 2016 NRM statistics, that:

> Only 384 of the 2563 people who received a positive CG [Conclusive
>
> Grounds decision] in 2014, 2015 and 2016 were granted
>
> discretionary leave to remain in the UK. This statistical evidence is
>
> not found in the NRM data, but it highlights the limited value of a
>
> positive CG and the reality of the UK's short term and limited
>
> response to its support for trafficked persons (Burland, 2017).

So then, through the UK government's NRM system, if a person who has been a victim of contemporary slavery in the UK must live precariously as they wait months to receive a Conclusive Grounds decision which is then not guaranteed to benefit them in any way, Theresa May must ask how exactly her government is 'leading the way in defeating modern slavery'. She should also consider that many may view circumnavigating the NRM as a more likely means to be able to start living their lives with immediate support from friends, acquaintances and strangers as opposed to limited (if any) support, with no specified timeline, if they choose to wait for help from the government.

Those interviewed as part of this research project had all encountered authorities, and while some respondents, such as **Isaac**, indicated that they feel they would have lived

a better life if they had avoided contact with the authorities, none had purposefully tried to avoid identification. However, there were respondents who simply did not know about the asylum system, contrary to the public assumption that all immigrants come to the UK because they think "the streets are paved with gold" and the welfare state is an enticing opportunity (May & Cazeneuve, 2015).

Catherine and **Imogen**'s interviews emphasised how a lack of knowledge of the asylum system put them at real risk. **Catherine** arrived in the UK illegally after escaping a trafficking situation in Albania and, knowing nothing about asylum, found casual work and accommodation. After hearing of the asylum system, she applied straight away, but her delay in application counted against her and she was denied asylum. This is an issue that has been identified in other research, whereby a delay in accessing support has been found to undermine the credibility of those making a claim for asylum (Lewis et al., 2013).

Imogen's story highlights how a lack of knowledge of the asylum system can lead directly to a situation of contemporary slavery. After her working visa expired, the Job Centre informed her they were no longer able to support her. This statutory agency took no accountability for her welfare, and she left the Job Centre unaware of the asylum system despite the fact that she was an ideal candidate. This resulted in her accepting an offer of work from a stranger that transpired to be a situation of contemporary slavery that lasted for three years.

If people in situations such as **Imogen** and **Catherine** were to be made aware of the asylum system on their arrival to the UK, their vulnerabilities could be drastically reduced. It is also fundamental that statutory organisations interacting with individuals who may not know about, but may be in a position to apply for, asylum accept a degree of accountability for at least signposting such individuals to organisations that may be able to offer them support and advice. Had **Imogen** received such advice it is unlikely that she would have turned to strangers for help and found herself in such extreme exploitation. Offering this signposting advice might have taken another minute of the Job Centre staff's time, but not doing so took three years of **Imogen**'s life.

These examples show that clear information on who should apply for asylum, how the process works and why they need to apply is not successfully reaching those who would benefit from such material. They illustrate how, without clear information being provided on the asylum process, those who continue to be unaware are at an immediate disadvantage, be that in regard to the likelihood that their asylum claim will be accepted, or in the potential that a lack of knowledge of asylum could lead to contemporary slavery.

There are, of course, practical issues that prevent such information being made directly available to this hard to reach group. Primarily, if people are entering the UK illegally by circumnavigating border check points and statutory authorities, then there is no easy route to make sure this information reaches them. However, that is not to say that providing such information is impossible, simply that more onerous methods

must be considered.

However, it is not just a lack of knowledge of the asylum system that can lead to vulnerabilities, but the lack of support while asylum seekers wait for the decision, as well as the outcome – be it positive or negative. Having already mentioned the pressure that immigration agencies are under to reduce immigration, it is evident that decisions will err on the side of the negative and that discrepancies in a person's story will likely lead to a negative decision. However, numerous respondents highlighted in their interviews that they were simply unable to remember or got confused over some of their answers, while others admitted to lying or altering facts because they had such a distrust and fear of the authorities making the decisions.

Fredrika recalled how her main reason for wanting to claim asylum in the UK was because she was gay and would be killed or imprisoned for her sexuality if returned to Uganda. However, because of the negative reactions of her family to her telling them that she was gay, she was extremely reluctant to disclose this information to a stranger in the asylum interview. As a result, without the disclosure of her sexuality, her claim did not have enough merit to warrant a positive decision, and **Fredrika** was denied asylum. Similarly, **Catherine** (mentioned above) suffers from severe PTSD as a result of her slavery experience. The fact that she had not applied for asylum immediately upon arrival to the UK – because she was unaware of the system – coupled with her lack of memory as a result of the PTSD, resulted in her asylum claim being discredited and her application being rejected. The reasons that asylum seekers may lie in their interviews is an issue addressed in the literature; their lies may be an attempt of deceit in order

to gain status, but they may equally be more reflective of situations such as those of **Fredrika** and **Catherine** (Herlihy & Turner, 2006; Stepnitz, 2012). These are just two of many examples from the interviews that illustrate the distrust, fear and confusion of asylum seekers trying to navigate their way through the system and how a lack of awareness of how these issues might affect the claimants' applications may well generate bias amongst the decision makers.

This is an issue addressed by Gill et al. (2018) whose research on asylum adjudication indicated bias in judicial decisions. They note that to treat people fairly is not necessarily to treat them all the same, but to be aware of the different circumstances behind each case so that any decision overcomes the possibility of inequality. However, in asylum cases, judges have a degree of discretion over their cases, meaning that litigants will not all receive an equal measure of said 'fair treatment', but it will be influenced by the judge's own opinions. This leads to inconsistency between cases and, correspondingly, between the outcomes.

This piece of research involved the observation of 240 judicial hearings (Immigration and Asylum Chamber). It identified that judicial discretionary behaviour that is vulnerability-neutral (does not attempt to redress vulnerabilities), vulnerability-amplifying (making fewer helpful decisions regarding the litigants' vulnerabilities), or correlated with extraneous factors (that are not relevant to the case, such as the day of the week of the hearing) outweighs judicial vulnerability-redressing behaviour. The findings indicated that the treatment of an appellant would be influenced by their own gender and that of the judge, their own age, the way they dressed, whether or not

they were represented and the day of the week on which their hearing fell. This highlights a shocking risk of bias faced by the appellant before their case is even heard.

The treatment of asylum seekers in the UK is increasingly punitive, with the prohibition on working, the dispersal of refugees and an increase in detention (Vickers, 2015). In the UK, public tension surrounding migration has increased in correlation with both the rise in immigration itself, as well as the increasingly uninformed and uninhibited political discussions on the subject (Crawley, 2006).

By creating a hostile environment for illegal immigrants, the government is encouraging them to avoid authorities, or to lie if they are found. This is evidenced again by the Windrush scandal, where people who had every right to be in the UK were being told they must leave. With such issues facing those with legal status becoming public, those who are in the UK illegally would likely, rightly, identify themselves as in a very vulnerable position. If those here legally are being told they must leave, then 'illegal' immigrants are faced with little hope (Bulman, 2018a). Such an environment generates distrust and fear which makes asylum seekers reticent to provide accurate accounts to authorities, or to lie because they are reluctant to tell their sensitive stories of hardship to people who have a vested interest in repatriating them (Herlihy & Turner, 2006; Stepnitz, 2012). Further, with a predisposed unlikeliness of receiving a positive Conclusive Grounds decision simply because they are not from the EU, victims of slavery who fit this category may automatically be discouraged from applying to the NRM for support.

The interviews in this research project have also highlighted how there is a distinct lack of support for asylum seekers both as they wait for the outcome of their decision, but even after a decision has been made. **Isaac** indicated how the asylum system detrimentally impacted him as he was taken in and out of detention with no explanation as to why, and continued to wait for a decision on his asylum application whilst being forbidden from getting work or an education. This point is emphasised by Thibos and Topouzova (2017:no pagination) who state that:

> [t]he threat of being caught in these nets [detention], and the dire consequences that can result from doing so, are one of the main reasons why many remain at risk in countries of transit and destination.

Isaac's story highlights how the hostile environment for illegal immigrants could serve to push them away from engaging in the system. Asylum seekers receive £37.75 each week from the government (gov.uk, n.d.), but the vast majority do not have permission to work or to get an education while they wait for their asylum decision which should be made within six months but could take longer. Without even considering the loss of potential tax revenue that could be generated if asylum seekers were able to work (Williams, 2015; d'Albis et al., 2018), there are clear other ways in which the system is detrimental. The government insists that the £37.75 per week is a liveable amount, and yet **Gamba** described how in order to stay in touch with his family he would regularly have to choose between either eating one day or paying for a phone call to his mother.

A prominent finding from a two year research project exploring the experiences of 30 asylum seekers in England discovered that forms of extremely exploitative and forced labour were commonly unavoidable for refugees and asylum seekers in order for them to be able to meet their basic needs because government provisions were simply not enough (Lewis et al., 2013; Dwyer et al., 2016). Even in situations where people entered into and managed to escape such labour exploitation, they found that their restricted legal positions as refugees or asylum seekers would leave them little option but to return to such dubious labour. This research concluded that:

> [t]ackling forced labour among refugees and asylum seekers requires
> a major overhaul of government policy to restore asylum seekers'
> right to work and to ensure universal access to basic employment
> rights irrespective of immigration status (Lewis et al., 2013).

As such, a hostile environment towards migrants cannot work to decrease asylum seeker and refugees' vulnerability to forced labour. This means that the government cannot simultaneously lead the way in defeating 'modern slavery' *and* continue its hostile environment towards immigrants. If it is to continue the hostile environment, then it must accept accountability for encouraging the conditions necessary for contemporary slavery to thrive.

Highlighting the struggle to meet basic needs identified by the above report, **Gamba**, **Isaac**, **Fredrika** and **Hasim** all emphasised in their interviews how they relied wholeheartedly on the support of charities and drop-in centres to be able to survive as they waited for the outcome of their asylum decisions; some even lived with volunteers that they had met via the drop-in centres. Although she has reapplied for

asylum, **Fredrika**'s initial claim was denied and she then experienced the forced

destitution suffered by so many rejected by the asylum system. Because she strongly

believes her life is at risk should she return to Uganda, **Fredrika** has 'chosen' to remain

destitute in the UK. This reflects De Genova's (2002) work on the 'deportability' of

asylum seekers whereby the asylum system generates a palpable notion that asylum

seekers could be sent 'home' at any time. When being returned to your home country

equates to a potential death sentence, this threat generates a constant sense of fear.

Literature indicates that this is a common story, and that by forcing refused asylum

seekers into destitution, the UK government fails to accept any degree of

accountability for these people, completely overlooking the particular vulnerabilities

faced by those, such as **Fredrika** who are unable or unwilling to leave the UK (Lewis et

al, 2013; Lewis & Waite, 2015; Dwyer et al., 2016). In such a position where the option

of returning 'home' is not a possibility, and the right to work in the UK has been

denied, research shows that refused asylum seekers are at real risk of exploitation.

> Destitution, resulting from lacking the right to work or access to any
>
> government support or benefits, was the primary driver into
>
> exploitative work for irregular migrants and refused asylum seekers
>
> in our study (Lewis & Waite, 2015:6).

The study referred to involved research with 30 participants, 17 of whom were asylum

seekers on arrival to the UK. Of those 17, 14 entered the labour market after being

refused asylum left them with no support and no right to work (ibid.). When left in

such a precarious situation, these people become particularly vulnerable to

exploitative labour. They have no government supported housing or stipend and, if

they are to remain in the UK, must find a way to survive. This will often mean there is little choice other than to enter the labour market. However, with no legal right to work, they are restricted to approaching employers who are willing to illegally employ a refused asylum seeker. Such employers have the opportunity to take advantage of this extreme misbalance in power; knowing that the worker has no legal access to the labour market, they have the possibility to enforce poor working conditions, long hours and low pay in the knowledge that the worker has little choice but to accept (Dwyer et al., 2016). Workers that challenge such conditions are simply reminded that they have no other option but to accept the situation (Waite, 2017) and that there will always be someone else willing to take their place (Dwyer et al., 2016). To report their working conditions to the authorities will simply result in their own penalisation for working with no legal right to do so (Lewis et al., 2013; Dwyer et al., 2016).

This lack of statutory support and its resulting impact on mental health was an issue raised in several of the interviews with asylum seekers. The asylum system removes agency from its applicants, prohibiting the majority from accessing employment or education, and stipulating the location in which they must live. This lack of freedom, coupled with the uncertainty of knowing when a decision will be made, or whether it will be positive, can lead to feelings of hopelessness and despair. This is especially true for those who fear for their lives should they be repatriated; for them, a negative outcome of an asylum decision could equate to a death sentence. The uncertainty caused by the asylum system also prevents asylum seekers from trying to integrate; they have no money to socialise and are reluctant to form relationships or to try to settle in an area when they are unsure of how long they will be permitted to stay. This can generate feelings of isolation, and some respondents discussed experiencing

suicidal feelings as a result. This negative impact on mental health as a result of the asylum system, and particularly for those denied their claim, is highlighted in the literature (Dwyer et al., 2016).

Although there is no easy way to reconcile the lack of support for asylum seekers, as increasing their monetary support may be unfeasible, it is evident that a lack of communication only increases what is already a highly stressful situation. For **Isaac**, being detained and released without receiving any information as to why he had been detained served to cause him distress, but also led to a lack of trust in the authorities. Their inability to communicate with him on the issues surrounding his detention, or to take accountability for his welfare, made him reluctant to put his trust in organisations of authority going forward, and reticence to open up to authorities is often construed as an attempt at deceit (Herlihy & Turner, 2006).

These examples emphasise how a lack of support may encourage asylum seekers to pursue other methods of survival, such as looking for work, which would breach the rules of the asylum system for most asylum seekers and which would leave them with no protection should this work be exploitative (Dwyer et al., 2016; Waite, 2017). Such lack of support may also actually serve to discourage people from engaging with the system. As such, the hostile environment is likely to push people away from engaging with the authorities and into more long-term, illegal and precarious situations. Further, the length of time that people must wait for an asylum decision essentially means that their lives must be put on hold; they cannot access education or find employment. For **Catherine**, this meant that she felt unable to address her PTSD because her entire

focus was on waiting for the outcome of the asylum decision. Although the government suggests that decisions should be reached within six months, this is not always the case, and the longer the wait, the longer asylum seekers live in the UK unable to contribute financially and unable to actively integrate into society (d'Albis et al., 2018).

Hasim described in his interview how, as an asylum seeker, he believed that all his problems would be solved as soon as a decision was reached, but upon being granted asylum, he remained in a vulnerable position because he was unaware of how to apply for housing or employment. His experience was similar to **Oscar**'s, who received a positive decision and then was told to take his papers and go. He was given no information on where to go or of organisations that may be able to offer assistance. As a result, **Oscar** became homeless, despite having been granted the right to live and work in the UK. **Oscar**'s story of vulnerability after being granted asylum is one that is reflected in the literature. Interestingly, those that are granted leave to remain have permission to work, but experience some of the highest unemployment rates in the UK (Dwyer et al., 2016). Hynes and Sales (2010) discuss how the dispersal of refugees could be one of the reasons for high unemployment rates. Refugees are dispersed out of London and the south east to other areas in the UK. This often means they are separated from their own family members and support networks and therefore must start the process of making connections all over again. However, perhaps more significantly, the areas that refugees are dispersed to are determined by the availability for temporary housing. In many cases, temporary housing is concentrated

around areas of economic deprivation, therefore adding further barriers to accessing work.

A report commissioned by Refugee Council (Basedow & Doyle, 2016) found that there are severe delays in refugees receiving key documents which give them the opportunity to find legal work. Basedow and Doyle (2016) undertook qualitative research with 11 individuals who had been granted asylum, and found that delays in receiving vital documents were common. Of the 11 interviewees, six had received their national insurance number before their government assistance had ended, while the other five had not. Without a national insurance number, these refugees are unable to access legal employment. This leaves them in a situation in which they have been granted refugee status, but their government support has ended and they are unable to legally find work. In these circumstances, refugees become destitute and are extremely susceptible to offers of illegitimate labour by employers who are willing to illegally take on workers without their national insurance numbers. Such employers know that the workers have no authority to call for fair working conditions or rates of pay and therefore have the power to stipulate long hours for little pay in the knowledge that the worker has little other choice. The government must recognise its failings in providing these documents in time to those to whom it grants asylum and it must accept accountability for the vulnerabilities it causes for those who fall through the gaps.

The fact that such a high proportion of victims of contemporary slavery identified in the UK only experience the slavery within the UK (47.7%) is unsurprising when considering the lack of support offered to those both seeking and granted asylum.

Without communication, information or support during this time of extreme instability, it can only be expected that offers of support or work from strangers would prove to be tempting. Although some may question why the government should be expected to be proactive in making this information available when it is the migrant making a concerted effort to enter the country, it must be acknowledged that some, like **Hattie**, do not know which country they are travelling to. They are so desperate to leave their situation that the end destination is irrelevant. **Barak** evidenced this in his exclamation that "I want to go wherever! Even Somalia!". In such situations, it is simply not possible to research into the legal requirements of the asylum system when they are unaware of where their destination country will be. The same can be said of those who may know where they intend to travel to but, like **James**, the situation dictates that they leave immediately, without allowing them time to research into the situation that awaits them upon arrival. As such, the government has a duty to try and reach as many immigrants as possible if it intends to be accountable to its claim of tackling 'modern slavery'.

Although some of the interview respondents had had their asylum claims rejected, they were all appealing the decisions and continued to wait for the next outcome. This means that the interviews did not provide examples of those who received negative decisions and were awaiting repatriation. However, to acknowledge those who have fled to the UK in order to escape situations – or potential situations – of contemporary slavery, it must be accepted that the UK government, in some instances, is returning people to situations of slavery, to situations in which they are likely to become victims of slavery, or to their deaths (Bulman, 2018b).

These issues all point towards the need for increased knowledge, firstly amongst asylum seekers, regarding what the system is, how to navigate it, and what they should expect, which would have benefitted respondents like **Oscar** and perhaps prevented him from becoming homeless after being granted asylum; secondly for statutory agents regarding how they could decrease the vulnerabilities of asylum seekers towards becoming victims of contemporary slavery. While the main requirement of improved knowledge is to ensure that asylum seekers are treated fairly and that a person's nationality does not influence whether or not they receive a positive Conclusive Grounds decision in the NRM, some caution must be exercised in relation to any awareness campaigns associated with contemporary slavery. This is an issue highlighted by Quirk and Shih (2017) who raise concern over the implications of 'modern slavery awareness campaigns' and the potentially detrimental impact they can cause. Other than the previously mentioned tendency to base campaigns on statistics of referrals to the NRM rather than positive decisions, one of their main concerns is that raising awareness is not enough; people may become aware as to what contemporary slavery is, but that is futile unless they know what to do with this information. Clearly, for those working in government agencies, information on what is expected of them as part of their job should be included in any campaign or training session. This would involve ensuring that any statutory agency knows how to signpost people in need that they are unable to help themselves (such as would have been beneficial in the case of the Job Centre with **Imogen**) and that those making NRM and asylum decisions are aware of the impact that distrust, PTSD and fear could have on their interviews.

Another key way in which the UK government is allowing the perpetuation of systems of slavery is through its tied visa system. In 2012, the UK government introduced the tied visa, which means that overseas domestic workers are tied to their employers once they come to the UK. This means that should the worker leave the employer for any reason, including to escape unfair or exploitative labour conditions, the worker will have breached their visa and is then liable for repatriation. As a result, for those in exploitative domestic situations, the workers' legal choices are to stay in the exploitative situation or to be returned to their home countries; there is no option to change employer (Sloan, 2015). For those who have chosen the option of moving to the UK in order to escape a dangerous situation in their home countries, should their employment situation become exploitative, they may be reluctant to leave because they are so desperate not to be returned to their home country, thereby resigning themselves to a life of exploitation which the UK government will not allow them to challenge. However, should they choose to leave because of exploitation but want to avoid repatriation, the situation may become such that they choose to stay in the UK illegally, seeking support from agencies, acquaintances or strangers in order to avoid the restrictive legal policies. Although this may lead to situations which still remain preferable to being returned home, there is also the potential for such situations to lead to contemporary slavery. As Moss describes (2011:no pagination), the choice of the UK government to disallow overseas domestic migrants the option to change employers:

> betray[s] the fact that the Government is less concerned with
>
> policies that have been hailed by parliamentarians to be effective in

preventing trafficking, such as the domestic worker visa protections,

and more concerned with being seen to be tough on so called

immigration crime.

6.2.1 The Benefits of a Resettlement Programme

However, there is one successful method through which the government is supporting

immigrants to integrate safely and securely in the UK: the UN resettlement

programmes. As discussed in Chapter Five, the UN resettlement programmes involve

identifying the most at-risk refugees in a country where they have sought protection.

These refugees are then moved to a country that participates in the resettlement

scheme, of which the UK is one, where they will (in most cases) receive permanent

resident status (UNHCR, 2017). This immediately outweighs any benefit offered by the

NRM where leave to remain is not automatically granted, however a refugee only

qualifies for a resettlement programme if it is not possible for them to return to their

home country or settle in the country of asylum.

The resettlement programme for Syria is slightly different, in that instead of being

granted indefinite leave to remain, refugees on this resettlement programme - the

Government's Vulnerable Person's Relocation Scheme - are granted five years'

Humanitarian Protection which, although incomparable to permanent resident status,

still significantly outweighs anything that the NRM can guarantee (Refugee Council,

2018). The purpose of this discrepancy between the programmes is that the UK

government expects the conflict in Syria to be relatively short lived and hopes that

Syrian refugees will be able to return to Syria in the near future. The resettlement

programme works via:

> the selection and transfer of refugees from a country in which they
>
> have sought protection – usually somewhere with a large number of
>
> refugees who are living in camps or urban settings – to a third
>
> country which has agreed to admit them as refugees and where they
>
> can rebuild their lives (Refugee Council, 2018).

For a refugee to be considered for the programme, they must have left their home country and legally entered another country in the hope that it will grant them protection.

Resettlement programmes provide a significant level of support to refugees who are lucky enough to be accepted onto them. However, they generate a serious problem in creating a two-tier system between resettled refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. **Fadi**, who works with asylum seekers in the UK, discussed in his interview how the resettlement programmes generate a significant divide between those on the programme and those applying for asylum. Asylum seekers often told him that they found it hard to understand why those on resettlement programmes were receiving such better treatment and support than them, when they had all gone through similar experiences. The description of resettlement programmes creating a two-tier system is one picked up by both the media (BBC, 2017) and in research reports (Basedow & Doyle, 2016; All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees, 2017). Although there is no easy way around this situation, and it may not be feasible for the government to provide support equal to the resettlement programmes to all asylum seekers in the UK, the government should take accountability for how this two-tiered system could

prevent integration between those in the asylum system and those in resettlement programmes. It should also acknowledge the obscurity of having a system whereby two people could flee the same situation in the same country and one receive long term assistance while the other receives no support.

It is also important to note here another fundamental flaw with the resettlement programmes: corruption. There are brief mentions in a small number of sources about corruption in resettlement programmes. Hilhorst et al. (2014) discuss how people living in border camps have recounted stories of aid workers requesting bribes to work on resettlement programme applications. Without the bribes, the applications are put on hold for an unspecified amount of time while the aid workers focus on progressing the applications of those who could afford to pay. Corruption amongst the agency workers has also been identified by Hayden (2018) in a report based on interviews with refugees in Khartoum undertaken over a 10 month period. The research found that "individuals working with the Sudanese branch of the UN agency responsible for resettlement engage in corrupt practices, and that life-changing decisions are often made based on bribes rather than eligibility" (Hayden, 2018:no pagination). Like the findings discussed by Hilhorst et al. (2014), this report noted how UNHCR workers asked for bribes in order to advance applicants' resettlement applications. The price of the bribe was in the region of $15,000 per person. To gather such huge sums of money, applicants were borrowing from family members across the world. However, the pressure of needing to pay this money back puts these individuals in a precarious situation where they are likely going to have to work in order to pay off a debt that they should not have had to pay in the first instance. Of course this makes them

vulnerable to exploitative labour when they are looking for work with employers who are willing to let them work beyond the legally stipulated maximum working hours.

Of particular interest is the fact that the UNHCR makes public the punitive measures in place should an applicant be found attempting to bribe a UNHCR officer. They will either have their resettlement processing suspended for 3-10 years, have their application terminated, or be considered for referral for criminal prosecution (UNHCR, 2008; 2014). However, it offers little equivalent should it be the officers that are culpable, simply offering claims that accusations of misconduct are investigated (UNHCR, 2013). This indicates a belief that asylum seekers are more accountable to their corrupt actions than the officials who place them in a position where they have no option but to succumb to the corruption or give up on resettlement.

There were two respondents interviewed in this thesis who had come to the UK via a resettlement programme and both had accessed the programme in a corrupt way, however, their experience is not one identified in the literature. While the literature covers the concept of corruption and bribery in advancing the progress of a resettlement application, **Nadim** and **Barak**'s experiences relate to making a border crossing appear legal. Both respondents had fled Syria to Lebanon but had crossed the border illegally. They had later returned to bribe border officials to stamp their documents so it appeared that their crossing had been legal, and it is only with a legal border crossing that an individual becomes eligible for a resettlement programme. They were both accepted onto a resettlement programme and were provided with a place in the UK. Of all the respondents in this research project, **Barak** and **Nadim** were

the two for whom life had been the easiest since arriving in the UK.

These discussions highlight some significant problems with resettlement programmes. Firstly, there is the issue of corruption in the resettlement process by both applicants and agency workers. Secondly there is a problem further up the line before the resettlement process even begins. Those like **Nadim** and **Barak** who have the funds to cross a border and bribe officials to stamp their documents find themselves in a privileged position that thousands of others who have experienced the same atrocities but who do not have the same financial standing are excluded from. Flaws therefore exist from the point of influencing the people progressing the applications right back to the point of identifying who is eligible for the programme.

6.2.2   The Importance of Pre-empting Mass Migration

The success of resettlement programmes in assisting people to integrate in and contribute to their new society emphasises how pre-empting mass migration would be more beneficial in preventing contemporary slavery than focusing on preventing immigration. As Solomon and Thibos (2017:no pagination) describe:

> Obviously, yes, we want to prevent – not in the sense of preventing
> migration but the factors that force people to have to move. But we
> also have to proactively look at migration as one of the adaptation
> strategies. So if we know a particular area, or a particular region, or
> even an entire country may become uninhabitable, let's not wait
> until there's a disaster to deal with the migration. Let's plan ahead!

By anticipating, you get people out of harm's way and allow them to
live safe and productive lives.

If governments were to use such foresight to prepare for a likely resulting mass
migration out of an area, then provisions could be put in place to ensure that these
migrants do not need to rely on smugglers or traffickers to get them out of their
country, or on strangers to help them find housing or employment once they have
reached their destination.

Once potential situations of mass migration have been identified, then the
responsibility to protect could be invoked in order to provide support to the citizens of
the state in question. The responsibility to protect is a political commitment to end
and prevent some of the worst forms of violence and persecution (UN, n.d.). The
responsibility to protect highlights how:

the primary responsibility for the protection of its people rested first
and foremost with the State itself. However, a 'residual
responsibility' also lied with the broader community of states, which
was activated when a particular state is clearly either unwilling or
unable to fulfil its responsibility to protect or is itself the actual
perpetrator of crimes or atrocities' (ibid.).

In cases where high numbers of people are displaced, the state is accountable to do
what it can to protect its citizens from human rights violations. This is particularly
important because displaced persons have a higher mortality rate than any group,
other than perhaps those who remain where the violence occurs (Bellamy, 2017).

However, where states are unable, or unwilling to provide this protection, there is an expectation that the international community will provide support.

While the resettlement programmes are arguably one method through which this responsibility to protect may be fulfilled, the proportion of people it helps in relation to those in need is very small. UNHCR (2018) describes how in 2017, there were 1.19 million refugees in need of resettlement yet there were only resettlement places for 75,188 refugees – just 6% of those in need. Instead of creating a hostile environment for those in desperate need, to reduce the risks of exploitation for those fleeing dangerous situations, destination countries should consider being more accommodating. When physical safety is a person's priority, they cannot be expected to put their lives at risk by waiting for visa applications before fleeing. By reducing the hostility facing those arriving in the UK and increasing the support and communication that they receive, the UK government would be simultaneously decreasing the likelihood that such people would end up in situations of contemporary slavery, and the likelihood that they would try to remain hidden from authorities. After all, "there may be no easier way for the international community to meet its responsibility to protect than by providing asylum and other international protection on adequate terms" (Barbour & Gorlick, 2008).

6.3   Distinguishing Between Exploitation and Contemporary Slavery

Theresa May's focus on tackling 'modern slavery' while disregarding the often exploitative outcomes of the asylum system raises the question as to whether there is any distinct line that separates contemporary slavery from exploitation. Much

academic discussion has focussed on trying to identify how the two differ, with some

supporting the idea that there is a distinct difference, while others claim that

contemporary slavery is simply a form of extreme exploitation that cannot be

segregated into a category of its own. Proponents of the latter suggest that there are

plenty of examples of non-slavery situations where powers attaching to the right of

ownership exist (Patterson, 1982; O'Connell Davidson, 2010).

> The distinguishing feature of slavery is widely held to be that it treats
>
> human beings as property. Yet, the League of Nations' definition of
>
> slavery as 'the status or conditions of a person over whom any or all
>
> of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised' does
>
> not completely differentiate the master–slave relation from every
>
> other social relationship. This is because some of the powers
>
> attaching to the right of ownership are also often exercised over
>
> spouses, employees and children (O'Connell Davidson, 2010:246).

However, as the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines suggest, slavery relates not only to the

powers attaching to the right of ownership, but to the simultaneous experience of

exploitation (Allain et al., 2012). For children, perhaps the powers attaching to the

right of ownership are present, in that their parents or guardians may have full control

over their decisions, but the child could not be deemed as enslaved unless her parents

were exploiting her. Similarly, for spouses and employees, although some of the

powers attaching to the right of ownership may be present regarding the fact that

there is a contract in place between two parties, the spouse or employee still *can* leave

the situation. Equally, unless the employer or spouse was exploiting the employee or

husband/wife, then the situation would not meet the grounds to be defined as slavery.

One topic which is often defined as slavery, but where such a label is commonly questioned, is forced marriage. Some adamantly support the notion that forced marriage constitutes contemporary slavery (Kelly, 2017; Anti-Slavery International, 2018) and its recent inclusion in the Global Slavery Index (GSI) has both affected the GSI figures and influenced international audiences to this thinking. However, for many, the recognition of forced marriage as slavery is not so evident (Gong-Gershowitz, 2009; Jain, 2009).

Firstly, it is important to identify that there is a distinction between an arranged and a forced marriage. An arranged marriage is one that is organised on behalf of the couple but where both parties are over 18 and have the option not to participate. A forced marriage is where one or both parties participate in the marriage under duress and where the victim(s) are denied their agency (KarmaNirvana, 2018). "It is this very violation of autonomy and the right to self-determination that makes forced marriage an egregious violation of the victim's personhood" (Jain, 2009:1032). To provide an example from the interviews, **Chiku** experienced a forced marriage after her entire family other than herself and her father were killed in an armed conflict. With a lack of means, her father chose to marry **Chiku** to a much older man. While this may be considered an arranged marriage, **Chiku** did not have the choice not to participate; she was forced into the marriage and was subsequently kept enslaved by the man she married.

For those in a forced marriage where there is a third party organising and enforcing

the arrangement, there are powers attaching to the right of ownership but these are not held by those to whom the person is to marry. Either or both parties of the marriage may not consent to the marriage itself, but they are unable to resist due to the abuse or pressures placed on them by those enforcing it. For such a situation then, there is a clear demonstration of the powers attaching to the right of ownership whereby the people forced into the marriage are unable to decline, however, the exploitation aspect is much less clear. In such a situation, where the perpetrator is not a member of the marriage, it is unclear as to how the perpetrator could benefit from the exploitation of this person; this implies that forced marriage does not fit the definition of slavery. The actual process of being pressured and forced into a marriage against the person's consent may be defined as exploitative, but that does not necessarily mean that the marriage itself will be exploitative.

However, where the line begins to blur as to whether forced marriage could constitute slavery is when the perpetrator is one of the parties to be married. If this person has organised and enforces the marriage with the intention of benefitting from the exploitation of the other person, then this could be recognised as slavery: the powers attaching to the right of ownership are held by the person the victim is to marry and they intend to use the marriage to benefit from the exploitation of their new spouse. However, as Jain (2009:1019) states, "while forced marriage may involve components of rape, sexual violence and enslavement, these [a]re not determinative of its existence". As such, it is not possible to make generalisations claiming that all forced marriages represent situations of contemporary slavery. To do so would be as erroneous as suggesting that all situations of prostitution are cases of slavery. Instead,

each case must be assessed individually to determine whether both the powers attaching to the right of ownership and "the intent of exploitation through the use, management, profit, transfer or disposal of that person" (Allain et al., 2012) are present. Only then can the situation be determined as one of contemporary slavery.

Other situations that comprise powers attaching to the right of ownership but do not indicate slavery include members of the armed forces and prisoners. Like the employee scenario mentioned above, members of the armed forces have signed a contract to work and the conditions have been made clear to them. Although some of these conditions might, to some, appear exploitative, the employees have agreed to the conditions and the intention of the armed forces is not to benefit from the exploitation of its employees. Further, although there are some restrictions in place, members of the armed forces do have the option to leave without fear of physical violence as a repercussion. This example, however, clearly does not cover situations of child soldiers who, as discussed in Chapter Two, may be recruited against their will, purposefully exploited, and forbidden from leaving through threats of violent punishment or death; their experience would then be defined as contemporary slavery.

For prisoners, being a citizen of a state means agreeing to its laws and consenting that, upon breaking them, the legal repercussions will be accepted, which may involve time in prison. The prisoner is not free to leave the situation as people are in other examples mentioned, yet the exploitation of prisoners is not the intention of the criminal justice system. Again, like the forced marriage scenario, if prisoners were to

experience exploitation then they would meet the definition of contemporary slavery. If this were the case, then prisoners would essentially be victims of state sanctioned exploitation, as discussed by Chase, 2015; LeBaron, 2015 and Bales & Mayblin, 2018, however this is not generalisable to all prisoners and should be assessed on a case by case basis.

A unique aspect of prisoners and the people controlling them is that the relationship is not between two individuals (or an individual representing a company in the case of a line manager of an employee or member of the armed forces). Instead, the relationship is between the prisoner and the state. This brings to light a question regarding who the perpetrator of the slavery would be if prisoners were to be exploited: the prison officer who is enforcing the exploitation, or the prison system that expects her to do it. If the prison officer was acting alone or with a group of other like-minded prison officers then the question is easier to answer, but if the exploitation is systematic then understandings of slavery become much more clouded.

Situations of contemporary slavery are referred to as "a relationship between (at least) two people" (Bales, 2006:1). While this implies that the relationship could be between more than one victim and more than one perpetrator, it does not account for situations where there is no identifiable perpetrator; situations, for example, in which the perpetrator is not a person, but a system. Prisons offer just one example to highlight the difficulties in identifying situations of contemporary slavery where slavery could be a result of a system rather than an individual or group of individuals.

From the interviews, **Nadim**'s story exemplifies such a situation where slavery is

systematic. **Nadim** fled because of war. He escaped Syria for neighbouring Lebanon,

but there was such a huge influx of Syrians into the country that there was vast

competition for a small number of jobs. This meant that employers could lower wages

and offer jobs with poor working conditions, such as long hours and no breaks,

because there would always be someone desperate enough to do the work. Steinfeld

defines this as labour compulsion, which relates to "situations in which the compelled

party is offered a choice between disagreeable alternatives and chooses the lesser

evil" (cited in O'Connell Davidson, 2010:246). For **Nadim** the choice was either not to

work and, thereby, not have the means to provide food and shelter for his family, or

accept poor working conditions in return for low pay. Such choice is really no choice at

all, and of course **Nadim** 'chose' the exploitative labour. Whilst in Lebanon, **Nadim**

moved between several similar jobs, each one exploitative. Although he always had

the physical choice to leave these situations, he could not justify being out of work and

was unable to find any non-exploitative working situations. As such, although he could

leave individual jobs, he did not have the choice to escape exploitation. For **Nadim** it

was always a case of either working in exploitative conditions in order to provide for

his family, or not working in exploitative conditions and allowing his family to starve.

Nadim was not prevented from leaving each exploitative situation as he wished, but

was never able to find work that was not exploitative. His experience illustrates

exploitative situations in which there were no powers attaching to the right of

ownership for an individual. Although there were people exploiting him, they did not

have the power to prevent him from leaving, thereby his situation would not fit the

definition of slavery as it requires the simultaneous existence of the powers attaching to the right of ownership *and* the exploitation. Whilst individuals did not hold power over **Nadim**, that power did exist, but it was held by a system of corruption rather than an individual perpetrator (or group of perpetrators). Regardless of where he went for work, he was likely to be exploited. This links back to the question of exploitation in prisons and whether such mistreatment could be defined as slavery if the exploitation was initiated by a system rather than an individual.

In **Nadim**'s case, the situations were such that he had no alternative options but to accept exploitative labour. Conflict had left him in a position in which he was systematically discriminated against, leaving him with little choice. While he encountered numerous employers that had decided to alter conditions for their employees to be exploitative, it is unlikely that these employers would all have implemented such changes to their wages and working conditions had the situation not been as it was, with an influx of people desperate for work. The sudden societal change resulting from the conflict in neighbouring Syria and the displacement of thousands of people caused a direct impact in Lebanon by generating a much larger pool of potential employees. In situations such as these, people desperate for work may themselves begin to offer to work for lower wages to undercut the competition and ensure they are able to find employment and provide for their families. This is highlighted in the literature by Lewis et al. (2013) who discuss how migrants in a vulnerable position will often choose not to work together to improve their working conditions because they're so desperate for the work that they are willing to accept the terrible conditions if it means that they will get the job over their competitors.

Simultaneously, employers offer lower wages and longer hours, knowing that there will always be someone who will accept the work.

In **Nadim**'s case, there was one exploitative working situation that he could not leave. He had made an agreement with his employer that he would work without pay in exchange for free accommodation for himself and his family. In this regard, **Nadim**'s story reflects that of **Imogen**, where she cooked in the restaurant and undertook all the domestic duties for no pay but was not charged rent. However, although for **Nadim**, to choose to leave the employment would be to accept homelessness for himself and his family, **Imogen** did not have the physical option of being able to leave her situation. Every time she asked to leave she was threatened with being returned to Bangladesh; those exploiting her promised to tell the police that she had been living in the UK illegally and told her that she was bound to be repatriated as a result. These threats, along with physical assault, kept **Imogen** compliant out of fear, because she knew that to be returned to Bangladesh would be a death sentence for her.

However, the comparison between **Imogen** and **Nadim**'s situations and the experiences of threats of repatriation versus the threats of homelessness, raises the question of where the real differences lay in these two cases, where one is deemed to be contemporary slavery and the other exploitation. The seriousness of the threats may be well balanced, but for **Imogen**, the threats were personal, from another person and aimed only at her; they were also backed with violence. For **Nadim**, however, his employer did not make immediate threats and was not violent; the threat of homelessness was less personal and more systematic, facing him only should he leave

the exploitative working situation. So here, is it the violence that constitutes a situation of slavery, or the direct relationship between victim and perpetrator? As the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines suggest that situations are *usually* (but not necessarily always) supported and obtained through means including violent force, it must be accepted that violence is not always present or necessary in order to define a situation as slavery. Thus, the difference between **Imogen**'s experience of slavery and **Nadim**'s experience of exploitation must be the relationship between victim and perpetrator, where in the case of slavery the exploitation was personal – it was aimed at **Imogen** and the perpetrators would do what it took to prevent her from leaving. For **Nadim**, however, the exploitation was not personal. It existed in a moment of societal change in which exploitation of workers had become the norm. There was no urgent drive to prevent **Nadim** from leaving, because there would always be someone else to take his place, indicating that systems are currently not understood as perpetrators of contemporary slavery even if they generate the same outcome as an individual who is defined as a perpetrator. The impact of systems and structural issues in allowing the conditions for individuals to perpetrate contemporary slavery is discussed more fully in Chapter Seven.

These examples emphasise how in **Imogen**'s situation the powers attaching to the right of ownership were held by someone else in the sense that she was not permitted to leave or to have a day off work; her life was fully controlled by the perpetrators. For **Nadim**, however, no employer held such powers over him, and yet the societal structure meant that his agency was reduced to such an extent that he had no choice but to continue accepting exploitative jobs. **Nadim**'s situation in this regard is heavily

reflected in the UK asylum system.

In the UK, the majority of asylum seekers are forbidden from employment or education until a decision is made on their case, and they receive £37.75 per week on which to live while they wait. However, as mentioned previously, forms of extremely exploitative and forced labour are commonly unavoidable for refugees and asylum seekers in order for them to be able to meet their basic needs (Lewis et al., 2013). This means that, like **Nadim**, asylum seekers may simply have to accept exploitative labour as they cannot access legal employment but require work in order to survive. Although they can 'choose' to leave the exploitative situations, again like for **Nadim**, there is really no choice at all because they need the money in order to survive. However, this can be taken one step further when considering the impact that the fear of repatriation had on **Imogen**. For some asylum seekers, this fear encourages them to remain hidden from the authorities in the hope of making a life for themselves in the UK under the radar where not being found means not being returned to the country they fled. The ILO (2005) reports numerous examples whereby employers have threatened repatriation to their undocumented migrant worker employees as a way of guaranteeing their labour and their silence on exploitative employment. For others, the fear of repatriation means compliance to the system and a reluctance to complain. As O'Connell Davidson asserts:

> the range and number of jobs available to them are more limited
>
> than those available to other groups of workers, and the lack of
>
> employment opportunities, especially for those who have indebted

themselves to migrate, is a powerful motive to consent to poor

conditions and wages (O'Connell Davidson, 2010:253).

Threats of repatriation used by employers for compliance is simply an easy method to

prevent these people from trying to leave the exploitative conditions.

These examples all highlight the very blurred line between what constitutes

contemporary slavery and what constitutes exploitation. Both **Nadim** and **Imogen**

resigned themselves to exploitative labour; **Imogen** because she did not know the

country or where to go for help, and **Nadim** because he needed to find a way to feed

and shelter his family, but exploitative labour was all that was available to him.

Imogen's situation is considered slavery because there was an identifiable group of

perpetrators keeping her in the situation who used violence and her fear of

repatriation to keep her compliant; they were the ones who could be identified as

holding the powers attaching to the right of ownership over her because they chose to

control her in that way. **Nadim**'s situation, however, is not considered slavery.

Although there were identifiable employers who purposefully exploited **Nadim**, they

did not actively prevent him from leaving their employ. However, for **Nadim**, these

employers did not need to use threats to keep him compliant – especially the

employer who provided **Nadim** and his family with housing in return for his free labour

– as the threat of homelessness and destitution was obvious. The main difference

between these examples is that **Imogen**'s exploiters were directly threatening her in a

way that made her compliant, while in **Nadim**'s situation, the threats that made him

compliant were not made by his exploiters; they were structural and they were so

evident that highlighting them was simply not necessary. Such an arbitrary line of

differentiating between slavery and exploitation based only on whether threats come from a person rather than a system highlights how, if the asylum system or the tied visa system were a person, they would likely be identified as a perpetrator of slavery. As O'Connell Davidson asks, "is it really possible to distinguish between trafficked/unfree and non-trafficked/ free migrants by asking whether restrictions on their choices and mobility are enforced by violence or its threat?" (2010:253). And, if the violence and threats are initiated by a system rather than a person, their experiences may be the same, but the labels and the ways in which they are treated as a result, are not.

The tied visa system which prevents overseas domestic workers from changing their employers leaves those workers with limited legal options should their employment become exploitative: they can stay in the exploitative labour, or they can be repatriated. This means that such employers have the privilege of knowing that their employees will be unlikely to ever raise a complaint against them. Essentially, through the tied visa system, the UK government grants the powers attaching to the right of ownership to the employers by giving them control over the domestic workers in the sense that they can set the working conditions and pay and the employee has little power to question them. If the workers decide not to accept the prescribed conditions, then they are returned to the government which will repatriate them, likely against their will. As such, the tied visa system creates the perfect environment for unmonitored domestic exploitation to thrive by offering the powers attaching the right of ownership over that person to their employer. Should such ownership be rejected by the worker, then the legal outcome would be forced movement through the

repatriation of that person back to their home country.

The asylum system reflects these problems. It prevents people from accessing legitimate labour, but does not provide enough for many asylum seekers to be able to survive without some form of work, leaving them with little choice but to accept exploitative labour in order to survive. It also makes direct threats. **Imogen** remained compliant due to threats of repatriation in the same way that many asylum seekers suffer exploitation but choose not to raise an issue because they suffer a constant threat of repatriation for any misdemeanour.

Where **Nadim**'s 'choice' was either to undertake exploitative labour and provide a little for his family, or avoid the exploitative labour and not be able to provide for his family, the asylum seeker's choice is threefold. They can accept exploitative labour to supplement the £37.75 a week provided to them, or they can choose to avoid the system entirely and find illegal work which they would not be able to raise a complaint against if it was exploitative. Their third option (the legal option) is to be compliant to the system, accepting £37.75 per week to survive without any additional work and resigning themselves to the fact that they may wait a year or more for a decision on their asylum, while knowing they could be detained at any time and accepting that repatriation will continue to be a constant threat. To choose this third option is to accept that the state holds the powers attaching to the right of ownership over people in such a situation. The state has the power to arrest and detain asylum seekers without, as **Isaac** discussed, providing any information as to the reasons for the detention or how long they will be detained; the detentions, as many reports have

highlighted, also often involve violence (O'Connell Davidson, 2013a).

As O'Connell Davidson states, immigrants in detention may not suffer labour exploitation, but their bodies, by being in detention centres, are generating huge profits for the private companies that run the centres (O'Connell Davidson, 2013a). This is supported by research exposing the huge profits that are generated by detention facilities which receive on average $124 per day per detainee in the USA and £82 in the UK. With expanding immigration detention systems and the USA detaining an average of 34,000 people per day (Martin, 2015), this means these companies are set to make millions each year from the detention of immigrants (Conlon & Hiemstra, 2016). This significantly reflects those situations in which people are defined as victims of contemporary slavery when they have suffered no physical exploitation but have benefits registered and paid in their name while their exploiter takes all their welfare money and generates a profit from the victim. Further, the state has the power to repatriate people; moving them across borders against their will, in a system that is often backed with coercion and violence (Binberg Peirce & Partners et al., 2008). Interestingly, these situations of detention and repatriation are not identified as situations of contemporary slavery despite the distinct similarities they have to situations which *are* defined as such. As O'Connell Davidson succinctly concludes:

> States use razor wire and guns to prevent people from moving where
> they wish to move. They detain them against their will. They use the
> threat of separation from their loved ones to make them comply
> with demands to move and they forcibly transport them from one
> territory to another. When states do these things their actions are

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not described as 'trafficking' or 'modern slavery', but are generally

either applauded or accepted as integral to the legitimacy of the

modern nation-state that claims a monopoly over the control of

mobility, as well as a monopoly on violence (2010:255).

O'Connell Davidson is right to ask why states are not held to account as perpetrators of

slavery when individuals acting the same way would instantly be recognised as such.

The fact that the asylum system functions in the way it does but is not criticised for

encouraging slavery simply highlights further that a government that promotes

repatriation, uses violence to detain immigrants and leaves them little choice but to

accept exploitative labour simply cannot also laud itself as a champion in the fight

against 'modern slavery.'

This again emphasises the extremely blurred line between what is considered slavery

and what is considered exploitation. Not all asylum seekers are victims of slavery and

not all are exploited, but at what point does migration become exploitative, and at

what point does such exploitation become slavery? Some, like Craig et al. (2007), argue

that it is important to distinguish between situations of exploitation and situations of

contemporary slavery. However, such a stance suggests that there should be a line

between what is considered acceptable exploitation and what is considered

unacceptable exploitation or slavery. Such a suggestion appears illogical; to deem a

situation as 'exploitation' is to indicate its unacceptability. This therefore suggests that

less focus should be placed on trying to differentiate between exploitation and slavery,

and that more focus should be placed on ending exploitative practices as a whole as

opposed to one specific sub-group of exploitative practices. This highlights the

tendency of too much attention being placed on terminology over the more pressing issue of human suffering. For those experiencing either contemporary slavery or exploitation, the definition of their suffering is likely to be far less important or pressing to them than an offer of support in ending their situation. This is not to say that slavery no longer exists, simply that focus should be taken away from the specific forms of exploitation that constitute slavery and placed on tackling exploitation more generally. However, it must be acknowledged that without such defining lines, legal responses cannot be consistent; though if conviction rates remain at their currently insignificant level - 239 suspects were charged in 2017/18 – (Cross, 2018) then the impact of a lack of clear legal definition will likely be negligible.

The blurred line between slavery and exploitation is often one of the criticisms against using the terminology of slavery today (O'Connell Davidson, 2010), because the lack of a legal status of slavery makes differentiating between the two extremely difficult. However, even during the transatlantic slave trade and immediately after its abolition, despite the legal status of slavery, the segregation between exploitative labour and slavery was not clear cut. O'Connell Davidson (2017) highlights how industrial wage workers of the same era as transatlantic slavery had masters to whom they were bound, but were not considered enslaved. Further, 'coolies' worked in exploitative conditions, often comparable to those of enslaved Africans, but were not defined as enslaved. Equally, after abolition, labour exploitation persisted and domestic workers continued to labour under conditions often reminiscent of slavery (Quirk & LeBaron, 2015). If exploitative conditions such as these that were essentially equal to, but not defined as slavery existed when slavery was legal, then there is little justification to

reason that slavery today cannot be defined as such on the basis that there is no clear distinction between exploitation and slavery.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, abolitionists were focussed on ending racialised, African, slavery in the Americas, while ignoring exploitative situations elsewhere that essentially constituted slavery. Decades later, legislation began to identify this discrepancy between slavery and exploitation, and the supplementary convention of 1956 called for states to abolish 'slavery-like practices'. The terminology in this convention highlighted how it was not possible to list all forms of slavery, and that there were likely to be situations considered exploitative that had not yet, but should have been, defined as slavery. It is the plight of this supplementary convention that should be recognised today, but instead of trying to widen the definition of slavery to incorporate more situations of exploitation, a move away from ideas of slavery towards the broader framework of exploitation should be encouraged. Moving attention away from the specific and limited experiences of slavery to the more general and widely experienced situations of exploitation or 'slavery-like' practices would help to ensure that government and practitioner responses stop defining one person's exploitation as more worthy of attention than another's.

6.4   Conclusion

This discussion chapter has focused on three main areas: intersectionality and structural dynamics, ways in which UK government systems encourage contemporary slavery, and the difference between slavery and exploitation. Focusing on these topics has addressed the impact of structural issues on generating situations of contemporary

slavery, and has questioned the importance of identifying a distinction between exploitation and contemporary slavery.

The chapter has determined that the use of intersectionality alone in understanding people's identity is not enough to identify who may become vulnerable to contemporary slavery. People's age, gender or ethnicity alone are not significant enough factors to put them at risk. Instead, their intersecting identities should be understood in tandem with the context and structural dynamics that they face. This means that it will be difficult to make any direct comparisons between people's experiences, because it will be rare that people will have the same intersecting identities *and* experience the same context and structural dynamics. However, this research has indicated that the context and structural dynamics are more pertinent in identifying whether or not someone will be at risk of contemporary slavery than a person's identity intersections. The respondents had extremely varied identities with differences in age, gender, ethnicity, nationality and religion, yet they all lived through a similar context: conflict. Although the conflict varied for each respondent - for some it was armed war, for others it was familial conflict, employment conflict, or marital breakdown - a commonality between all the conflicts was the context that it reduced the options available to those living through it. It was this reduction in choice that forced the respondents into making decisions where every outcome held some element of risk. As such, it was the context more than their identities that held inherent risk, which relegates the importance of intersectionality in such discussions.

In relation to the ways in which UK government systems encourage situations of

contemporary slavery, there is drastic need for change. Theresa May claims that her government will "lead the way in defeating modern slavery" (May, 2016). This is a non-controversial cause which serves to capture enthusiasm from all ends of the political spectrum, making it easy for the government to champion (McGrath, 2014; Kotiswaran & Okyere, 2015; O'Connell Davidson, 2016). Despite claims of 'leading the way', the government continues to focus on problems in source countries, despite the fact that the majority of victims only experience slavery after arriving in the UK. The NRM is unreliable, citing unhelpful numbers that do not truly reflect the situation and it continues to fail in significant ways to offer the required support to the people who need it (Home Office, 2014b) with no guarantee that the individual will receive support any different than if they had not gone through the NRM. The mechanism is prejudiced against those potential victims who are not from the EU and the NRM reforms suggested in 2014 continue to be stuck in pilot stages while conviction rates of perpetrators remain insignificant (Cooper et al., 2017; HM Government, 2017; Robinson, 2017). The asylum system fails to provide adequate information to those who are waiting for a decision, and even to those who have received a positive decision, serving to generate unnecessary vulnerabilities amongst those who do not know their entitlements and do not know where to turn for support. Concurrently, Theresa May runs a government that has an emphasis on reducing immigration and making the UK a hostile environment to illegal immigrants, while immigration services fail to communicate, signpost or assist their clients, leaving them vulnerable to the offers of people seeking to profit from their exploitation.

Immigration agencies are under pressure to reduce immigration, yet despite the

conflict of interests, are simultaneously responsible for making decisions as to whether or not they believe those with live immigration issues to have been victims of slavery. Further, strict immigration laws mean that asylum seekers must abide by rules that fail to protect or benefit them in any way and have the possibility of pushing people into situations of slavery who may not have otherwise been vulnerable; the NRM's offer is barely any better. The lack of support, advice and belief in these people pushes them underground and into searching for work in precarious situations via vicarious means. Defeating 'modern slavery' simply does not fit into an environment like this. The UK government cannot be praised, or even recognised, for championing 'modern slavery' while it continues to stall on central issues, ignore its own flaws and perpetuate systems that are biased against migrants.

Literature relating to the blurred lines between situations of exploitation and situations of contemporary slavery tends to highlight examples of cases where the powers attaching to the right of ownership are present, but where the situation would not reasonably be defined as contemporary slavery. Examples provided include children, spouses and employees. However, such conversations fail to engage with definitions of contemporary slavery that require the powers attaching to the right of ownership to exist in tandem with intended exploitation. By incorporating this latter part of the definition, the confusion surrounding those situations in which there is an exertion of control but no exploitation is overcome.

The importance of perfecting the definition of contemporary slavery may be considered a priority to some in academia, especially to those who believe that a

preoccupation with the topic diminishes and trivialises the historical experiences of the enslaved (Beutin, 2017). However, the real-life impact of contemporary slavery and exploitation is of more importance than deliberating over the difference between the two. For those in the present day suffering from either extreme exploitation or contemporary slavery, the definition of their suffering is likely to be less important than receiving the support and assistance they need. To suggest that there needs to be a conclusive line implies that there are acceptable and unacceptable forms of exploitation, when, in reality, any form of exploitation should be eliminated. In this respect, it is less imperative to identify a definitive line that separates exploitation and contemporary slavery than it is to focus on eradicating all cases of exploitation, although a lack of definitive line would affect legal responses.

The following analysis chapter moves away from the structural impacts that may trigger contemporary slavery and focuses instead on grounding the findings from this research in literature based on the agentic processes in play in situations of contemporary slavery.

Chapter Seven: Agency and Contemporary Slavery – Victims and Agents

The previous chapter addresses the usefulness of differentiating between situations of exploitation and of contemporary slavery. It also focusses on the role of structure in causing situations of contemporary slavery by considering the intersectionality and structural dynamics of a person's situation in addition to how they are affected by the restrictive policies of the UK government.

This chapter continues to give meaning to the findings presented in chapters 4 and 5 but moves away from the role of structure and towards the role of agency in generating situations of contemporary slavery. It debates the usefulness of victim terminology and the impact its use has on generating unrealistic depictions of those who suffer contemporary slavery. It then challenges the notion that victimhood and agency must be mutually exclusive by demonstrating the prevalence of agency in the lead up to situations of contemporary slavery. Finally, it considers the interplay between structure and agency in generating and perpetuating situations of contemporary slavery. These are all fundamental aspects in understanding who is vulnerable to becoming a victim of contemporary slavery, why they are at risk, and the conditions that might exacerbate the likelihood of becoming a victim.

7.1   Victim Terminology

Firstly, although briefly mentioned at the beginning of the thesis, it is important to highlight that the term 'victim' is used throughout this piece of work with acknowledgement of the flaws and controversies surrounding its use. Increasing

numbers of victims are resenting being identified with the term because of its negative connotations and its capacity to deny their independence and strength (Van Dijk, 2009). American feminists have advocated for the use of the term 'survivor' to replace that of 'victim' in order to acknowledge the agency that individuals have in situations where they are not necessarily passive and weak. While there are clear benefits to the use of the term 'survivor' and flaws with the term 'victim', this thesis has favoured the latter as, unlike its counterpart, it is applicable to situations not only in which the person in question has managed to escape their exploitative situation, but also to those who continue to suffer in contemporary slavery. Although the term 'victim' holds certain connotations, this thesis does not equate the term with a person who is powerless and passive. However, the impact of this choice of terminology will now become the focus.

7.1.1   The Removal of Agency

The idea of someone consenting to a situation of contemporary slavery is so counter-intuitive that those who suffer this crime tend to be understood as having no agency or choice in the situation. From the outside, experiences are often understood as constituting a complete removal of agency whereby the victim played no part and had no choice in the situation (De Angelis, 2016). This lack of agency is fundamental in Christie's understandings of the 'ideal victim' which identifies the individual as blameless and weak and who, at the time of victimisation, was undertaking 'respectable' activities (1986). This then causes problems in identifying as victims those who appear not to be weak, or those who had some agency, be it in the lead up to the exploitation, or within the situation itself. It also poses problems for those whose

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activities are not considered respectable. This could cover a range of issues from people having been in prison to committing criminal activities to provide for themselves.

In literature on contemporary slavery, there is one key topic that receives the focus of attention when questioning the authenticity of a person's victimhood because of their non-respectable activities. This concentrates on women who have previously been sex workers and have become victims of contemporary slavery, or those who have agreed to undertake sex work but have found themselves in situations whereby the conditions they agreed to have not been upheld (Doezema, 1998; Blume, 2015). Because sex work is not considered respectable, for those who had some degree of agency in choosing this 'non-respectable' occupation, there is scepticism around the possibility that they constitute victims (Wilson & O'Brien, 2016) and a tendency to assume that they are accountable for their own suffering. To fit the profile of an 'ideal victim' and not be treated with scepticism, victims of contemporary slavery for sexual exploitation should have been deceived into their exploitation and should have had no choice in undertaking sex work.

Wilson and O'Brien (2016) highlight how this lack of acknowledgement of victimhood in relation to those who have had some degree of agency in taking part in sex work is reflected in the United States Trafficking in Persons reports. In these reports, of the 361 victim narratives of sexual slavery the authors looked at, only one victim was understood to have voluntarily entered sex work; the remaining 360 had encountered sexual exploitation but were not perceived to have undertaken sex work voluntarily.

This emphasises the huge impact that agency can have on understandings of victims; it is extremely unlikely that these numbers accurately reflect the proportions of women who voluntarily and involuntarily undertook sex work and experienced contemporary slavery. As this example demonstrates, those with agency related to sex work were extremely unlikely to be recognised as victims as they did not fit the criteria of the 'ideal victim' who is weak, blameless and respectable.

In relation to contemporary slavery for sexual exploitation, Weitzer (2007) highlights how this 'ideal victim' narrative is wholly inappropriate considering how the relationship between migration, sex work and agency commonly means that women are aware that they will be working in sex work, however, this agency does not negate their experiences as victims. Notions of the 'ideal victim' within contemporary slavery discourse therefore serve to confuse victimhood and agency. On the one hand, as Srikantiah (2007) posits, the agency of those who choose to engage in sex work is denied; those advocating for the criminalisation of sex work simply do not believe that a woman could choose such work, but that these women must have had no agency in order to find themselves in it (Butler-Sloss, 2011; Skrivankova, 2011). And yet, on the other hand, rather than labelling all these women as victims because they have engaged in sex work which it is believed they cannot have consented to, those who do claim to have consented to the work are labelled as complicit in their exploitation. This demonstrates how agency is therefore removed from victims of sexual slavery regardless of their choices concerning sex work; their ideas of their own agency regarding their choices are entirely disregarded.

However, attributes relating to the 'ideal victim' are inconsistent with the actual lived experiences of victims of contemporary slavery whose agency often plays some role in their situation unless they are one of the rare few victims who suffer kidnapping and have no degree of choice leading up to their exploitation (Doezema, 2001; O'Connell Davidson, 2006). While there may be inappropriate notions of who constitutes an 'ideal victim' based on weakness, blamelessness and respectability, an individual does not need to be an 'ideal victim' in order to be a victim. To reassert the definition of the Bellagio-Harvard guidelines, a victim is someone who has been controlled for the purpose of exploitation; the extent of their agency or involvement is therefore irrelevant in defining someone as a victim of contemporary slavery.

7.1.2   Gendering of the 'Ideal Victim'

The focus on victims, victimisation and agency in relation to contemporary slavery is almost exclusively on women's experiences (Blume, 2015). This highlights an important point that the experiences of men as victims are commonly disregarded as they are deemed not to fit that ideal of being physically weak and passive. "In addition to physical strength, men are understood to have a better capacity to defend and care for themselves; men are perceived to have more control over their labour than women" (Blume, 2015:8).

Focussing on the victimhood of women who fit this ideal is to separate those who experience contemporary slavery into female victims, where the focus is mainly on non-consenting sex work, and male agents, where the focus is mainly on labour

exploitation which does not hold the same controversy around consent as sex work. While agency has received significant attention in the literature in relation to the exploitation of women working in commercial sex, such attention has not been offered in equal measure to other forms of exploitation or to the exploitation of men (Choi-Fitzpatrick, 2012). "Migrant men are seen as the norm - and are thus visible - but their gendered experiences are never highlighted and never questioned" (Blume, 2015:5).

De Angelis' work focuses on the trafficking of women (2016), and she advocates for discussions of trafficking to understand that victimhood and agency can exist together rather than as opposites. Sen's framework provides a grounding for this (1985; 1999). Sen discusses how women's agency is limited in a way that men's agency is not, both in terms of their 'well-being freedom' – that is larger scale aspects such as their economic security – as well as their 'agency-freedom', or the control they have over their immediate situation. Both aspects of freedom are constrained for women more so than men, which could explain why there is a tendency to avoid referring to men as victims. Men have more freedom over their agency, and the more agency a person has, the less likely they will be identified as a victim, as illustrated by the United States Trafficking in Persons reports discussed above. These notions of external factors impacting on agency are discussed further below.

Focusing on female victims to the extent that men become ignored from conversations on victims of contemporary slavery only serves to further embed the concept of an 'ideal victim' and reinforce the idea that it is women rather than men who become victims. However, the impact of the inappropriate focus on women as victims does not

end with men being overlooked, and can actually influence policy responses (Quirk & O'Connell Davidson, 2015; Wilson & O'Brien, 2016). This is something discussed in the literature, particularly in reference to the ways in which the conflation between women, sex work and contemporary slavery has been used to push and justify political agendas relating to sex work (Weitzer, 2010; Blume, 2015). However, the focus on women as victims has further impacts, in that by highlighting the 'women as victims' agenda, front line responses have, until recently, been largely focussed on women. This overlooks any similarities between the experiences of genders and leads to overgeneralised and misconceived understandings of the victim experience and levels of agency. Fundamentally, it also means that male victims have likely been going without acknowledgement or support. The main flaw of such a victim typology is that it serves to prioritise those victims who fit the criteria and dismiss those who do not. However, as identified above, the 'ideal victim' does not necessarily reflect the 'real victim'.

It is only in the past few years that the number of males being identified as potential victims of contemporary slavery in the UK has started to draw anywhere near close to the numbers of females identified. Now these recognitions have been made, a significant difference in statistics is noticeable. The chart below shows a comparison between the percentage of males and females referred into the National Referral Mechanism between 2013 and 2017 (NCA, 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018). Any discrepancy in percentages reflects transgender individuals and the rounding of decimal numbers.

Figure 4 - Males and Females Referred into the NRM

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Males	35.7%	38.7%	46.5%	49%	52%
Females	64.2%	61.2%	53.4%	50.8%	47%

The chart shows a clear and constant change over time in the ratio between males and females identified as potential victims of contemporary slavery in the UK, where in 2013 females represented almost two thirds of all potential victims, but in 2017 more males had been identified than females. This indicates a change in understandings of who constitutes a victim, and is reassuring in the sense that it appears the victimhood of males is no longer being overlooked. There has also been a change in the forms of exploitation that people are referred into the NRM for. While in 2013, 44.4% of cases related to slavery for sexual exploitation (NCA, 2014), in 2017 sexual exploitation represented only 33.9% of cases (NCA, 2018). Again, this signifies that front line staff are gaining a better understanding that contemporary slavery constitutes more than just sexual exploitation. Despite this increase in the identification of potential contemporary slavery cases affecting males and the decrease in percentages of potential cases of sexual exploitation being referred into the NRM, should a member of the public be asked to explain their understanding of what is meant by human trafficking or 'modern slavery', personal experience has shown that the most likely response will be 'women forced into sex work.' This indicates that, reflecting some of the flaws of awareness campaigns discussed in Chapter Six, there is a clear lack of public understanding relating to contemporary slavery.

However, to widen the understanding of victims is not necessarily the best way to

tackle this issue. Although it might be assumed that including men in discussions of victimhood would alter understandings from the feminised 'weak and passive' victim to a more inclusive understanding that accepts that victims may have agency and are not always weak, this would not necessarily be the case. As Blume (2015) discusses, widening the typology of victims to include men might not raise the standards of what is meant by the term 'victim', but may in fact lower them. This would mean that rather than female victims being understood on a level comparable with men, where their agency is recognised and their power and independence is acknowledged, there is a possibility that it could simply serve to mean that male victims are understood on a par with female victims – that they are weak, passive and have no control over their situations.

7.1.3   The Impact of Victim Terminology on Agency

In succumbing to this 'ideal victim' narrative, a tendency has developed amongst activists, suggesting that:

> [s]laves are victims who need to be rescued – helpless, dependent, a
> little pathetic, and, we expect, grateful for a chance at freedom.
> What this view misses is the resilience and strength of people caught
> in slavery, their endurance, intelligence, and compassion (Bales,
> 2007:62).

Bales highlights here one of the most fundamental problems with victim terminology, that to assign the term 'victim' to an individual is to remove their agency and suggest

they are nothing more than a passive person caught in a situation over which they have no control or power. The importance of language is clear in relation to victimhood and contemporary slavery, where the assignation of the victim label can change the way that the victim is perceived – both by themselves and by outsiders (Foucault, 1977; Green, 2015). As Giddens acknowledges, language can have a huge impact on a person's daily life as they are expected to live up to their label and some may find their activities changing in a nod towards what is expected of them (Giddens, 1986). This was reflected in **Fredrika**'s story where she had a legitimate reason for claiming asylum. **Fredrika** is gay and certain she would be killed if she were to be returned to Uganda, however, after receiving negative and hateful responses from her family after she disclosed her sexuality to them, she was too afraid to talk about her sexuality in her asylum interview. Because of this fear, **Fredrika** lied in her asylum interview, trying to live up to the 'ideal victim' narrative in order to increase her chances at receiving a positive decision.

Applying victimhood to someone also goes against notions of intersectionality – it suggests that the victim aspect of a person's identity is the prominent and most relevant feature, and it fails to acknowledge the ways in which their victimhood might intersect with other aspects of their identity which, for them, may be much more important. Implying that all victims are weak and powerless also disregards the vast complexities of situations of slavery and fails to acknowledge the role that the individual's agency and choices may have played in their situations, an issue addressed further in the following section.

While this discussion has focused on the ways in which the 'ideal victim' is believed to have no agency, there is also much academic discussion about how terming someone as a victim can actually lead to a removal of agency, thereby reinforcing the notion of victimhood simply through the use of the label. The label of being a victim ascribes a role of passivity that many may find constricting.

Those victims of contemporary slavery who want to access support through the NRM must prove that they are victims. However, because of the limitations of the 'ideal victim' and the tendency that those who fit this ideal will receive better treatment than those who do not (Williams, 2004; Davies, 2007), encouraging someone to identify themselves as a victim may be one way in which their agency is actually removed. This person might not deem themselves to be a victim (De Angelis, 2016), or may be reluctant to use the term. However, because of the pressure of needing to be identified as a 'genuine victim', some, like **Fredrika**, may fear disclosing their true experience as they are so anxious about the impression they must make to the agencies assisting or making decisions on their situation. They are led to believe that they will only be supported if they fit the criteria of the 'ideal victim' as presented to them through narratives, media, and anti-slavery campaigns. These suggest they should be weak, blameless and respectable, but also that they should display signs of physical suffering (Aradau, 2004) meaning that in order to increase the likelihood of receiving support, they may be encouraged to take on a persona that does not accurately reflect their experience, despite them genuinely being a victim. Scenarios such as this only serve to reinforce the 'ideal victim' narrative.

Contemporary anti-slavery campaigns have received much criticism, as mentioned in Chapter Six. Quirk and Shih (2017) review the lack of impact that these campaigns have through their tendency to provide awareness that does not result in action. However, these campaigns often have a further negative effect of reinforcing the stereotypical 'ideal victim' who is passive, voiceless and in need of rescue. Quirk and Richter (2015) discuss this predisposition of contemporary anti-slavery campaigns using sensationalist images, and Quirk and O'Connell Davidson (2015:no pagination) refer to them as "simplistic and misleading images". They often depict women in chains, handcuffs, ropes or blindfolds, or with barcodes printed on their bare skin. While such images may garner the attention of the sympathetic public who deem those depicted in the images to be deserving of their pity and compassion (De Angelis, 2016), these images reflect the 'ideal victim', rather than the 'real victim'. As mentioned above, this can encourage 'genuine victims' to alter their persona in order to fit the ideal narrative in the hope of receiving a more favourable outcome. However, the use of such images can also misinform the public of the experiences of victims of contemporary slavery. By using these images that depict desperate and helpless, usually female, individuals, the public are offered a reinforced view of the 'ideal victim', leading to them disregarding or wrongly interpreting situations of contemporary slavery in which the victim is male, or where the victim displays some level of agency.

These campaigns encourage a misunderstanding of contemporary slavery which may not end only with a misinterpretation by the public, but could actually impact policy and governmental responses to such situations (Quirk & O'Connell Davidson, 2015). While the 'ideal victim' continues to be portrayed as a weak, passive individual lacking

agency, those that have had any autonomous choice or any knowledge about their

situation are less likely to receive sympathy and support, and are more likely to receive

criminal justice or immigration sanctions (De Angelis, 2016). As a result, "popular

representations of trafficking and slavery have too often hurt—rather than helped—

efforts to both understand and combat global exploitation, discrimination and

vulnerability" (Quirk & O'Connell Davidson, 2015:no pagination).

To treat victims as having no agency is also to make assumptions on their behalf, which

serves to further enforce any lack of agency. Morris (1997:29) explains how

detrimental it can be to deny victims the opportunity to tell their story. "Silence and

the loss of voice may eventually constitute or represent for some who suffer a

complete shattering of the self." As such, to assume that a victim would not want to

share their story and to deny them the chance to do so is to remove their choice in the

situation. To treat victims as having no agency is also to make assumptions on their

behalf, which further enforces any lack of agency. Denying a victim the opportunity to

voice their experience denies not only their agency in choosing whether or not to

share their story, but who they are as a person, having been shaped by their

experience of being a victim. This is reinforced by De Angelis (2016) who asserts that

placing all victims of slavery into one homogenous group serves to deny their unique

and individual experiences, but also removes a sense of who these people are outside

of their slavery experiences – considering them only as victims. Van Dijk (2009) adds to

this with the claim that assigning a victim label can generate a discrepancy between

the understandings that others have of the victim and their own self-image, meaning

that outsiders consider them only by their label as opposed to by the person they

know themselves to be. Again, this relates back to intersectionality and rejects all the other intersecting aspects of a person's identity by viewing their victimhood as the most pertinent factor. Significantly, this also overlooks any aspect of a person's life after the slavery situation. "Women rebuild and refashion their lives post-trafficking in a variety of imaginative ways. Principally, women celebrate survival as the exemplar in achieving agency" (De Angelis, 2016:15). This quote from De Angelis emphasises how a person's overcoming of a situation of slavery could be the very aspect of their situation that provides them with a sense of agency. Therefore, to understand a person only as a victim is to deny their post-slavery identity and the agency they have discovered.

7.1.4   The Notion of Rescue

The denial of agency relating to situations of contemporary slavery is underlined with the terminology of 'rescue' where agencies emphasise the importance of 'rescuing victims' from slavery (Hope for Justice, n.d.). Such choice of vocabulary emphasises the tendency of outsiders to consider those in situations of slavery to be passive and powerless, requiring the assistance of such outsiders to escape their exploitation. Although in some situations this may be true, it is not universal, and not all those who suffer contemporary slavery are the passive victims that this choice of terminology implies.

The use of the word 'rescue' may be fundamentally hypocritical in several ways. Some may enter a situation of contemporary slavery with a degree of choice, perhaps regarding the nature of the work but not the conditions, or vice versa. There is the potential that this situation could be preferable to the one they left, for example if the

slavery situation provided safe accommodation (even if it offered no pay), after the individual had fled a situation in which they had no housing or employment. In such circumstances, those organisations who 'rescue' these victims without first discussing with them their options and the likely outcomes of such a 'rescue', may cause the victim to leave the slavery situation only to end up in worse conditions. For example, if the person is entered into the NRM then they have access to support and accommodation. However, this is not long-term, and there is no support guaranteed upon leaving the NRM. Therefore, if such organisations fail to explain the long-term outcomes of the NRM to those victims that they 'rescue', then such 'rescues' offer false promises of security. Once individuals have left the NRM and are faced with no housing, no employment and no recourse to public funds, some may rightly identify that their situation of slavery was actually favourable, not only to life before the situation of slavery (as discussed by O'Connell Davidson in Martins, 2016), but to life after the 'rescue'. By failing to offer guaranteed support to victims of contemporary slavery after leaving the NRM, the UK government is accountable for generating an environment where, for some, an experience of slavery offers more safety and security than that offered by the government.

As Choi-Fitzpatrick explains:

> current policies are rooted in a neoliberal assumption that coerced
>
> victims can simply be returned to the market where they will be able
>
> to pursue other viable choices and to supportive families and
>
> societies. These assumptions are both simplistic and false (Choi-
>
> Fitzpatrick, 2012:21).

This reflects the notion of hyper-precarity discussed by Lewis et al. (2013; 2014) whereby the labour exploitation of those in the asylum system as well as those both granted and refused asylum should be understood not by the precarious labour, but by the precarious lives of those experiencing the labour. The socio-legal status of asylum seekers and refugees, coupled with migration contexts and gender relations means that, as Choi-Fitzpatrick stipulates, it is not the working situation that is precarious, but the entire underpinning of these people's lives in the UK. As Lewis and Waite stipulate:

> [u]nless one or more persistent insecurity is altered or resolved, racialised and gendered migration, work and welfare regimes and neoliberalism combine to create an ongoing 'precarity trap' for migrant forced labourers. For these reasons, a singular focus on 'rescue' from any one particular forced labour situation is unlikely to offer a durable solution unless other insecurities contributing to the 'precarity trap' are addressed (Lewis & Waite, 2015:9).

To return to 'rescues', the role of a 'rescuer' is also imbued with notions of power, superiority and control. The role is socially valued and is inherently superior to that of the victim. Rejection of the 'rescue' is therefore seen as deviant and evidence that the victim is too traumatised to make decisions in their own best interests. Although the organisations undertaking the 'rescues' may believe that no person would choose to be exploited, unless they explain the likely outcomes to the victim and allow them to make an informed decision, then by undertaking a 'rescue' they are withdrawing agency and choice from that individual by removing them from a situation which may be preferable to them than the long-term (lack of) support offered by the UK government. Unless the organisation continues to support the victim through the NRM

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and after exiting, into accommodation, employment, and integration into society, then such 'rescues' are nothing more than a short-term relief from exploitation.

7.2   The Victim/Agent Binary

While the terminology of victimhood can serve to remove an individual's agency as described above, slavery itself is understood as a situation in which a person's agency is removed. As Landman (forthcoming) describes:

> [f]irst, fundamentally, slavery involves the question of human dignity
> and the value of a human being which under conditions of slavery is
> reduced to property, possession, or a subject of control by another
> that fundamentally denies that person true social and political
> agency.[3]

As this quote implies, notions of slavery always return to ideas of possession, and with that possession must come some degree of a lack of agency for the victim to be controlled. The whole concept of slavery involves a victim who no longer has full self determination to be able to make his or her own choices, meaning that the victim can be understood as having had the powers attaching to the right of ownership removed from their own control and given to the perpetrator controlling them, hence they then become understood as property (Allain et al., 2012). As described above, many understandings of victims are based around a notion of the 'ideal victim' which suggest

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[3] The article that this quote was taken from was kindly shared by Professor Landman via email. It is a draft of a forthcoming article for a journal based in Padua and is part of a follow up to a keynote speech he gave at a conference. As it is forthcoming, any further reference to this work will be cited as 'Landman (forthcoming)'.

that, in order to be defined as a victim of contemporary slavery, all agency must have been removed from the victim and their choices leading up to the slavery must have played no part in the outcome. However, while definitions of slavery indicate that the powers attaching to the right of ownership must be held by a perpetrator to the extent that they have control over the victim, this does not necessarily equate to a complete removal of agency.

There are significant flaws associated with the tendency to understand victims of contemporary slavery on a voluntary/forced or victim/agency binary, where only those with no agency and no level of choice leading to the situation (thereby fitting the criteria for the 'ideal victim') are considered victims. As described above, the notion of an 'ideal victim' who has no agency is not reflective of a 'real victim'. While, of course, there will be examples of people who experience contemporary slavery as a result of a complete removal of agency, many victims have some level of agency and choice leading to their exploitation. However, in such a scenario, forced and voluntary exist on a scale rather than a binary; there is no black and white distinction between a situation of exploitation that is forced and one that is voluntary, as a person's level of choice will depend on their situation. This reflects Skrivankova's work which emphasises that "there is a continuum of experiences ranging from decent work through minor and major labour law violations, to extreme exploitation in the form of forced labour" (2010:4). While it is likely that there will always be some level of force in situations of contemporary slavery, as it is improbable that any person would volunteer to exploitation, violence and being held hostage should their agency be free and uncontrolled (O'Connell Davidson, 2013b), there may very well also be a degree of

agency and choice on the victim's part that has led towards the situation.

As stated, this 'choice' will likely sit on a spectrum where a person with complete agency is least likely to enter a situation of contemporary slavery, and a person with no agency is the most likely. Of all the respondents from this research project, there was only one who experienced a complete removal of agency. **Beth** experienced contemporary slavery on two occasions, once in Uganda and once in the UK. Although her experience in the UK was one in which she had some level of agency, this agency was entirely removed during her experience in Uganda. As a child, **Beth** was kidnapped by the Lord's Resistance Army and held against her will as a 'wife' of one of the commanders where she was kept for four years and sexually exploited. Her complete lack of choice and agency in this situation puts her in the category of an 'ideal victim'. While the removal of agency cannot be denied in **Beth**'s case, it is not reflective of the lived experience for the majority of victims, and the remaining respondents who experienced contemporary slavery did have a degree of agency leading towards their exploitation.

Usually, individuals will have some input, agency and a degree of choice in situations that lead to their exploitation, however, such choices have usually been limited and are not reflective of those available to a person who has complete agency. From the interviews, this can be illustrated by **Hattie** who 'chose' to engage the services of a smuggler to help her illegally leave the country. **Hattie** needed to flee the country out of fear of unfair arrest, and this threat limited her options and restricted her agency. While she would never have previously considered trying to leave the country illegally,

the threat of arrest left her with the limited choices of either finding a way out of the country or accepting arrest. With these being the only options available to her, **Hattie** 'chose' to illegally leave the country and 'chose' to make a deal with a smuggler to pay off her debt on arrival at the destination; she agreed to care work but was forced into prostitution. While these were technically choices that **Hattie** made, she would not have made those choices if not for the situation limiting her agency and the possibilities available to her.

This example highlights how notions of choice and agency are not as easily defined as a person simply having a choice or not having a choice. O'Connell Davidson (2013b) defines this confusing notion as the difference between an active and a voluntary or autonomous choice. Here, an 'active' choice is simply the act of making a choice, while an 'autonomous' or 'voluntary' choice is one that is made without the influence of any external forces. **Hattie** made an active choice to enter a deal with a smuggler, however it was not a voluntary choice, as her situation forced her into making this decision; if she had not feared being arrested and never released, it is unlikely that she would have made such a choice. Regardless of whether decisions constitute an autonomous choice or merely an active one, in the majority of cases it would be misguided to suggest that victims of contemporary slavery (both leading up to and within their exploitative situations) have no agency.

This is emphasised in the IOM's global migration report which states that "less than 1 per cent of IOM-assisted victims were kidnapped at the point of trafficking and, conversely, over 50 per cent were recruited through a personal contact"

(IOM Global Migration Report, 2011, quoted in De Angelis, 2016:77). This shows that in a firm majority of cases, victims of contemporary slavery do hold some degree of agency where they enter into agreements with acquaintances and are more than just passive individuals.

These examples demonstrate how migrants who find themselves in situations of contemporary slavery cannot be easily divided into:

> [t]hose who were driven to move by forces beyond their control or who were forcibly moved for purposes of exploitation by 'traffickers'; and on the other hand, those who exercised agency, choice, and control over their own migration, including those who entered into a partnership with 'smugglers' to make an unauthorized border crossing (O'Connell Davidson, 2013b:177).

The line between being forcibly moved and exercising agency is not distinct, as again illustrated by **Hattie** who straddles this binary having been driven to move by forces beyond her control and yet also entering a partnership with a smuggler. This is further emphasised by Brysk and Choi-Fitzpatrick who state that "trafficked individuals are neither helpless victims (as in the moral crusader narrative) nor rights-bearing individuals (as in the human rights framework)" (2012:5). Instead, they most likely sit somewhere between these two extremes.

This discussion highlights how it is inaccurate to suggest that freedom and slavery are direct opposites or mutually exclusive (Schneider, 1993; De Angelis, 2016). To do so would be to overlook any extent of freedom that those experiencing slavery have, and

would also ignore any lack of freedom experienced by those that are not victims of slavery. Such concepts consider that the only available scenarios are that a person has agency and free choice or that they do not, when agency and coercion should rather be understood as on a scale. In reality, those who experience contemporary slavery rarely suffer a complete denial of agency but will have had some degree of choice in the situations that led to their exploitation. However, these apparent choices are forced rather than voluntary. "Choosing" from a set of very limited or bad options is an act of agency but, due to the constraints or conditions under which the choice is made, does not negate their status as a victim of contemporary slavery. However, it is also important to emphasise that, as the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines advocate, the removal or limitation of agency alone is not enough to define a person as a victim of contemporary slavery; they must also experience exploitation (Allain et al., 2012).

7.3   Macro and Micro Level Impacts on Agency

Landman unpacks these ideas of agency and choice existing on a spectrum as opposed to on a binary.

> At the individual or micro level, a person will have varying degrees of
> personal agency (i.e. negative liberty) and the ability to freely
> exchange their labour within a rights protective labour market. At
> the societal or macro level, a person will be embedded in economic,
> legal, political, and social structures that also affect their relative
> degree of agency (forthcoming).

This highlights how notions of agency are not as simple as denoting whether or not an

individual has control over their own choices, and links back to Sen's argument that

the macro level environment is more restrictive on women than on men (1985; 1999).

As Landman points out, agency should be understood in two separate and significant

ways: agency at the micro level and agency at the macro level, where micro refers to

relationships between individuals and macro to relationships between an individual

and larger societal structures and systems. This concept of an individual's ability to

exercise agency being constrained by environmental and social structures is one that

receives significant attention in the literature (Sen, 1985; Archer, 1995; Sen, 1999;

Lister, 2004; De Angelis, 2016). Landman's argument is that agency can be removed at

both the micro and macro level, but that a person can only be understood as a victim

of contemporary slavery if their agency is removed at the micro level. To Landman

then, the experiences of those whose agency is restricted at the macro level and who

go onto suffer exploitation but without a removal of agency at the micro level would

not be considered victims of contemporary slavery. An example from this research

project of an individual who experienced such a situation would be **Nadim** who moved

between multiple exploitative jobs after fleeing Syria to Lebanon. While **Nadim** had

the agency to be able to leave the exploitative situations of labour, he would have

been unlikely to find any other job which did not offer only exploitative conditions and

pay. As such, these macro level conditions impacted the micro level and made it

possible for the employers at the micro level to introduce these exploitative conditions

without reprisal. This demonstrates how the argument that agency must be removed

at the micro level in order to constitute a situation of contemporary slavery fails to

engage with the complex interactions between the macro and micro level and

overlooks the ways in which it may only be possible for a micro level removal of agency if the macro level allows it.

At the macro level, the state structurally removes agency from some more than others and, in doing so, makes it possible for agency to be removed at the micro level. For example, in the 18th and 19th centuries, the legal justification of slavery at the macro level meant that the removal of agency at the micro level was acceptable, and even expected. This indicates that slavery existed because the macro level permitted, and even encouraged, the removal of agency at the micro level. Although slavery is no longer legal, the macro and micro systems continue to interact in a similar way in relation to slavery.

To return to the example of **Hattie**, the impact of the removal of agency at the macro and micro levels becomes apparent. The corruption both in the factory she had been working in and amongst the local police force meant that there was a macro level system that removed her agency; she was not able to live a free life with autonomous choice because the factory had reported her to the police and the police had issued a warrant for her arrest because she had fought for fair wages. This removal of agency at the macro level meant that **Hattie**'s choices were limited. She could make an active choice, but not an autonomous one: she could either remain in Vietnam and face unfair arrest, or she could try to leave the country. The only way to leave the country without drawing the attention of the police would be to do so illegally, which required a smuggler. This means that the macro level removal of agency led **Hattie** into making this deal with a smuggler. Because of a lack of options, **Hattie** agreed with this smuggler that he would get her out of the country and, as she did not have the funds

to pay him up front, that she would work for him on arrival to pay off the debt. However, this is where **Hattie**'s agency was then removed at the micro level. She had no one to turn to for help, she did not know what country she was in, and even if she had known, she knew that she was illegal in that country and therefore at risk of repatriation if her presence were to be discovered. As such, the removal of agency at the macro level because of the corrupt systems in Vietnam meant that **Hattie**'s smuggler was easily able to deny her agency at the micro level. Even once in a new country, her lack of agency at the macro level continued because of her fear of being repatriated. For her, the situation of contemporary slavery occurred because of a removal of agency at the micro level, but this would not have been possible without the vulnerabilities she experienced because of the macro level.

Although macro level systems may no longer encourage slavery as a practice in and of itself as they did when slavery was legal, some of the systems act in such a way as to permit the existence of slavery today. For example, both the UK tied visa system and the UK asylum system are macro level structures which permit the removal of agency of those within their systems to some extent. For those in the tied visa system, their agency is removed by the prohibition of the changing of employers regardless of the working conditions they enforce; domestic worker migrants must remain with the employer to whom their visa is tied, or they must return to their home country. For those in the asylum system, agency is removed by the proscription of obtaining employment or an education, the allocation of a location in which they must live, and through threats of, and actual, detention and repatriation.

By removing agency in these ways at the macro level, the state is increasing the likelihood that these people will also have their agency removed at the micro level (see, for example, Sloan, 2015). In the tied visa system, the macro level removal of agency means that the employers can remove agency at the micro level, as the domestic workers who are working for them under the tied visa have little option other than to accept the conditions that the employer sets, or to return home, as exemplified by **Ofira** whose description of her situation indicated that she was on a tied visa. Unlike those on other working visas who have the option to change employers and remain in employment in the UK, the tied visa system reduces the agency of those confined by it by preventing the changing of employers. Instead, should they feel they have a valid reason to stay in the UK, they are required to apply for asylum after leaving the domestic labour situation, leaving them without access to employment for the duration of the decision making process.

In the asylum system, the lack of legal routes into employment, the low stipend and the assigned locations for housing are examples of the removal of agency at the macro level. These macro level restrictions may lead to the removal of agency at the micro level should an asylum seeker choose to supplement her stipend with illegal work, which is unavoidable for many, as discussed by Lewis et al. (2013). During his interview, **Isaac** discussed how his agency was impacted by macro level systems when he was going through the asylum system. He had been offered various jobs while part of the asylum process and had felt unable to accept them because of his fear of being detained or repatriated, and yet he could have desperately benefitted from the extra money to help support his baby and his young sister. Having been detained previously

with no explanation as to why, **Isaac** indicated that he may have had more freedom

and choice and lived in less fear had he not had to submit to the constraints on his

agency that had been imposed by the asylum system. However, there are plenty of

cases where people in **Isaac**'s position have chosen to accept work despite the legal

constraints imposed by the asylum system (Lewis et al., 2013). The removal of agency

forced by the asylum system in such situations means that there are severe restrictions

on the employment opportunities available, as the individuals must remain hidden in

order not to be detected by authorities. This means that those offering employment to

those who do not have the legal right to accept it hold all the power over those in

desperate need of work. It means the employers can set the rates of pay, the hours of

work and the conditions of labour and leave the employee with no option but to

accept.

In such situations, the asylum system is accountable for the macro level removal of

agency in prohibiting access to labour that would, in turn, permit the removal of

agency at the micro level, as any asylum seeker accepting work illegally would not have

the route to report an employer should their working conditions become exploitative;

nor would she be able to ask for help should she find herself unable to leave this

labour situation, as to do so would be to risk detention for working illegally. This allows

those individuals who provide labour to asylum seekers to be able to remove agency at

the micro level in a way that would not be possible if the macro level systems were

structured differently.

In these scenarios the government, by imposing such strict rules against asylum

seekers gaining employment, is denying accountability and may try to absolve itself of any wrongdoings by arguing that these restrictive policies are a way of preventing exploitation, because if asylum seekers did not seek employment then they would not find themselves in exploitative labour. However, such claims would overlook the huge role that the government's own restrictive policies play in exacerbating vulnerabilities towards exploitation; if asylum seekers were provided with a stipend that they could survive on without needing to find extra money, they would not need to seek precarious labour. Equally, if they were not prohibited from finding employment then they would have access to legitimate sources of labour rather than only the illicit labour that is available to them currently. This is much a reflection of the earlier discussion regarding the government's reaction to smuggling and ideas that their strict immigration rules are a method of deterring traffickers (Stepnitz, 2012; O'Connell Davidson & Howard, 2015; Wilson & O'Brien, 2016).

This method of the UK government attempting to absolve itself of responsibility to asylum seekers is particularly evident in relation to the privatisation of asylum housing and detention. As a result of this privatisation, the government if offsetting its own responsibility, placing it instead on private actors. This has led to the production of a new economy in an 'asylum market', and therefore to new authorities, policies and governance in this field (Darling, 2016; Glorius et al., 2016).

Regardless of the government trying to distance itself from its responsibilities, as Jessop (1999) states, the nation state holds the political power, meaning that the welfare provided to forced migrants is dependent on the state that they are entering.

With neoliberalism in the stage of roll-out mobilisation, states are no longer primarily concerned with market expansion and instead, neoliberalism is more commonly linked with prioritising new social and penal policies which are "concerned specifically with the aggressive reregulation, disciplining, and containment of those marginalized or dispossessed by the neoliberalization of the 1980s" (Peck & Tickell, 2002:389). In this era of welfare retrenchment and ideas of the undeserving migrant (Sales, 2002), it is evident that the welfare provided to asylum seekers in the UK is not at all reflective of that received by UK citizens (though whose welfare support also continues to decline). Rather, there is a combined effort of attempting to prevent asylum seekers entering the country, and simultaneously reducing the support offered to them (Bloch & Schuster, 2002). This indicates that considerations of need are now coming second to considerations of contribution, which further amplifies the hostile environment and emphasises asylum seekers as a separate class of (non) citizen.

> In many instances, the nation state's responsibility for the welfare of forced migrants is effectively being devolved downwards to a complex network of regional and local actors that includes local authorities, private companies and voluntary and charitable agencies. In addition Member States are keen to reflect the problem of forced migration sideways onto other states (Dwyer, 2005:9).

As a result of the declining welfare support offered to asylum seekers in the UK, these individuals are having to turn to illegal work or NGOs in order to meet their basic human needs - provisions which would have previously been covered by the government (Kjaerum, 2002; Dwyer & Brown, 2004). As the state limits the claims that

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forced migrants have to public welfare, "the third sector is playing a significant role in supporting those who have been failed by a state which has a duty to provide for all of their essential living needs" (Mayblin & James, 2019, no pagination).

However, many of the NGOs that offer support in such instances are reliant on government funding and therefore their independence is immediately compromised (Cohen, 2002), or they are comprised of under-funded groups of unpaid forced migrants who have established organisations in the hope of being able to offer advice to fellow forced migrants who are facing some of the difficulties they have overcome (Dwyer, 2005). Without funding or robust levels of volunteers, such precarious organisations are not sustainable in the long term.

Instead of developing a maintainable collaboration with these NGOs (and veering away from the term 'network' employed by Dwyer, above), the government is leaving them to fill a gap that they should not have allowed to exist. In fact, refugee third sector organisations are spending over £33.4 million per year on poverty alleviation, which shows that levels of government support for refugees and asylum seekers are simply inadequate (Mayblin & James, 2019).

This discussion expands on Bollas' construction of violent innocence (1993), which relates to a denial of the reality regarding situations in which a person or organisation deems themselves innocent of the violence inherently bound to them. Such violent innocence is evidently displayed by the UK government as it continues to show outrage at the perpetrators of contemporary slavery, while simultaneously absolving itself of

the ways in which it encourages such slavery to exist. As Gadd and Broad identify "the politics of modern slavery render it difficult to imagine offenders as anything other than the 'evil' nemesis of 'innocent' victims" (Gadd & Broad, 2018:1440). However, to demarcate victims and perpetrators in this way is to overlook the complex relationships between the two, where the situation of slavery generated by a perpetrator may actually be preferable to the victim than their alternative, or where the victim exploits other victims in order to improve their own conditions. Equally, to set victims and perpetrators on a binary is to omit the impact that macro level structures have on micro level relationships.

If contemporary slavery can only exist in situations where agency is removed at the micro level, as argued by Landman (forthcoming), then these discussions show how situations of contemporary slavery in the UK are sometimes only possible because of the macro level vulnerabilities generated by government policies. In these cases, to suggest that situations of contemporary slavery can only be defined as such if the agency has been removed at the micro level is to imply that it is only the micro level at which the slavery exists. However, as the above discussions have outlined, there are numerous situations in which the micro level removal of agency would not be so widespread – if possible at all – if it were not for the impact of the macro level. This further emphasises the hypocrisy of a government that claims to lead the way in defeating 'modern slavery' and yet imposes policies that promote the removal of agency at the macro level which, in turn, allow for and endorse the removal of agency, and the existence of slavery, at the micro level.

7.3.1 Structure and Agency

Without attempting to discuss in detail the wealth of academic literature that addresses agency and structure, it is nonetheless important to acknowledge the two in reference to their impact on situations of contemporary slavery. Historically, sociology has tended to identify structure and agency as two unique and separate entities (Giddens, 1986; Green, 2015), with the key theories separating them being structuralism and individualisation. Structuralism is a theory often related back to scholars such as Levi-Strauss and Saussure. It rests on the idea that it is structures that influence social life, and argues that meaning can only be inferred with reference to the overarching structures that impact individuals' decisions. To relate this to contemporary slavery, structuralism would argue that situations of slavery arise only as a result of the overarching structures such as conflict or the asylum system; that is, structures influence people to such an extent that without their impact, people may not become vulnerable to contemporary slavery. While, undeniably, there are systems that cause people to become vulnerable to contemporary slavery, it would be misguided to suggest that it is these structures alone that cause the vulnerabilities; to do so would imply that everyone living under the same structure, the same conflict for example, would likely experience the same end result. This focus on generalisations is a key flaw of structural sociologists (Giddens, 1986).

Most social theory regarding the structure and agency debate concentrates on the importance and power of agency (Giddens, 1986). These schools of thought advocate the belief that human behaviour is not solely influenced by the structures of the societies in which people live, but that individuals have agency over their own lives and

decisions. Individualisation is one such theory, associated with theorists such as Ulrich Beck, Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim and Zygmunt Bauman (see specifically Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001).

> To put it in a nutshell, 'individualization' consists in transforming human 'identity' from a 'given' into a 'task' – and charging the actors with the responsibility for performing that task and for the consequences (also the side-effects) of their performance (Bauman, 2001:xv).

The theory of individualisation argues that individuals have control over their situations and experiences, opposing the structuralist idea that individuals and human behaviour are led and limited by collective structures. Landman's work (forthcoming) in relation to the removal of agency at micro and macro level (discussed above) errs on the side of individualisation. While he recognises that agency can be removed at both the macro and micro level, his argument is that only the removal of agency at the micro level can constitute a situation of contemporary slavery, and thus the impact of agency is more important than the impact of structure.

Giddens' work (1986) focuses on creating a bridge between the theories that focus only on structure and those that focus only on agency. He advocates for an understanding whereby the two concepts sit alongside each other as opposed to independently. Giddens argues that the individual cannot exist outside of the structures to which she is tied, but equally that the structures would not exist without the input of the individual. This is his theory of structuration, a concept that highlights how agency and structure both exist in a cycle of continual mutual influence, whereby

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the two cannot exist independently of each other.

> The basic domain of study of the social sciences, according to the
> theory of structuration, is neither the experience of the individual
> actor, nor the existence of any form of societal totality, but social
> practices ordered across space and time. Human social activities, like
> some self-reproducing items in nature, are recursive. That is to say,
> they are not brought into being by social actors but continually
> recreated by them via the very means whereby they express
> themselves as actors. In and through their activities agents
> reproduce the conditions that make these activities possible
> (Giddens, 1986:2).

This notion of structure and agency working in tandem is particularly relevant to contemporary slavery and is where Landman's discussion of the macro and micro level removal of agency (forthcoming), *should* be situated. While Landman's approach edges towards individualism, as he argues that slavery can only exist with the removal of agency at the micro level, for many situations of slavery, the removal of agency at the micro level would not be possible without the vulnerabilities generated at the macro level. Where micro constitutes the impact of agents and macro constitutes the impact of structure, agency and structure are thus intertwined and inseparable in understanding the vulnerabilities that lead to situations of contemporary slavery.

To introduce conflict to structuration theory is to understand the conflict as representative of structure, be that in relation to state-level conflict, marital expectations, familial norms or any of the other many forms of conflict. The conflict

then influences people's agency by leaving them limited choices which they must choose between; they still have some degree of agency to make choices, but their options have been defined by the structure of the conflict.

The work of feminist geopolitics must be introduced here as it reflects some of the integral parts of structuration theory. As Dowler and Sharp (2001) identify, there is a considerable amount of literature on political violence, but the majority of this centres on the workings of war. Such focus looks predominantly at men as the initiators and the soldiers of these conflicts, and therefore overlooks the role that women play. To reframe understandings of war by introducing the actions of women would be to link the public and private spheres which would then highlight how in such conflict, the two are inseparable and mutually constitutive – the violence experienced in the home is a product of, and a causation for, violence in war and vice versa.

Brickell and Cuomo (2019) emphasise the importance of understanding the ways in which geolegal spaces exist and operate in order to better comprehend notions of conflict and violence that exist outside notions of war. Such feminist geopolitics highlight the way in which binaries such as that between the intimate and the global can be pulled apart to show that there is no true separation between conflict in the home and conflict on the battlefield (Hyndman, 2004; Mountz & Hyndman, 2006; Pratt & Rosner, 2006; Pain & Staeheli, 2014). To understand violence against the global and the intimate in this way is to see the two as mutually constituted entities that, like the micro and macro discussions of slavery, cannot exist in isolation; instead they should be understood as part of a single phenomenon.

However, relating to situations of conflict and experiences of contemporary slavery in the UK, it is not just the conflict that should be understood as a contributing structure, but the policies created by the UK government. On arrival to the UK, structure influences individuals' agency; if the individual is required to apply for asylum, then the system limits them to three options. The first option is to apply for asylum and respect the legal restrictions preventing them from seeking employment or education while they wait for a decision; the second option is that they apply for asylum and illegally seek employment as many do (Lewis et al., 2013); the third option is to try and avoid being identified entirely and attempt to establish a life, accommodation and employment without being acknowledged by any authority. These examples highlight the impact that structures have on limiting autonomous choices to active-but-restricted choices. The impact of structure is clear here, but it does not negate the impact of agency. While the structures may limit agency and leave people the opportunity to make only constrained choices, there is still a level of agency allowing them to make some degree of choice.

It is in this context that it is possible to understand the impact of agency in situations of contemporary slavery. The individual may make decisions, like **Nadim** who had to choose between staying in the conflict with no food, shelter or income and taking the risk to cross the border into Lebanon. It was this active decision that led him to suffer in exploitative labour. Similarly, **Imogen** had the choice to stay in Bangladesh where she would be killed, or to take a risk with a stranger. Though this was a constrained choice, it was still a choice. Once in the UK, she faced further constrained choices

including whether she should accept the offer of a job from a stranger or try to find support elsewhere in a country where she knew no one and could not speak the language. Again, this was a constrained choice, but it was still a choice. **Imogen** had agency that allowed her to make choices between limited options, but the outcome of which led her directly into a situation of contemporary slavery where she was kept for domestic servitude and forced labour for three years.

However, what **Imogen**'s story highlights is that neither agency nor structure are entirely responsible for situations of contemporary slavery – it is the relationship and interaction between the two that causes agentic decisions to exacerbate the pre-existing vulnerabilities caused by structures. For this reason, any generalisations that are based on the impact of structure or agency alone can only go part way to understanding what it is that puts people at risk of contemporary slavery.

Given the rarity that those suffering situations of contemporary slavery have completely no agency or choice in the lead up to their exploitation, it must be considered why people with agency put themselves at risk of contemporary slavery. Structural factors are key in answering this question and, as this research has shown, conflict is a significant structural factor that can cause people to make active but not autonomous choices that may lead them towards situations of slavery. For many, it is the desperation of needing to leave their current situation of conflict - be that war, marital conflict, familial conflict or any of the numerous forms of both macro and micro-level conflict – that reduces the voluntariness of their decisions and leaves them with limited choices. For those whose choices are to stay in the conflict, where their

lives might be in danger, or to take a risk on trying to escape, there is little freedom in their choice and they are likely to choose the latter option in order to increase their chances of safety. Prior to the conflict they may not have tried to leave their current situations, but the conflict has led to a removal of autonomous or voluntary choices, leaving them with little option or alternative. While they may still have *choice*, it is not a free choice as it might have been if their lives were safe and they were not suffering through conflict. Unfortunately for some, the result of these choices is not always safety, and may well lead them into scenarios worse than that of the conflict. As such, situations of contemporary slavery should never be generalised to be resulting from the impact of large scale structures alone. While these structures may play some part in generating vulnerabilities towards contemporary slavery, it is the interplay between structure and agency that determines whether an individual becomes a victim.

7.4   Conclusion

This chapter considers the role of agency in generating situations of contemporary slavery. It addresses a number of issues including victim terminology, the flaws of understanding contemporary slavery through a victim/agent binary, and the relationship between structure and agency in leading people into situations of contemporary slavery. This chapter determines that victim terminology can have a detrimental impact on those who experience contemporary slavery but who do not fit the expectations of an 'ideal victim'. People are less likely to be recognised as victims or receive sympathy or support if they fail to appear weak and passive, or if they had any agency leading up to their experience of slavery. This is particularly evident in the lack of recognition of male victims (which has only recently begun to change) and the

denial of the victimhood of women who choose to undertake sex work. Further, the

simple assignation of the label 'victim' to a person can serve to remove agency and

alter the way they are perceived, both by themselves and by others. However, notions

of an 'ideal victim' are rarely reflective of the experiences of a 'real victim'.

This chapter also tackles the common approach of understanding victimhood and

agency as existing on a binary. Instead, this thesis argues that the two concepts sit on a

spectrum where those who experience contemporary slavery very rarely suffer a

complete denial of agency, but have some level of choice in the decisions that have led

to their situations of exploitation. However, there is usually some limit on this agency

and any choices tend to be active rather than autonomous. It is important to

acknowledge that any extent of agency leading up to or during a situation of

contemporary slavery does not negate a person's status as a victim.

This links to discussions of how a person's vulnerability can never be a result of agency

or structure alone, but it is a combination of the two that increases the likelihood that

someone will become a victim of contemporary slavery. There are arguments to

suggest that a situation can only be understood as contemporary slavery if agency is

removed at the micro level. However, such claims fail to engage with the complex

interactions between the macro and micro levels. The removal of agency at the micro

level and a resulting experience of contemporary slavery may only be possible if the

macro level allows it. Where the macro level reflects structural systems, this means

that structure generates vulnerabilities that are then exacerbated by agentic choices at

the micro level. This indicates an inseparability between agency and structure in

generating the conditions for contemporary slavery to occur.

Having summarised and analysed the findings of this research project, the next and final chapter provides an overall conclusion to the thesis as well as suggestions of how the findings could be developed further in the future.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion - Accountability and Academic Research

This thesis set out to discover what direct link, if any, exists between conflict and contemporary slavery by comparing the findings of in-depth interviews with respondents who had fled conflict to safety and those who had fled conflict but experienced contemporary slavery. The existing academic literature linking the topics of conflict and contemporary slavery concentrates on three key areas: victims of contemporary slavery during conflict, perpetrators of contemporary slavery linked to conflict, and immediate post conflict zones. Discussions of victims relate exclusively to women and children, with significant focus being placed on child soldiers. This literature centres on the methods through which child soldiers are recruited, their experiences during conflict and their demobilisation and reintegration into society after they have either escaped or been released.

Literature relating to perpetrators of contemporary slavery linked to conflict focusses predominantly on the impact of peacekeeping troops. The key theme here is how peacekeeping missions are directly leading to an increase in the trafficking of women and girls to the areas in which missions are taking place. Despite the prohibition of paying for sex, UN peacekeeping troops have been shown to bring huge demand for sex workers. Organised crime gangs recognise this lucrative opportunity and traffic women and girls into the area in order to meet the demand, with the rise in trafficking being directly proportionate to the size of the peacekeeping mission. Some peacekeeping troops have also been identified as having played a part in the actual trafficking of victims by providing the transport or stamping the documents of people they know to be being moved against their will.

The literature that looks at post-conflict zones focuses on the immediate time period after the end of a war and how the failing political, social, economic and structural conditions put people at risk of contemporary slavery as they seek a way to survive in an environment where they are in direct competition with thousands of others for the same opportunities. Post-conflict zones see corruption becoming rife amongst officials, which allows for crime to go unpunished and leaves the potential for an increase in the rates of slavery. Discussions of post-conflict zones also highlight the disproportionate effect experienced by women as they are excluded from demobilisation programmes and often lose their jobs to be replaced by men returning from war, thereby exacerbating their marginalised position and forcing them to take risks in order to support themselves.

A key oversight of the literature on conflict and contemporary slavery relates to the time frame of vulnerabilities resulting from conflict. The literature accepts that people become vulnerable to slavery during a conflict and that these vulnerabilities remain even in the wake of the conflict. However, literature relating to post-conflict vulnerabilities focuses almost exclusively on slavery within the immediate post-conflict period and gives little consideration to whether these conflict-initiated vulnerabilities ever actually end. This thesis tackles this gap in knowledge by investigating the experiences of those who flee conflict and go on to suffer contemporary slavery in order to identify that their vulnerabilities to exploitation can often be linked back to their experience of conflict, regardless of the time that has passed.

Significantly, as well as failing to look beyond the immediate post-conflict period, the literature focuses almost exclusively on the in-country experiences of contemporary slavery during conflict; little attention is paid to situations in which people flee conflict and then go on to suffer contemporary slavery. Fundamentally, this overlooks circumstances in which people have managed to reach a new destination in relative safety, but where a lack of knowledge of this new location may leave them vulnerable to people who seek to profit from their exploitation. This thesis takes this gap in the literature as a point of focus by investigating the experiences of those fleeing conflict to the UK and exploring how they are placed at significant risk of contemporary slavery after reaching the country. The findings expand on current literature that highlights the precarious position that asylum seekers find themselves in when faced with a hostile environment, a significant lack of support, and a desperation not to be repatriated.

A final substantial limitation of the current literature addressing the link between conflict and contemporary slavery is its restricted understanding of conflict. This research project set out following the literature's approach to conflict, relating it exclusively to war. However, interviews with people who identified themselves as having lived through conflict made it clear that such an understanding was limited and failed to represent broader lived experiences of conflict. As a result, a revised understanding of the notion was employed to reflect the self-identification of the respondents, and to allow investigation into situations of conflict that are not limited to war.

The research project engages with literature on notions of victimhood and ideas of the 'ideal victim' to show that victimhood and agency sit on a spectrum as opposed to a binary. This argument is situated within theory relating to structure and agency, with the thesis stipulating that understandings of conflict-related contemporary slavery should be located within a structuration approach which recognises the impact of both structure and agency in leading to situations of slavery.

This research uses a broad definition of conflict as a set of conditions whereby parties identify and act on mutually incompatible goals. Using this definition in tandem with the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines' understanding of slavery, the research generates qualitative data from in-depth interviews with individuals who had experienced conflict, who had experienced conflict and contemporary slavery, and who worked with either of those two groups to offer new insight into the relatively unexplored link between conflict and contemporary slavery. The remainder of this thesis summarises the limitations and key findings of the research project and highlights both the practical applications of these findings and how they could be expanded upon with further research.

8.1   Limitations of the Research

The use of snowball sampling in identifying and accessing potential respondents for this research generated a key limitation. The sampling began by contacting gatekeepers who worked for agencies assisting refugees, asylum seekers and victims of contemporary slavery. This meant that the study only included respondents who had received some form of organisational support. Respondents who had not received

support were not accessible and therefore their stories were not heard for this research project. Their experiences, however, would have likely differed significantly from those of the respondents that did contribute because, without the assistance of such organisations, they would have been left to navigate the confusing statutory systems alone.

Similarly, the research began with an understanding of conflict that was limited to war, reflecting the terminology most commonly found in the literature. This meant that the gatekeepers who were initially accessed were those who worked with individuals who were likely to have experienced conflict in the sense of war. Upon beginning the interviews, it was clear that the respondents' definition of conflict was different to that identified initially by this research project and this led to a widening of the understanding of the term. However, because this revelation was made after organising and beginning the interviews, no UK nationals were included in the study as they did not fit the initial criteria of having experienced conflict in the sense of war. This is a key limitation considering that UK nationals are the most commonly identified nationality of potential victims of contemporary slavery in the UK (NCA, 2018).

One further limitation of this research relates to a lack of data regarding individuals who had fled to the UK but who had been denied asylum and were facing repatriation. Although some of the interview respondents had had their asylum claims rejected, they had all appealed the decisions and continued to wait for the next outcome. It is possible that those who have been denied asylum and who are facing repatriation will have different experiences to those who opened a fresh claim after a negative asylum

decision. Their stories could provide insight into the vulnerabilities that such individuals face both in the UK after receiving word that they are to be repatriated, and upon return to their home countries.

8.2 Slavery Triggered by Conflict

Firstly, this thesis discovered that intersectionality is not enough to determine whether a person is likely to become vulnerable to contemporary slavery. While intersectionality may be useful in highlighting some of the common identity traits of vulnerable individuals, it has reached the limit of its practicability when considered in isolation. It fails to provide both scale and coherence, and it overlooks the impact of external factors. There is no single, or intersecting identity trait that increases the likelihood that one person will be more vulnerable to becoming a victim of contemporary slavery than another. To suggest otherwise is to generate detrimental stereotypes of vulnerability which reinforce inaccurate typecasts. Instead, it is the context of the situation that should be prioritised in identifying risk. Contexts that limit people's choices and lead to a lack of support are those that are most likely to generate a risk to contemporary slavery; this is regardless of the identity of the person in question.

8.2.1 Lack of Choice

The gathering of first-hand accounts from people who have fled conflict and experienced contemporary slavery identified a lack of viable choices as the key vulnerability that led them towards situations of contemporary slavery. While this

limiting of choices was evident in the stories of all of those who experienced contemporary slavery, the cause of the limited options varied; for some, their choices were restricted as a direct result of conflict, and for others, it was the combination of conflict and overarching structures.

Conflict had limited their agency by reducing the options available to them, leaving the respondents physically able to make choices but only between restricted options which all held inherent risk, thereby highlighting the difference between active and agentic choices. Those whose choices were limited by overarching structures, such as widespread ethnic discrimination or structural discrimination against refugees, suffered this lack of choice twice. Initially, their experience of conflict restricted their options; this then pushed them towards situations in which structural issues further exacerbated their vulnerabilities and left them again with limited choices, all of which held risk. Even when the respondents were aware that their choices could lead to dangerous situations, desperation to escape the conflict meant that there was little alternative but to accept the risk and hope that their choice led them to a safer situation. While some respondents were lucky to achieve this outcome, many found themselves fleeing conflict only to experience contemporary slavery.

8.2.2 Lack of Support

The other key factor that this thesis has identified as leading people towards situations of contemporary slavery is a lack of support. Some respondents experienced this lack of support during the conflict, such as those whose family members were killed. For

others, the lack of support occurred after their arrival in the UK. In some instances, it followed rejection from the respondent's family, preventing them from turning to them for help when they needed it. For others, the lack of support was experienced by respondents who were failed by UK statutory agencies which could have reasonably been expected to provide assistance that would have limited the likelihood that they would have become victims of contemporary slavery. Whatever the cause of the lack of support, it reinforces the lack of viable options already facing these individuals by limiting their options further by removing the possibility of turning to their support network for safety. This means making an active choice between non-agentic options, leading to a higher likelihood of risk than if they were to turn to their regular support network for help.

Discovering the direct link between a lack of viable options, a lack of support and contemporary slavery is a fundamental step forward in identifying the vulnerabilities that put people at risk of contemporary slavery. These findings go beyond the tendency of claiming that people become victims due to 'some form of vulnerability'. This research has identified what those vulnerabilities are and where they derive from. Such findings are crucial if any prevention or intervention effort is ever to target the relevant issues and successfully reduce the number of people becoming victims of contemporary slavery.

8.3   Distinguishing Between Slavery and Exploitation

Literature criticising the use of slavery terminology in reference to current situations highlights the lack of clear differentiation between slavery and exploitation to dispute

its use. Such criticisms offer examples of cases that would not be defined as slavery, but where the powers attaching to the right of ownership are present. Examples include children, spouses and employees. However, these discussions fail to engage with understandings of contemporary slavery that require the powers attaching to the right of ownership to exist in partnership with intended exploitation. This definition, as adopted by the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines, overcomes this confusion of situations in which the exertion of control exists without the involvement of exploitation.

Striving for a defining line between exploitation and slavery suggests there is a point that divides acceptable and non-acceptable exploitation. This is counterintuitive. If a situation is exploitative, then there should be no requirement for it to meet a threshold in order to receive proactive action to combat it. This thesis argues that less emphasis should be placed on demarcating the difference between slavery and exploitation and more emphasis should be placed on combatting exploitation, regardless of how extreme its nature. It encourages academics to concern themselves less with identifying a distinct divide between exploitation and contemporary slavery, and more with generating usable data that can assist in preventing and combatting all forms of exploitation.

8.4   A Scale of Victimhood and Agency

This thesis argues that victimhood and agency should be understood as sitting on a spectrum as opposed to a binary. Data gathered from interviews with individuals who have experienced contemporary slavery shows that those who become victims very

rarely suffer a complete denial of agency but have some level of choice in the decisions that lead to their situations of exploitation. This goes against the often-cited image of the 'ideal victim' who is passive, weak and who has no control over their fate. The stereotypes created by such discourse are damaging as they fail to reflect the experiences of a 'real victim' and perpetuate the false stereotypes of slavery only affecting those without agency. Understanding victimhood as existing on a scale reflects the true experiences of victims who would not have freely chosen a situation of exploitation, but whose lack of agentic choice instigated an active, but not autonomous, decision that led to slavery. This thesis emphasises the importance of acknowledging that a person's status as a victim of contemporary slavery is not negated by the possession of agency – to any degree – leading up to or during their exploitation.

8.5 The Roles of Structure and Agency

This research uses first-hand accounts with people who have fled conflict and experienced contemporary slavery to assess the influence that structure and agency have in generating the conditions required for contemporary slavery to exist. While slavery is generally understood as a removal of agency at the micro level – that is by one person of another – this thesis argues that the relationship is much more complex than this. In reality, while the restriction of an individual's agency is necessary in order for a situation of slavery to occur, the power of limiting this agency is not always held at the micro level. In most of the instances identified through the interviews, the individuals' agency was impacted significantly by macro level structures. These structures varied, indicating that it was not the impact of a particular structure that

caused vulnerabilities, but the common thread of such structures leading to a restriction of agency and a limiting of choices. For some, these structures related directly to the conflict; for others, the impact of macro level structures limiting their agency was only felt after arrival in the UK, predominantly in relation to the asylum system.

The restrictions that these macro level structures placed on these individuals led to a limiting of the options available to them. With a lack of options, they had no choice but to make decisions that held some inherent risk. For some, these choices pushed them towards situations in which their agency would be further removed at the micro level, leading to contemporary slavery. The experience of slavery is not identified as such unless a person's agency has been severely limited at the micro level and they have simultaneously experienced exploitation. For many, this limiting of agency at the micro level would not have been possible if not for the impact of the macro level. Interestingly, this means that when an individual suffers exploitation equivalent to slavery, it is not defined as such if it is perpetuated by a system rather than an individual, regardless of whether all other factors are the same.

Instead of claiming that contemporary slavery exists purely because of the impact of either structure or agency, this thesis argues that the two are inseparable in generating the conditions for contemporary slavery to occur. Structures influence a person's options which may encourage them to make risky decisions, however there is still a level of agency involved in making those decisions. While structures influence a person's choices, victims of contemporary slavery rarely experience a complete

removal of agency in the time preceding their exploitation. It is the combination of structures and an individual's choices that has a bearing on the likelihood that they will become a victim of contemporary slavery. This finding highlights the hypocrisy of a government that claims to lead the way in defeating 'modern slavery' while simultaneously imposing policies that encourage the removal of agency at the macro level and which, in turn, promote the removal of agency, and the existence of slavery, at the micro level.

8.6   The Hypocrisy of UK Government Policy

One of the most significant findings of this research was the hypocritical and contradictory nature of UK policies that claim, on the one hand, to prioritise fighting 'modern slavery' and, on the other, perpetuate biased and restrictive dogmas that increase the likelihood of the occurrence of contemporary slavery.

The UK government's choice of contemporary slavery as a cause to champion is an easy and non-controversial decision; it invokes no opposition from any political view. However, the extent to which the government has acted on Theresa May's claim that the country will lead the way in defeating 'modern slavery' has gone almost no further than simply offering this statement.

The National Referral Mechanism, championed as the government's method of assisting and counting victims of contemporary slavery, fails in both aspects. The NRM has been shown to fail in offering adequate support to those referred into it. While it offers 45 days in safe accommodation, a positive Conclusive Grounds decision provides

nothing other than a confirmation of the experience of contemporary slavery. There is no continued support upon leaving the system, meaning individuals are commonly released from safehouses only to have no accommodation, employment or access to benefits. This can lead some directly back into situations of slavery when they are greeted with offers of potentially risky work and have no viable alternative. For others it means that their slavery experience was preferable to the (lack of) support offered by the UK government.

Reviews of the NRM were published in 2014 with a list of recommendations to better assist the vulnerable people who turn to it for support. Four years later, those recommendations that have been acted on continue to be stuck in pilot stages, indicating the government's unwillingness to take accountability for implementing a successful and supportive system. Regarding the figures, there will always be difficulty generating accurate statistics in relation to such a clandestine issue but, as the only measure that does not rely on estimates, the NRM figures are the ones most commonly cited in the UK in relation to contemporary slavery. However, the quoted statistics most often relate to the number of people that are referred into the system rather than the number of those who are positively identified as victims. The yearly increases in such figures are lauded for reflecting better identification systems, and yet the numbers of people receiving positive Conclusive Grounds decisions are skirted over, and the rates of convictions remain negligible.

The system indicates significant bias when considering the rate of positive Conclusive Grounds decisions received by those who are EU nationals compared to those that are

not. There are twice as many non-EU nationals referred into the NRM as there are EU nationals, and yet EU nationals are over ten times more likely to receive a positive Conclusive Grounds decision. This is indicative of bias and reflects a flawed system in which those who make the decisions relating to confirming the victim status of non-EU nationals are faced with a conflict of interests as they are also responsible for the UK's visa system.

Focus continues to be placed on source countries in trying to identify the reasons that people become vulnerable to contemporary slavery in the UK. While on the surface this may appear logical because of the high rates of foreign nationals identified as potential victims in the UK, such tactics fail to engage properly with the statistics. Further investigation of the data indicates that the largest group of people who suffer contemporary slavery in the UK do not experience such exploitation until after they have arrived in the country, signifying that focus should, instead, be placed on how the UK causes such risk. Placing focus on the source countries removes accountability from the UK government and draws attention away from the issues in the UK that generate vulnerabilities to contemporary slavery; issues that are intertwined with the drive to create a hostile environment for illegal immigrants.

The systems facing those that arrive in the UK from non-EU countries are not conducive to reducing the risk of contemporary slavery. After applying for asylum, refugees receive little communication and insufficient means to live, whilst being prohibited from seeking legal employment. When the stipend does not offer enough to survive, this leaves asylum seekers with little choice but to seek illegitimate

employment and accept that, should it be exploitative, they will have no way out without facing detention or repatriation. The asylum system fails to provide adequate information or support to those who apply, to those who are denied, and even to those who receive a positive decision. The forced destitution of those denied asylum increases the likelihood that they will experience contemporary slavery, especially for those who are unable or unwilling to leave the UK. Equally, by granting asylum without explaining the resulting entitlements or signposting to organisations that could offer support, refugees are abandoned in a country they do not know. Unnecessary vulnerabilities are generated for those who have no support and are unaware of their entitlements, leaving them little option but to turn to strangers for support; strangers who may be looking to profit from their exploitation.

This thesis has used evidence from those that have endured severe vulnerabilities as a direct result of UK government policies to prove that the government is failing to prevent contemporary slavery from occurring, to combat it in progress or to adequately support the victims that it identifies. Moreover, this thesis shows that UK policies are actually directly responsible for generating and perpetuating situations of contemporary slavery and should be held accountable for doing so. Claims that the government will prioritise fighting 'modern slavery' are hypocritical while the same government continues to push a hostile environment for illegal immigrants. These two political agendas are contradictory, and the UK government cannot be celebrated, or even acknowledged, for fighting 'modern slavery' while it continues to stall on offering adequate support to victims of contemporary slavery, to disregard its own role in allowing contemporary slavery to exist, and to perpetuate systems that are biased

against those most in need.

8.7 The Importance of a Bottom Up Approach

The above discussions all highlight the importance of addressing contemporary slavery from a bottom up approach, rather than the currently employed top down approach. Current understandings of contemporary slavery focus on addressing the structural issues that may increase the likelihood that a person becomes vulnerable to contemporary slavery. This involves particular attention being paid to source countries and how macro level issues may push people towards slavery in the UK. There are multiple flaws to this approach, a primary one being the way that source countries are used as a scape goat to justify the lack of attention that the UK government pays to the ways in which its own policies encourage contemporary slavery to exist.

However, another failing of this approach is the way it focuses on structure to such an extent that agency is overlooked. This thesis has demonstrated that situations of contemporary slavery rarely occur with a complete removal of a victim's agency. Instead, vulnerabilities are generated through the interaction between structure and agency, and there is most commonly some degree of agency in the situations that lead to the exploitation. Overlooking the ways in which structure and agency interact is to fail to gather a true understanding of the ways in which individuals become vulnerable to such exploitation.

While understanding the impact that structures have is important, placing focus on

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them alone generates inaccurate conclusions about the nature of contemporary slavery. As the discussion on intersectionality has shown, suggesting that individuals who experience the same structure are all equally likely to experience contemporary slavery is unfounded and fails to acknowledge the agentic processes at play.

Not only does a structural approach fail to recognise the important role of agency in generating vulnerabilities to contemporary slavery, it also disregards the vast differences in people's situations prior to their exploitation. This is demonstrated in this thesis with the use of conflict. Conflict is just one of the many causes of vulnerabilities, and yet even under this rubric, the experience of conflict is different for each individual, from political unrest to employment disagreements. To generalise conflict as a cause of contemporary slavery is to disregard the breadth of the term and the vast differences experienced by people who suffer different forms of conflict. While such a generalisation is not inaccurate, it fails to engage with the more complex interconnection with agency. Instead of linking vulnerabilities to slavery directly back to conflict, the intermediary impact should be acknowledged; that of the lack of options resulting from a reduction in agency caused by conflict. The findings from this research show that an individual is not automatically vulnerable to slavery when she experiences conflict, but that her vulnerability is heightened when she experiences a restriction on her agency as a result of conflict. It is in this way that understandings of the link between conflict and contemporary slavery should be approached: not by a direct link to conflict, but by the transitional effects it causes.

8.8   Practical Applications and Further Research

The findings of this research extend past academic interest to offer insight into how practical changes could be made to effectively reduce the numbers of people falling victim to contemporary slavery. It offers a new understanding of the causes that encourage someone to become vulnerable to contemporary slavery, going beyond the current tendency of suggesting that people become victims of slavery because of 'some pre-existing vulnerability'. By identifying precisely what these vulnerabilities are and how they are generated, this research provides new information to enable the development of effective interventions to specifically target those most at risk. In the same way that this thesis encourages a bottom up approach to tackling contemporary slavery, the practical suggestions offered below begin with small scale, easy to implement changes, followed by suggestions that tackle the more overarching issues. Some of the practical suggestions give rise to ideas for further research; the most relevant of these are included below in reference to their corresponding practical applications.

Firstly, there should be a method for employees to anonymously report exploitative labour. Offering a reporting mechanism would allow those working in exploitative conditions – whether they are doing so legally or otherwise – to inform an authority of their situation. The current framework leads to punishment for any asylum seeker found to be working, meaning that should they face exploitative conditions, there is little they can do but accept them, or look for other labour which is equally likely to offer only poor conditions. Such a mechanism would then encourage punitive measures for employers forcing exploitative conditions instead of for the workers that have little choice other than to accept them.

Training of statutory staff is also an immediate requirement that has been identified in this research. This is pertinent in two key areas: for those making asylum decisions, and for those working with service uses. The former should receive training specifically on the reasons why asylum seekers may not offer the truth in their interviews. Should it be discovered that an asylum seeker has been deceitful in their claim, that will currently count against them in the likelihood that they will receive a positive decision. However, to understand the reasons behind this deception would encourage a greater understanding of the desperation of those claiming asylum and should generate a second interview rather than a dismissal of the case. Equally, decision makers should be aware that those fleeing a situation in their home countries are unlikely to have documentation to prove their accounts. When safety is their main concern, ensuring they collect potentially relevant documents before they leave will never be a priority; this should not count against asylum seekers' claims.

For statutory organisations who work with service users, training is required based on the fact that they interact with people facing any number of vulnerabilities. While the staff's main role may not be to identify or act upon those vulnerabilities, it is fundamental that they are at least able to signpost individuals in need to organisations that may be able to support them. In failing to offer such potentially vital information, these statutory organisations risk allowing the perpetuation of exploitation, or leaving people in a situation where they are unaware of their options and, as a result, may believe that they have little choice but to accept exploitation.

There is a possibility here for useful research to be undertaken to identify the training trends of statutory organisations that work with service users. This research could identify whether there are certain sectors or geographical regions that are more proficient than others at training their staff to recognise and signpost vulnerable clients. While there may be some difficulty in drawing direct correlations, these findings could also be compared with NRM reporting data to identify whether higher rates of training correlate to larger numbers of referrals into the NRM in the corresponding geographical locations.

Similarly, information packs could be offered to all immigrants on arrival to the UK. While this may fail to reach those who enter clandestinely, it would be available regardless of whether the migrants have visas or intend to claim asylum. This information would include details of their rights, including the national minimum wage and the importance of not sharing a bank account or a national insurance number. It should also include information on support services that migrants could contact should they require assistance or advice, be that at the time they receive the information or in the future. Such information could be distributed with visa applications, travel tickets or upon arrival at the UK border.

There is also an important need for better information on receipt of an asylum decision – be that positive or negative. The current lack of information means that even those who are granted asylum are left confused about their entitlements and therefore at risk of homelessness or of entering the labour market through illegitimate means, only to experience exploitation despite having the right to work. This could

easily be rectified if, along with the paperwork outlining the decision of an asylum seekers' claim, they were provided with information (in the applicant's language) of what the decision means; the options that are available to them; their entitlements as a result of the decision; and organisations they can contact for more information, advice or support.

This point leads to some of the larger scale changes that could be implemented from the findings of this research project. Initially, more robust support following an asylum decision would decrease the likelihood that both refugees and refused asylum seekers would find themselves victims of exploitation. This is reflected in the difference between the experiences of those who enter the UK on a resettlement programme and those who enter as asylum seekers. The former receive effective support for a year after arriving in the country, assistance in integrating into their new communities and advice on entitlements; the latter are left to do all this for themselves and the differences in their experiences as a result are significant. While it could be anticipated that receiving a positive asylum decision would equate to receiving some form of support to reflect the need that has clearly been identified by receiving this decision, this research has identified that this is not the case. After receiving a positive asylum decision, refugees are provided with little, if any information on how they could, or should, proceed. This lack of support only serves to push such people to turn to others for advice which holds an inherent risk of leading them into exploitation when they are unaware of their entitlements. Clearly for those who receive a negative decision and therefore have no entitlements, this risk of exploitation is heightened.

Another change that the UK government should make to reduce the likelihood of asylum seekers in the UK becoming vulnerable to contemporary slavery is to end their forced destitution upon the receipt of a negative asylum decision. While offering asylum seekers the right to work is currently lauded as a pull-factor for immigration, leaving those who are denied asylum without the right to work serves only to generate substantial vulnerabilities among this group, especially for those who are unable to leave the UK. The 'Let Them Work' coalition puts this issue at the heart of their campaign and Sajid Javid, Home Secretary, recently stated that he would like to review the ban on asylum seekers working in the UK (Grierson, 2018). Putting refused asylum seekers in this position simply leaves them with no choice but to accept exploitative labour, the conditions of which have the potential to become severe when employers become aware of their illegal status. Ideally the right to work should be extended to all asylum seekers, as it is evident that the current statutory support they receive is not enough to prevent the search for a supplementary income. There are employers ready to exploit asylum seekers' illegal working status to receive significant labour for little remittance.

Additional research could offer further useful insight into the experiences of asylum seekers in the UK. The respondents interviewed for this thesis all came from significantly different backgrounds. They were politicians, business owners, factory workers and stall holders. They were male, female, religious, atheist, rich and poor. And yet after arriving in the UK, their identities and experiences were homogenised. Despite the disparity in their backgrounds, the countries they came from, the methods they used to reach the UK and the reasons that they travelled here, upon claiming

asylum, the vast intersectional aspects of their identities were all reduced to one: asylum seeker. Research could be undertaken into how, by standardising all asylum seekers into one group, the UK government has essentially created a new class of (non) citizen. Understanding the methods and the reasons behind homogenising asylum seekers in this way could provide insight into how the UK government justifies treating this social class in a way that would be considered unacceptable if applied to UK citizens. Understanding these justifications could assist in making changes to the asylum system to increase social integration, and to reduce the negative impact on mental health and the likelihood that such individuals will need to turn to exploitative labour simply to be able to survive while they wait for a decision on their claim.

Linking to support after a decision, this should extend to support for those identified through the NRM. Currently, should a person receive a negative decision, they have two days to exit a safehouse, and they are offered no statutory support despite clearly displaying vulnerabilities severe enough for them to have been referred into the NRM in the first instance. This clearly leaves them at risk of exploitation. Yet even on receipt of a positive decision, there is no automatic support in place for victims of 'modern slavery' once they leave the safehouse. Whether or not they have entitlements, if these individuals are left without support – especially if they are dealing with severe trauma – then they are at heightened risk of being re-exploited as they look for security through some form of employment and housing. The Modern Slavery (Victim Support) Bill seeks to make a change in this sense by advocating for the provision of 12 months of support to any victim referred into the NRM who receives a positive conclusive grounds decision. While this, if passed, would be instrumental in decreasing

the vulnerabilities of victims of contemporary slavery in the UK upon exiting a safehouse, there remains no intention to support those in receipt of a negative decision, despite presenting with vulnerabilities significant enough for a first responder to deem a referral into the NRM necessary.

Further research could expand upon the possibility that a person's experience of contemporary slavery could be considered preferable to their previous situation, or to life after escaping their exploitation. With this thesis focusing on people who have experienced conflict, there is the possibility that the experience of contemporary slavery, where the provision of food, accommodation and employment (albeit exploitative) may be deemed preferable to the conflict situation where perhaps there was no safe housing, no access to food and no way of earning an income. Although this is a moral philosophical dilemma that has no clear answer, gaining a thorough understanding of this ethical quandary could influence policy regarding the duty of care that a government has to a citizen experiencing contemporary slavery that is preferable to their previous situation. It could also influence judicial decisions relating to the offence committed by a perpetrator of slavery in such an instance and whether their sentencing should take into consideration the fact that, although they held someone in a situation of contemporary slavery, it was preferable to the situation they helped them to escape.

In a similar vein, research along these lines could assess whether the UK government can continue to justify the lack of support it provides to victims of contemporary slavery after they have exited the NRM if it has removed the individual from a situation

of contemporary slavery and provided safe accommodation for 45 days. Such research could review whether the government can reasonably claim that it has no further responsibility on the basis that the individual is now in better circumstances than she was in during her situation of slavery. This research would need to consider the possibility that the government, by offering no support after the NRM in the form of accommodation, access to benefits or employment, may actually put the individual in worse conditions than she was in during her situation of contemporary slavery. Such research would reflect the work of Sykes and Matza (1957) on the techniques of neutralization whereby a perpetrator (in these examples, either a perpetrator of contemporary slavery, or the UK government) commits an immoral act, but justifies it with claims that the act they committed was preferable for the victim than the alternatives available to them.

Also in reference to the NRM, changes are required regarding the decision making process. Currently, those referred into the system who have a live immigration issue are dealt with by the organisation that is responsible for the UK visa system, indicating a conflict of interests. It is positive to know that progress is being made in the development of a single unit that will be responsible for making all decisions regarding 'modern slavery' regardless of immigration status. However, it is vital that immigration status should not be a factor in determining whether or not someone is deemed to be a victim of 'modern slavery'. Those in the NRM should not be treated on the basis of their nationality, but on whether or not they are a victim. In this sense, the nationality and immigration status of the potential victim should not be taken into account during the decision making process, as the statistics indicate that this has already resulted in

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significant bias whereby those with a live immigration issue are drastically less likely to receive a favourable decision on their victim status.

Further research could be undertaken to identify whether bias truly exists in the NRM, or whether non-EU nationals are simply incorrectly referred into the NRM on a level much more significant than their EU counterparts. Such research could take NRM referrals that have received a negative conclusive grounds decision and send them back through the NRM system with information regarding immigration claims and nationality removed. Once all referrals are dealt with by the same decision-making unit, such changes would put all referrals on an equal footing. It would then be possible to identify how many of those negative referrals going back through the system receive a negative decision the second time round, when immigration data is omitted. If the numbers are barely changed, then claims of bias can be rejected, however should the numbers of negative decisions decrease, this would be evidence of bias against those with a live immigration issue.

Decisions on victimhood that incorporate an immigration status are reflective of ideas of the 'ideal victim', whereby those without a live immigration issue are better suited to such a notion. This research has emphasised the failings of such a concept and stressed how detrimental it can be to those who experience contemporary slavery. By highlighting the possession of agency held by victims both leading up to and during their situations of exploitation, this thesis pushes for understandings of victims to move beyond the notion of weak and passive individuals to recognise a degree of agency that has been enacted in response to a restriction of viable options. Using first-

hand accounts of those who have experienced conflict and contemporary slavery, this thesis has given voice to those who often remain voiceless. It is imperative that these voices are heard and their messages acknowledged if any intervention is to be successful. Such interventions will surpass the current trend of anti-slavery programmes which are rooted in generalisations based on statistics that fail to reflect reality and which are grounded in poorly developed quantitative data.

The UK government also has a duty to recognise its own role in the perpetuation of contemporary slavery through its hostile environment and restrictive policies. It cannot continue to claim that it seeks to tackle 'modern slavery' while simultaneously pushing an entirely contradictory agenda. One of the methods it uses to remove attention from its role in encouraging slavery is to focus on vulnerabilities in source countries and how they could be tackled to reduce the likelihood of migration into slavery. However, statistics indicate that the largest group of those identified as victims of contemporary slavery in the UK experienced their exploitation only in the UK. As such, the government must turn its attention to understanding and tackling the reasons why the UK poses such a threat. This insight should encourage a new approach to prevention efforts where the UK government accepts responsibility for the role that it plays in limiting the agency of people arriving in the country and in pushing policies that encourage and perpetuate situations of contemporary slavery. In reality, an individual's experience after arriving in the UK is more indicative than the situation they are fleeing in whether they will go on to experience contemporary slavery.

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UNIVERSITY OF Hull

Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

Interview

Please complete this form after you have read the attached (separate) Information Sheet.

Thank you for considering taking part in my research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to participate. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

	Please Tick those that apply
I have had the opportunity to think about the information on the Information Sheet, ask questions about the study, and have had my questions answered.	
I understand that I can choose not to answer any questions I feel uncomfortable with, without giving any reason, and without any consequences.	
I am happy for a third party to sit in on the interview.	
I understand that taking part in the study is voluntary and that I can leave at any time, without giving any reason, and without any consequences.	
I agree to take part in this study.	
I am happy to be contacted for follow up interviews.	

I consent to the use of the interview for publications.	
I consent to direct quotations from the interview being used in publications.	
I consent to the recording of the interview.	
I am willing for the recording of my interview to be donated to the University of Hull's WISE Library in 2018.	
I give my permission to other researchers to access my interview records.	
OR I wish my interview records to be destroyed after the project has been completed.	

Participant's Statement:
I ……………………….. (name) agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project and understand what the research study involves.
Signed ....
..
Date ____/____/____
In order for us to make full use of your contribution and to copy, reformat and reuse it, it is necessary that you assign your copyright to the University of Hull.
I hereby assign the copyright in my contribution to the University of Hull.
Signed ....
....
Date ____/____/____

Investigator's Statement:
I, Alicia Kidd confirm that I have carefully explained the nature, demands and any foreseeable risks (where applicable) of the proposed research to the participant.

Signed …………………………………………………………………………
……
Date ____/____/____

Appendix B: Information Sheet

The purpose of this information sheet is to inform you of the part you will play in this piece of research and to explain your obligations and rights towards it.

What is the purpose of the study?
This study aims to examine the lives of those who originate from conflict zones and who have been victims of slavery. The intention is to investigate what the relationship (if any) is between conflict and modern slavery in order to understand how policy measures could be implemented within conflict zones to help prevent vulnerable people becoming victims of contemporary slavery.

Who is organising the interview?
I am the sole researcher in this study, however, my supervisors, Dr Simon Green and Dr Helen Johnston, will oversee the project and the production and use of the research I collect.

Why have you been asked to take part?
I am looking to gain information from anyone who has been a victim of contemporary slavery and who originates from a conflict zone. I am hoping to compare this with information gathered from those who originate from a conflict zone but have not been victims of contemporary slavery. I also hope to gather information from front line workers who work with either of the above groups. Whichever of these categories you fit in to, any information you can provide will be enlightening and potentially very useful for this piece of research on a topic which so far has been given very little attention.

What sort of questions will be asked and why?
Although our conversations will be recorded, I aim to make sure that the interviews are as informal as possible and will follow more of an open-ended discussion rather that a strictly structured set of questions. This is because each participant's experience will be very different and I want to ensure that I get as good a grasp on each story as possible. The topics that the interview will cover include how life was during the conflict, what led you/your clients to leave the conflict zone, the experience of slavery (if relevant) and how your/their life is now. Discussing these topics will help me to gain a richer understanding of how (and if) the conflict might play a role in causing people to become victims of slavery.

Do you have to take part?
You do not have to take part in this interview and you may choose to withdraw at any point. You will also have the opportunity to stop the interview at any point, either to take a break or to end the interview entirely. Although any answers you can provide will be very useful to this research, you are in full control as to which ones you answer. If you do not want to answer a question, simply let me know and we will move on. There will be no consequences to you should you choose to do any of the above.

How will the interview process be carried out, and what will happen to the recording?
I will organise a date and time that are convenient for you and together we will decide on a suitable location for us to meet. A third party may sit in on the interview if you feel comfortable with, or require this (e.g. for interpretation). When we meet we will talk about the topics outlined above and our conversations will be recorded. I will then transcribe the interview and the recordings and notes will be saved on my university computer. The information from your interview will be used to help my PhD thesis which is looking at the

relationship between conflict and contemporary slavery.

Confidentiality:
This research is entirely confidential and any personal details that could be used to identify you will either be removed or altered before publication. The only people who will have access to the raw data will be myself and my PhD supervisors who are also bound by this commitment to your anonymity. Any third party that sits in on the interview will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Use of the interview:
The interview will be recorded so that I can give my full attention to you as we talk about your story. This recording will then be transcribed and used to form the basis of my research into the relationship between conflict and contemporary slavery. I may use direct quotations from the interview (there is a section on the consent form to allows you to give or refuse permission for this).

Approval of the study:
This study has been approved by the University of Hull and WISE on ethical grounds and has therefore been given approval to go ahead.

Contact Information:

Email Address:
a.kidd@2015.hull.ac.uk

Correspondence address:
C/O Wilberforce Institute for the study of Slavery and Emancipation
27 High Street
Hull
HU1 1NE

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview.

Appendix C: Example Interview Questions

Agency workers

<u>About them</u>
- Can you tell me a bit about the work you and your organisation do?
- How long have you been doing that?

<u>About their clients</u>
- How many clients do you have?
- What are your clients like (age, nationality, personality)?
- Do they all have similar stories?
- Are they from similar backgrounds (wealth, security, education, religion, ethnicity)?
- Can you tell me about some of your clients' stories?
- How old are they?
- How old were they when they fled their home country?
- What was life like for them before they fled?
- Did they live in a rural or an urban area?
- Did they feel safe in the country?

<u>About the conflict</u>
- Where did the conflict occur?
- What did they do when they lived there?
- Who did they live with?
- Did they have to look after anyone?
- Did they work/what did they do?
- How did they feel like the conflict affected them?
- Was anyone else they knew involved in the conflict?
- Was it safe to be outside/go to work/go to school?

<u>About the slavery</u>
- What kind of slavery did they experience?
- Where did they experience the slavery?
- How did it happen?
- Were they enslaved/recruited by someone they knew?
- How long were they enslaved for?
- What was life like for them when they were enslaved?
- What did they have to do?
- How did they escape?
- What was life like for them after they escaped?

<u>About now</u>
- What has life been like for them since they arrived in the UK?
- What difficulties do they face?
- Why did they come to the UK?
- How did they come to the UK?
- Are they still in contact with their family?
- How have their lives changed since being assisted by your agency?

- What do they hope for their futures?

<u>Further interviews</u>
- Do you have any clients who may be willing to talk to me?
- Do you know of any other organisations that work in a similar field who may be willing to talk to me?

Those who fled conflict

<u>Rapport building</u>
- Ask about the location you're in
- Ask about the person who referred them to the study
- How old are you?
- How long have you been in the UK?
- What do you do here?
- Do you enjoy it here?
- What kind of place do you live in?
- Who do you live with?

<u>Life Before the UK</u>
- Where did you grow up?
- Can you tell me a bit about life there?
- What did you do?
- Who did you live with?
- What made you come to the UK?

<u>Religion</u>
- Are you religious?
- Have you been able to practice your religion in the UK?

<u>Conflict</u>
- Where did you live before you came to the UK?
- Was this an urban or a rural area?
- What were your living conditions like?
- Is that where you've always lived?
- Do you come from a specific ethnic group?
- Were many people religious in the place you came from?
- Were they of the same religion as you?
- Can you tell me a bit about what life was like when you were there?
- Where did the conflict happen?
- Who was the conflict with?
- Can you tell me a bit about the conflict?
- How did you manage to get away?

<u>Slavery</u>
- How did you become exploited?
- How long were you exploited for?
- Can you tell me a bit about your experience?
- Where were you living when you were being exploited?
- Who/how many people did you live with?

- Where were you working when you were being exploited?
- What kind of work were you being made to do?
- Is this work that you knew how to do?
- How many hours did you work?
- How much did you get paid?
- Did you ever ask for more money? If yes, what happened? If no, why not?
- What stopped you from walking out?
- Were you ever subjected to violence?
- Did you ever see anyone else subjected to violence?
- How many other people worked in the same place?
- Were they all being exploited? If not all, how many?
- Where were the other people from?
- Do you know what has happened to them?
- How did you escape?
- What have you been doing since?
- Did you tell the police?
- Did anybody else know you were there?
- Did you tell anybody what was happening to you?

Future
- What's your dream job?
- What are your hopes for the future?
- Are there any things that you're struggling with?
- What things do you like about the UK?
- Do you miss the place you used to live?

Further interviews
- Do you know anyone else who might be willing to talk to me?

Appendix D: Coding Framework

1. Respondents fleeing conflict to safety
   a. Positive government intervention in UK
      i. Resettlement schemes
      ii. Statutory intervention with individuals
      iii. Restricted repatriation
   b. Negative or no government intervention in UK
      i. Support provided by strangers
      ii. Support provided by non-statutory agencies
   c. Ongoing Risk Factors in UK
      i. Waiting for asylum
      ii. Lying in asylum claim
      iii. Inaccessibility of asylum system
      iv. Psychological impact of asylum system
      v. Uncertain future

2. Respondents fleeing conflict and experiencing contemporary slavery
   a. Slavery in country of conflict
      i. Slavery triggered by conflict
      ii. Slavery triggered by conflict and social structures
   b. Slavery in UK
      i. Slavery triggered by conflict
      ii. Slavery triggered by avoiding conflict
      iii. Slavery triggered by statutory structures
   c. Slavery in interim country between conflict country and UK
      i. Slavery triggered by conflict and social structures