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You can't see it if you're not looking: Sex trafficking in Aotearoa New Zealand

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Abstract

Domestic sex trafficking in Aotearoa has received little contemporary focus due to widespread ambiguity about its nature and prevalence, and discussion on the topic is made difficult by frequent and problematic conflation of 'sex work' with 'trafficking'. This thesis aimed to explore the experiences of Aotearoa victims of sex trafficking, using a narrative approach underpinned by a feminist and social constructionist epistemology in order to ethically navigate methodological issues presented by the likelihood of participants' past experiences of trauma and gender-based violence.

I interviewed 16 victims of trafficking and six key informants, and surveyed 70 medical and 61 social service practitioners. I found that vulnerability to exploitation was catalysed through the intersection of youthfulness, social marginality, and disrupted attachment relationships, which abusers then capitalised on by being perceived as a source of protective love (a phenomenon I label the 'love-illusion'). Victims' experiences and attempts to disclose these were often implicitly forbidden within both formal and social contexts. Accordingly, respondents indicated that unfamiliar disclosures were precluded by knowledge gaps or practitioners' attempts to consign victims' experiences into subjectively more familiar categories of violence.

This thesis provides two layers of analysis. Firstly, it argues for the viability of the feminist concepts of voice and silencing to theorise the experiences of story suppression threaded throughout the findings. Secondly, by applying Bourdieusian concepts of field, habitus, and capital to victims' experiences, the thesis constructs an explanatory framework for participants' vulnerability to abuse, their recruitment into and exploitation through trafficking, and their pathways to escape and recovery. This thesis sets out the implications emerging from the two-tier analysis, including practice imperatives regarding prevention, intervention, and support.

Ultimately, this thesis argues that these practice imperatives cannot be progressed without the establishment of a shared definitional clarity and a cohesive understanding of the nature of trafficking, and consequent support and intervention needs across and between agencies. This thesis therefore creates an impetus for implementing a feminist and social constructionist understanding of domestic trafficking in order to recognise the manifestations of harm of this social phenomenon in Aotearoa.

Dedication

To Squish, with the hope that you may grow up in a safer world.

Acknowledgements

It is difficult to articulate my gratitude for those instrumental in my doctoral journey without resorting to clichés. 'Thank you' does not adequately reflect my appreciation for the people I refer to here.

My foremost and most heartfelt thanks goes to my participants. I am unsure if any of you will choose to read the final product, and can understand why you would not. Regardless, I remain in awe of your willingness to share, your courage, and your honesty. I feel immensely privileged that you allowed me to witness both your suffering and your strength, and will continue to hold each of you, and the experiences you shared with me, in my heart and in my work.

My second and profound thanks goes to those who have had the greatest influences on my confidence, and competence in writing over the last three years. This includes my boss, Ang Jury, and my colleague, Ruth Weatherall. Likewise, it includes my supervisors, Liz Beddoe and Carole Adamson, with particular thanks for their willingness to supervise me despite my penchant for trouble-making. It also includes the people from whom I sought informal guidance during crises of confidence, and both sex worker and police friends who, I suspect, would rather not be identified.

Thirdly, I will be forever indebted to those friends, colleagues, and family members who maintained their belief in me, and who provided invaluable emotional support. I'm referring here to my own family, of course, but also to Kim, to Catherine and the Lord family, to Christina and the Wood/Knight/Lewis family, and to Ali, Mel, Ami, Elley, Steph, Sue, Annaliese, Hilary, Lisa, and others. There were many times when I was far too consumed by this work to be the friend I should have been. Thank you for loving me anyway.

Finally, a project such as this requires excellent clinical supervision, and, for me, excellent psychotherapy. Thank you, Lenka and Anne, for keeping me well.

Prologue

*“You
have been
taught your legs
are a pitstop for men
that need a place to rest
a vacancy, body empty enough
for guests ‘cause no one
ever comes and is
willing to
stay”*

- *Rupi Kaur*

In 2016 when I first began interviewing victims of sex trafficking, full of confidence and certainty in my research, I was struck by admiration and respect for the women (and one man) sharing their experiences with me. I was in awe of their continuous survival, as they withstood the multiple and often colliding manifestations of men’s violence. Above all, though, I was struck by the many ways in which we as practitioners unintentionally silence and invisibilise victims both during and after their periods of abuse through trafficking.

I argue that we do this because we naively believe that ‘trafficking doesn’t happen here’. Certainly, the trafficking that does happen in Aotearoa challenges the dominant narrative of trafficking – that it happens overseas, that it happens to foreigners, that it entails the exploitation of legitimately employed sex workers, that it must involve the reluctant crossing of borders, and that it features clearly depicted victims and offender identities. The telling of it simply gets reclassified to fall within categories of violence with which practitioners are more comfortable or familiar. It would thus be easy to replicate a pattern of invisibilisation in my writing of this research.

This project produced an ethical imperative to delineate an unpopular story: that of both organised and opportunistic sexual exploitation, occurring outside of the formalised, legal sex industry. This abuse appears to manifest principally within groups whose sub-cultures are characterised by the acceptance of violence against women and girls as both permissible and normative. Trafficking is chiefly perpetrated against girls in early- to mid-adolescence – selected as victims because of their pre-existing vulnerabilities, which are shaped by non-protective family structures, disrupted attachment patterns, and social marginalisation. When I recall these stories, I recall the rapes, the almost lethal violence, the despair that accompanied the outpouring of memories coloured by the belief that escape was impossible, the shame at having decisions about the body appropriated by an abuser, and the brutality represented in

participants' casual accounts of intentionally degrading acts of sexual violence. However, it is equally apparent that the organisation of this exploitation and the silencing of victims would be impossible were it not for the implicit sanctioning or complicity that occurs when people are unable or unwilling to hear their stories or to classify these stories as trafficking.

As a consequence, this research ended up being an attempt to not just hear and understand such silenced voices, but to deconstruct the practices of my profession that are not responsive to victims' needs. Specifically, it sparked my interest in the ways through which we obstruct and invisibilise victims' attempts at narrating their experiences, and only occasionally demonstrate willingness to identify the coercive control and criminality inherent in victims' exploitation. Through their participation, and the experiences they have selected and highlighted as important in their interviews, these participants are asking us to do better. We must do better.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

Sex trafficking is increasingly attracting attention from researchers, activists, practitioners, and policymakers internationally, yet remains largely invisible and absent from public, political, and academic discourse in Aotearoa. Attempting to introduce a discourse around trafficking is rife with challenges – as we will shortly see, competing and often ambiguous portrayals and conceptualisations of what constitutes sex trafficking contributes to discussion on this topic being deeply divisive. In this chapter, I introduce the phenomenon of sex trafficking, and the international and domestic policy context and discursive context in which it is situated. I then explain the aims of this research, the epistemological and methodological stance that aligns with these aims, my use of terms and the justification for these, and an overview of the structure and focal points of this thesis. Throughout this chapter, I frequently return to conceptualisations of and policy developments pertaining to sex work, both to illustrate the problematic conflation of the two and to emphasise the importance of feminist theorising of sex work to discern differences between the legal and formalised sex industry and the invisibilised experiences of sexual exploitation in informal settings. Throughout the writing of this thesis, I have included excerpts to illustrate the nature and impacts of the various violence that trafficking invariably entails. While I have avoided using explicit, vivid, or gratuitous descriptions of violence in order to focus on the lived experience of each participant, rather than the sensational story, these excerpts may nevertheless feature content that could be distressing to readers.

1.2. Background

While the United Nations' definition of sex trafficking includes all financially compensated sexual acts involving people under 18 as well as adults of any age by force or deception (Doran, Jenkins, & Mahoney, 2014), Aotearoa did not, until recently (New Zealand Legislation, 2016), recognise trafficking unless it involved the coercion into or deception regarding movement across national borders for the purposes of forced labour or sexual exploitation (Department of Labour, 2009). Currently, no qualitative research exists regarding the experiences of people in Aotearoa who are forced to sell sex through coercion, force, or deception, and who are not financially compensated during these transactions. Because of the dearth of knowledge originating from Aotearoa, much of the available literature was generated within a U.S context. According to the U.S Department of State (2012), sex trafficking disproportionately affects women and girls, and there are an estimated 27 million people worldwide being trafficked at any time. As I discuss shortly, however, problems with terminology preclude the acceptance of such statistics as face value.

The majority of victims of trafficking have backgrounds involving economic marginality; trauma and abuse, particularly sexual abuse; or displacement. Traffickers often then exploit these vulnerabilities (Omelaniuk, 2005). Sex trafficking can occur domestically or transnationally (Smith, Vardaman & Snow, 2009), involve adults or children/adolescents, and may involve no payment at all or involve exploitative arrangements where services are compelled in return for money, housing, or drugs (Schmidt, 2014). The U.S refers to the forced prostitution of children (up to age 18) as domestic minor sex trafficking (Estes & Weiner, 2005; Hanna, 2002; Hughes, 2005). Aotearoa does not similarly

regard the use of underage people in prostitution as trafficking unless it involves coercion, deception, or exploitation.

Unlike questions relating to age, however, authors consistently – and conclusively – point to a correlation between trafficking via forced prostitution, and prior exposure to abuse. Most of these trafficking victims were sexually and/or physically abused prior to being exploited (Clawson, Dutch, & Williamson, 2008; Raymond et al., 2002; Zimmerman, 2003; Zimmerman et al., 2010), indicating that the social and psychological consequences of early abuse must be understood in order to understand the experiences of subsequent methods of sexual exploitation, including trafficking. It is estimated that traffickers control between 50 to 90 percent of underage girls selling sex in the United States (Estes & Weiner, 2005; National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, n.d.), although the term ‘trafficker’ is often used synonymously with ‘intermediary’ and may not constitute ‘force’, highlighting definitional tensions that constrain our understanding of trafficking and inhibit mobilisation of practitioners against trafficking. Victims of trafficking are at risk of adverse physical, psychological, and emotional outcomes, such as physical injuries, chronic and acute health conditions and infections, sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, depression, anxiety, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, suicide, trauma bonding, and addiction (Gajic-Veljanoski & Stewart, 2007; Hodge & Lietz, 2007; Raymond & Hughes, 2001). I discuss these concepts in greater depth in chapter two.

1.3. Distinguishing Sex Work from Trafficking: Discursive Tensions

Theoretical, ideological, and philosophical perspectives on sex work and sex trafficking cause terms to be used in overlapping, contradictory, and confusing ways in policy documents, media coverage, and academic literature (Gerassi, 2015), which in turn increases controversy about which definitions are used and how (Jordan, Patel, & Rapp, 2013; Reid, 2010). For example, Heilemann and Santhiveeran (2011) state that “organised criminal and sex industries lead to the sexual exploitation and trafficking of women and girls” (p. 58). This clearly conflates sex work - an occupation presumably chosen by workers situated more towards the ‘consent’ end of the continuum (and thus with greater autonomy and freedom) - with the sexual exploitation imposed on unwilling participants, evidenced in particular by the equating of ‘criminal’ industries with other ‘sex’ industries. The conflation of these two experiences is unhelpful, particularly for researchers who, like me, seek to explore trafficking while assuming that the sex industry is not inherently immoral or criminal but rather a legitimate form of work approximate to other labour industries.

Sex work has traditionally existed on the outskirts of ‘conventional’ society (Burnes, Schept, & Long, 2012). Accordingly, early literature on sex work focuses almost exclusively on the supposed immorality of female sex workers and the inherent threat they posed to middle-class moral values, and remnants of this school of thought can still be identified in much modern literature. Feminist discourses, although opposed to the outdated and sexist conceptualisation of sex workers as ‘villainous sexual temptresses’ (the sexual beings luring men into infidelity and therefore representing the downfall of the traditional family unit) have largely diverged into opposing camps regarding the meaning of women’s participation in sex work (Goddard, 2005). For example, Whibly (2001) highlights the oppression intrinsic in legislation that criminalises sex work, citing it as an example of predominantly male policymakers’ attempts to regulate female sexuality and exercise power over (often already marginalised) women. Moreover, sex workers’ rights groups consider the decision to

enter sex work as motivated by legitimate business decisions resulting in a reciprocal, mutually beneficial business transaction (Goddard, 2005). Conversely, many radical feminists position the sex industry and sex work as an extension of exploitative patriarchal power relations and as ultimately detrimental when striving for gender equality. Such discourses position the use of women's bodies in a sexual capacity in return for monetary payment as symptomatic of society's objectification and commodification of female bodies, and as a continuation of oppressive, harmful patriarchal norms (Whibly, 2001). This view assumes a level of victimisation (and consequent lack of agency) present in commercial sexual transactions, regardless of the circumstances in which they occur. The conflation of these terms by (typically neo-abolitionist) research bodies with a politically oriented agenda poses challenges regarding the identification of power and powerlessness within supposed groups of 'victims' of trafficking.

1.4. Policy Context

Alongside feminist understandings, legislative reforms relating to sex work are extremely contentious. Sex workers' rights groups have been instrumental in successful campaigning for legislative changes decriminalising or legalising sex work in many Anglophone countries, including Aotearoa (Heilemann & Santhiveeran, 2011). Conversely, in countries such as Sweden and Canada, alternative approaches have been implemented in order to redress the perceived power imbalance inherent in sexual transactions in the labour market by criminalising purchasing sex rather than selling it (Bruckert & Hannem, 2013). The decriminalised model in Aotearoa is considered by prostitutes' rights groups to epitomise regulatory policy that advances the interests of sex workers and their right to organise within the labour market (Galilee & Lopes-Baker, 2014). Central to debates on legislative reform is the positioning of sex work as a presumptive 'cause' of trafficking (Miriam, 2005). Miriam (2005) advocates for a 'stop demand' approach to ending trafficking that radically challenges the conceptualisation of sex work as a 'free choice', and situates sex work as a definitive symptom of male dominance, as exploitation, and as a replication of male-oriented social order. This standpoint, however, is problematised by other feminists, who note that there is little evidence to support a correlation between sex work and trafficking, and point out the reduction in physical harm and social stigmatisation arising from more inclusive policies (Kempadoo, 2016; Outshoorn, 2005). An uneasy middle ground does exist: some feminists contextualise sex work as situated within a male-dominated society that involves social, gender, and economic inequality, while still conceptualising sex workers as having agency to negotiate their position in a problematic context, rather than being automatically deemed to be exploited victims (Farvid & Glass, 2014). Below, I provide a short summary of the development of Aotearoa's current legislative framework, and contextualise this within the human rights instruments pertaining to Aotearoa's performance in addressing sexual exploitation.

Aotearoa's decriminalisation of sex work included the introduction of the Prostitution Reform Act 2003 and the simultaneous repeal of sections of the Crimes Act 1961 pertaining to sex work; namely, Section 147 relating to brothel-keeping, Section 148 relating to living off earnings from sex work, and Section 149 relating to management of others' sex work. Each of these Sections were previously punishable by up to five years' imprisonment (New Zealand Parliament, 2012). In addition, the law reform entailed the repeal of Section 70E of the Massage Parlours Act 1978 (New Zealand Parliament, 2012). Women's groups and the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective (NZPC) were instrumental in gaining public and political support for legislative change designed to support the

needs of workers themselves (Abel et al., 2010). Paradoxically, while the base aims of the Bill were to safeguard sex workers' rights and improve their wellbeing, it was also made explicit that the "purpose [was] not intended to equate with the promotion of prostitution as an acceptable career option but instead to enable sex workers to have and access the same protections afforded to other workers" (Justice and Electoral Committee, 2002, para. 7), thus implying a continued moral judgment by policymakers.

While prostitution in Aotearoa has been decriminalised as a result of the Prostitution Reform Act 2003, sections 20, 21, and 22 prohibit the use of children and young people (anyone aged under 18) being used for sexual purposes involving profit to themselves or others (New Zealand Parliament, 2008). Section 149A of the Crimes Act 1961 also disallows the purchasing of sexual services from a person under 18. Following the signing of Convention 182 (discussed in greater depth later in this chapter) and the subsequent government focus on eradicating child prostitution, government agencies expressed commitment to inter-agency work to address the issue of underage sex work; however, debate continued regarding which department should take responsibility for action (New Zealand Parliament, 2008). It is important to note that while underage sex work is not synonymous with trafficking, there may be some overlap. Minimal nationwide commitment arising from these discussions has been evidenced following the 'Protecting our Innocence' paper (Ministry of Justice, 2002), other than increased maximum penalties and the updating of trafficking legislation.

In November 2015, the Crimes Amendment Act 2015 was passed. This encompassed a number of changes to Aotearoa's trafficking laws, the most significant of which was the insertion of Section 98D, which aligned our legislation more closely to the United Nations definition of trafficking by removing the requirement for trafficking to involve the crossing of international borders. Section 98D of the Crimes Act 1961 now stipulates that "the reception, recruitment, transport, transfer, concealment, or harbouring of a person in New Zealand or any other State... for the purpose of exploiting or facilitating the exploitation of the person, or... knowing that the reception, recruitment, transport, transfer, concealment, or harbouring of the person involves one or more acts of coercion against the person, one or more acts of deception against the person, or both" are criminal offences (New Zealand Legislation, 2016).

Aotearoa is a signatory to multiple human rights instruments that instruct or guide member States in matters of social justice and equity. The first of these is the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (the Convention), which concerns all organised crime, including crime relating to the organised trafficking of people. In 2000, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (referred to as 'the Palermo Protocol') was adopted and presented for member states to sign and ratify at the General Assembly of the Convention, with Articles specifically directing States to provide both prevention and investigation of trafficking. Article two of the Palermo Protocol outlines its intention to prevent and address trafficking of persons, and in particular women and children; to provide victims of trafficking with protection and restoration of their human rights; and to encourage collaboration between State parties to achieve these goals. Section B of Article three sets out two important aspects of this Protocol: firstly, that consent obtained shall be deemed irrelevant if it occurs through any coercive methods; and secondly, that the harbouring, transfer, transportation, or recruitment of persons under 18 constitutes trafficking,

irrespective of whether the purposes covered above are evident (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2015). While this is not identical to Aotearoa's definition, it comprises the same three core elements to define trafficking – the involvement with victims via various means, the use of force or coercion, and the purposes of exploitation.

Second, Aotearoa has signed and ratified Convention 182 of the International Labour Organisation (the ILO), which concerns the worst forms of child labour, including prostitution. Article 34 of this Convention requires State Parties to prevent the use of children in unlawful sexual activity through coercion, and to protect children from all types of sexual exploitation, with explicit mention of prostitution. Moreover, Article 25 prescribes that State Parties must protect children from trafficking. Guideline six of the ILO further holds that State parties are required to provide protection and support for trafficked persons, and that such support is imperative to disrupt the continuation of the trafficking cycle (Mair & Warren, n.d.).

Finally, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) was adopted and presented for signature and ratification at General Assembly in 1989, and was formalised in 1990. UNCROC's protocols are premised on the primary consideration of the welfare of children. Articles relating to child trafficking include Article 11, which compels State parties to take action to combat the transfer of children across international borders; and Article 19, which concerns the need for protection from all forms of abuse, violence, maltreatment, or exploitation (Ministry of Justice, 2002). Neither explicitly refer to trafficking within domestic borders, but do indicate the unacceptability of state inaction nonetheless.

Despite these instruments, reporting of the experiences of victims of trafficking domestically in Aotearoa has been predominantly anecdotal in nature, and is not specifically explored by either governmental or academic research. Correspondingly, while authors examining treatment programmes of victims in other countries cite the positive effects of governmental initiatives, public concern, and media responsiveness regarding the sex trafficking of minors (Finckenauer & Schrock, 2003; Parker & Skrmetti, 2013; Saewyc & Edinburgh, 2010); this does not hold true of Aotearoa, as no such initiatives have maintained a consistent presence that would be conducive to such analysis. As a consequence, the only publications that report on sex trafficking in Aotearoa are international watchdogs; principally, the United States' Trafficking in Persons (TIP) reports. In 2010, the power of language used to explain trafficking became evident, as the report exhibited clear evidence of the problematic discourses employed to describe trafficking, such as through language representing adolescents as devoid of autonomy, and the conflation of chosen sex work and coerced prostitution. The United States of America Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report (2010) states that:

Aotearoa is a source country for underage girls subjected to trafficking in persons, specifically forced prostitution, and a destination country for foreign men and women in forced labor... Some of these girls under 18 years old engage in prostitution occasionally on the street without the obvious control of a third party. Child trafficking victims, however, are found engaging in prostitution illegally in brothels, and other teenage girls who engage in prostitution on the street are closely controlled by local gangs.

Even notwithstanding the failure to differentiate between concepts determinative of agency, Aotearoa agencies contend that there is little evidence to support these statements (Bell, 2010). However, this

denial is equalled by agencies' allusions to either the reality or potential for trafficking. The Department of Labour (2009), for instance, argues that while trafficking has not become embedded as a problem in Aotearoa, it has the potential to become a destination country, and the Human Rights Commission (HRC) has been alerted to multiple instances of underage Thai girls being trafficked into Aotearoa for sexual purposes (Ministry of Justice, 2002). Over time, the concerns regarding the involvement of young people and adults in the sex industry through force or coercion appears to have been downgraded – as stated previously, few further government initiatives regarding sex trafficking have been found. Similarly, international attention to Aotearoa's trafficking situation seems to have been relaxed - both the 2016 and 2017 TIP reports mention the reported involvement of some underage persons in the sex industry, but do not explicate the nature of 'force' or the involvement of coercive others, particularly at an organised level as insinuated by the 2010 and earlier reports. The 2017 Trafficking in Persons report states that:

Some international students and temporary visa holders are vulnerable to forced labor or prostitution. A small number of Pacific island and Aotearoa (often of Māori descent) girls and boys are at risk of sex trafficking. Some children are recruited by other girls or compelled by family members into sex trafficking.

However, as with the 2010 and similar reports, the 2017 TIP report does not specify the sources of data informing the statements in the report. While some related offences have been documented, there has yet to be a conviction for sex trafficking in Aotearoa. Moreover, there is an indisputable dearth of robust research into the phenomenon of coerced involvement of underage people in the sex industry, despite the considerably greater volume of sensationalised media articles authored by community members with transparent moral agendas. I therefore argue that these TIP conclusions are likely to be informed as much by anecdotal accounts as by Ministry of Justice and New Zealand Police data or research findings, further illustrating the problematic impacts of ambiguity or inconsistency in terminology.

1.5. Research Aims and Questions

As indicated above, research into sex trafficking is contentious, complex to study, and prone to selective appropriation by interest groups. Further, it is also markedly under-researched in Aotearoa. This research therefore aims to explore the experiences of people within Aotearoa who have been or trafficked for sexual purposes. The research questions are consequently:

- In what Aotearoa contexts does sex trafficking occur?
- What are the experiences of people within Aotearoa who have been subjected to sex trafficking?
- What interventions would assist victims of sex trafficking in Aotearoa?

1.6. Importance of the Research

While there is an abundance of international literature (particularly in the United States) focusing on the nature, effects of, and interventions for victims of sex trafficking and slavery, there is minimal research in the New Zealand context. The differences in legislation and socio-political contexts between our nation and other nations mean that much of the literature is not applicable to our domestic context. Aotearoa has some literature available regarding the experiences of underage sex workers (Abel & Fitzgerald, 2008; Thorburn, 2016) and on the effects of sex work reform laws (e.g.

Abel, Fitzgerald, & Brunton, 2007), but none regarding prostitution occurring through force specifically, or highlighting experiences of sexual trafficking in a domestic context.

Consequently, at present, there is almost no research specific to Aotearoa focusing on trafficking in the ways in which the terms are constructed in this thesis. This, as we see later in this thesis, poses significant barriers to our ability to respond appropriately as social workers or professionals in similar fields, or to design prevention or intervention initiatives. Aotearoa's policy context, while officially cognisant of the potential for domestic trafficking to occur, is rarely inclusive of the reality of sex trafficking domestically, meaning that research into this topic has to contend with silence about the pervasive, insidious, and harmful dynamics it entails. There is therefore no 'starting point'; no foundational knowledge upon which to build to develop practice knowledge and academic research that situates victims' experiences within this specific category of violence. This research seeks to provide this - a building block from which to advance future research in this area that is specific to Aotearoa - and I put this forward as the principal importance of the research and as my core contribution to the field.

The lack of knowledge on this subject in Aotearoa made me reliant on international sources to inform my initial direction. I have therefore attempted to make my research as reflexive and explicit as possible in order to provide a firm grounding in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. In part, this contributes to the body of knowledge of doing sensitive, controversial, or unwelcome research, but it also orients the reader in the New Zealand context through the eyes of a social worker familiar with the clients, policy and organisations involved. I have chosen to take a 'wide lens' rather than an in-depth exploration of a single facet of victims' experience, on the basis that in the absence of a secure knowledge-base, the development of a snapshot that captures as many aspects of victims' experiences will have greater value than a more theorised and specific focus – particularly in the development of basic and widely-applicable practice implications. Amongst these are several specific theoretical and practical contributions, which are comprehensively summarised in the final chapter.

1.7. Use of Terms

There are several terms I have chosen to use that merit explanation, as they signify a departure from typical use within the literature. The first is my use of the term 'victim'. Although 'survivor' is increasingly used to denote those who have been subjected to violence, I contend that 'victim' more appropriately reflects the criminal nature of the situations discussed here, and the long-lasting impacts of victimisation. I therefore use the term 'victim' to describe the experiences narrated to me throughout this research, but the term 'survivor' when referring to individuals who have escaped and sought recovery from their experiences of victimisation. Secondly, I have chosen the term 'prostitution' to refer to forced or in cases with constrained ability to consent, as they are 'being prostituted' rather than engaging willingly in the labour market of 'sex work'. However, when I refer to adults' willing engagement in the sex industry, or the influence of advocates of the sex industry, I use the more appropriate term 'sex work' and 'sex worker' to reflect the legitimacy of the formalised industry in accordance with my feminist, sex workers' rights stance. Finally, as I have explicated above, the term 'trafficking' has often been misused, misapplied, and misappropriated to either describe a very narrow sequence of events (thus excluding the scenarios I focus on throughout this research). Equally, they have been applied in such a broad sense and to denote the involvement of such a range of activities

(including consensual sexual activity) that they have become essentially meaningless. I therefore base my definition of what constitutes trafficking on New Zealand's legal definition. I have targeted this research specifically at domestic experiences.

1.8. Structure of Thesis

I have maintained a conventional structure (of introduction, literature review, methods, findings, discussion, and conclusion) for this thesis, with some exceptions. First, I have included an extra chapter (chapter four), which sets out my reflexive positioning and navigation through ethical challenges; second, my findings consist of three shorter chapters according to the three components arising from my method of narrative analysis (context, temporality, and interaction); and third, my discussion is separated into two chapters to allow for two very different avenues of theorising to occur.

In chapter two, I introduce the concept of 'temporality', or experiences across time, as a structure for the literature review. This begins with an exploration of vulnerability to recruitment (past), the reality and impacts of victimisation through trafficking (present), and the potential for intervention (future). This attempts to bridge various bodies of knowledge by incorporating psychological research into victim behaviour, developmental precursors to victimisation, and mental health symptomatology, sociological explanations for victim/abuser dynamics, and social work practice knowledge. I conclude this chapter with an analysis of the gaps in current approaches and knowledge, and an exploration of the potential to transfer existing practice initiatives targeting other categories of violence to the context of sex trafficking.

In chapter three, I take the reader through the research procedure I developed and followed, beginning with why I have chosen to underpin the research with both a social constructionist and feminist perspective; specifically, to avoid replicating oppressive or abusive aspects of participants' past experiences and to privilege power-sharing principles. Accordingly, I then describe the congruence of narrative inquiry with these values, and the rationale for a qualitative-dominant mixed methods approach that entailed surveys of medical and social service professionals, interviews with survivors, and interviews with key informants. The conceptualisation of what constitutes 'sensitive' research and how literature situates this sensitivity and translates this to research imperatives is explored here. I also outline how I came to use Bourdieusian constructs late in the analysis as an organising structure to understand the context of trafficking and the foundations underpinning it.

In chapter four, I build on the ethical challenges touched upon in chapter three, and examine the role of self in the research process as it relates to ethical engagement with participants and with data. This aims to make explicit the assumptions and experiences that influence the way I conduct research into this particular category of violence against (predominantly) women. The way that I consider 'self' as part of this research is partially predicated on the values that accompany the perspectives underpinning the research; that is, feminism and social constructionism. Attending to the ways in which experiences are (co)constructed, and understood in relation to overarching power structures and the manifestation of these at multiple levels, necessitated personal engagement with the topic, the data, and the participants providing it – and the explicit consideration of the subjectivity inherent in these processes. Finally, my experiences of using my own voice throughout the research, and of my attempts to invite the voices of participants through my own engagement with them, is intended to be a contribution to the field and so is described here.

Chapters five, six, and seven collectively constitute the findings of the survivor-interview component of the research. Chapter five sets the scene by examining the context; in other words, looks at the beginning of participants' stories, such as the methods of recruitment through which they became involved with their abusers. This context also encompasses place, key events, and mechanisms of control and coercion experienced early in victims' stories, and illustrates the marked constraints to victims' autonomy and the simultaneous resistance of subjugation that occurred either within or alongside such constraints. Chapter six then considers the self of participants using temporality, or the transition of self and experience across time. This chapter is structured using the same temporal organisation as the literature review; we first look at past (before victimisation through or trafficking), the present (during victimisation and at the point of exit), and future (recovery after victimisation). This allows us to witness the progression from childhood and participants' self-analysis of the precursors to their victimisation, to the development of situations of heightened danger where choice and consent are precluded. It also allows us to explore the identities that they create in order to survive these environments, and finally to the impacts, emotions, needs, and expectations texturing their experiences of attempting to recover or to move on from these experiences. Chapter seven then examines the narrative element of interaction, or the role of various relationships in participants' lives. This therefore focuses on the primary characters of victims' stories and the individual and collective roles that these characters play in shaping experiences, beliefs, and expectations of others. In turn, this then facilitates understanding of the sub-cultures within which some participants were embedded, the difficulties in navigating these sub-cultures and traversing bureaucratic barriers to access support, and the implications of this for safety, agency, and help-seeking.

Chapter eight is a fourth findings chapter, but is focused on the surveys with practitioners and interviews with key informants. This exploration of practitioners' beliefs and perceptions of their own readiness to respond to trafficking scenarios highlights deeply problematic and contradictory beliefs, assumptions, and service gaps. Equally, however, it highlights the untapped depth of practice knowledge amongst those working therapeutically with victims, and suggests that structural barriers have thus far precluded the effective intervention into such scenarios.

My discussion has been separated into two chapters, to capture both the structural aspects of voice and silencing and the contextual components that compel, embed, and maintain the experience of victimisation. Chapter nine is centred on the silencing and invisibilising of participants' voices through multiple and intersecting systems and practitioner actions, and examines how these can be contextualised within an intersectional analysis of historical silencing of gender-based violence, and reinforced by unresponsive socio-political contexts and the corresponding naïveté of practitioners.

In chapter 10, I again discuss the findings in relation to the literature, but develop the literature using Bourdieusian concepts of field, habitus, and capital to theorise 'the game', the 'feel for the game', and the substitution of (often harmful) forms of social capital (Bourdieu, 1990; 1993; 2002) in the context of constrained access to other forms of capital through intersecting experiences of marginalisation. This conceptual framework allows for the identification of sub-culture norms, attitudes, and experiences, the beliefs that enable these to be perpetuated and silenced within families and communities, and the opportunities (and imperatives) for intervention that these represent.

In the final chapter (11), I conclude the thesis with the implications of all of the preceding chapters, including both key conclusions and practice and research recommendations. I also note the limitations of the research and its strengths, and argue that, while serving as a broad and shallow ('wide lens') analysis of various trafficking stories, this research also functions as foundational knowledge.

1.9. Conclusion

Trafficking is an issue shrouded by conflicting and controversial perspectives and motivations, all of which require careful navigation in order to research appropriately. This chapter has introduced my topic, my key concepts, and my organising structure. It sets out the background to research into trafficking, identifies some of the central definitional issues and discursive tensions that challenge the position of this research, and identifies the policy context legitimising the research and simultaneously (and paradoxically) discouraging it. The chapter then focuses on the procedural aspects of the research, including the aims of the research, the intended contribution to the existing body of knowledge, my use of key terms, and the structure the thesis follows. In the following chapter, I set out the previous literature on this topic and related topics to synthesise what is known, what is theorised, and what is missing from prior studies.

2. Settings, Exploitation, and Recovery: a Review of the Literature

2.1. Introduction

In chapter one, I set the scene for the research by demonstrating the relevance to Aotearoa, the policy context, and the consequent aims of the project. However, while this contextualised the research, it did not situate the study within the international literature, identify current gaps in knowledge or challenge dominant academic discourse on the subject, which is the purpose of this chapter. I organise this chapter using the narrative concept of 'temporality', which aligns with chapter nine's tracking of participants' realities during their past (prior to victimisation), present (during victimisation) and future (after victimisation). I therefore separate the precursors, lived realities, and interventions here: in other words, the before, the during, and the after of victimisation through trafficking. First, the 'before' literature focuses principally on vulnerability to sex trafficking, and on locating the context in which this victimisation is embedded. This is followed by a synthesis of literature regarding the dynamics evidenced in all stages of the victim-abuser relationship (the 'present'), including recruitment, entrapment, and exploitation, and the psychological concepts employed to theorise victim behaviour and mental health symptomatology in this setting. Finally, I conclude with a review of contemporary approaches to intervening in the field (the 'future'), both with individuals and through disruption of patterns of abuse. These include initial attention to risk and presenting needs while also considering the potential for recourse through the criminal justice system, residential shelters and corresponding psychotherapeutic goals, multi-agency systems that utilise wrap-around systems to maximise sustained engagement, and the circumnavigation of barriers to engagement. At present, there is little consensus regarding validated responses, but research suggests that interventions designed for similar and overlapping categories of violence also may be effective with victims of trafficking.

2.2. Vulnerability to Recruitment

2.2.1. Social setting

Vulnerability can arise from numerous avenues, and I explore here significant social factors, such as economic need and the influence of gendered inequality and gender role construction, before turning to trauma and attachment as explanations for conditioned vulnerability to exploitation. Literature on trafficking principally demonstrates the often insidious nature of initial exposure to exploitation. When adults are recruited (typically unbeknownst to them at the time), for example, they are often targeted for being in economically desperate situations, optimising the potential for 'pull' factors, such as immediate safety, accommodation, and access to substances, to ensure their compliance (Hopper & Hidalgo, 2006; Kerr, 2014). A desperate need for income and a need for housing make young people extremely vulnerable to being coerced into prostitution by promises of wealth and security, despite the mistreatment by the people managing them that accompany these benefits (Cobbina & Oselin, 2011; Hodge & Lietz, 2007). The notion of 'push' and 'pull' variables as equal contributors refers to the 'running from' and 'running to' factors that synergistically create vulnerability to being recruited into trafficking (Hoyle, Bosworth, & Dempsey, 2011). Research from the United States indicates that the majority of trafficking victims are intentionally recruited from hang-out locations frequented by vulnerable young people, such as those who are homeless, in poor socio-economic areas, in state care, or are addicted (Anderson, Coyle, Johnson, & Denner, 2014; Vieth & Ragland, 2005). However,

as will be further discussed shortly, these studies often fail to differentiate between underage sex work and trafficking involving force or coercion by a third party.

Histories of abandonment, abuse, and disruption to primary relationships create intense vulnerability (Andra et al., 2006; Santiago et al., 2013), which is sought out and exploited by people who can offer necessities like love, affection, alternative homes, and safety (Dorais & Corriveau, 2009; Hanna, 2002; Parker & Skrmetti, 2013; Reid, 2016). Reid (2012) states that “the colluding effects of a childhood marred by neglect and/or abuse coupled with the calculated exploitative methods of sex traffickers facilitate the creation of an emotional connection, or trauma bonding, between the traumatised minor and the exploitative trafficker” (p. 2). According to Dutton and Painter (1993), trauma bonding is invariably preceded by two conditions: a power imbalance that positions the victim as subordinate and vulnerable, and abuse that occurs intermittently and is interspersed with mild or positive treatment. Simply put, the combination of terror and gratitude lead to trauma bonding (Reid, 2016; Rockinson-Szapkiw, Spaulding, Justice, Spieth, & Owens, 2017), the conditions for which are often set by early relational conditions. I discuss the notion of trauma bonding further in the ‘trafficking dynamics’ section.

The effects of these individual-level social factors are often compounded by wider societal inequities. In the last decade, research has begun to emerge on the ways that colonisation shapes vulnerability to and perpetration of sexual exploitation (see McIntyre, 2012; Saewyc, MacKay, Anderson & Drozda, 2008; Sethi, 2009; Sikka, 2009; Tocher, 2012). However, despite my attempts to establish from the literature the nature of vulnerability as it is conferred upon the colonised, the conflation of the terms ‘trafficking’, ‘exploitation’, and ‘sex work’ made it impossible to distinguish socio-economic and other social risk factors that precipitate general involvement with the sex industry from those that compelled participation in sexual transactions that are coerced by another person or organisation, instead solely highlighting the greater likelihood of clusters of marginalisation indicators amongst colonised populations.

Social norms, beliefs, and practices also contribute to the continuation of trafficking through the embodiment of gender inequality. Patriarchal attitudes perpetuate the oppression of women and children through social and economic marginalisation, despite the influence of feminism (Ashenden, 2004). Correspondingly, the chief precipitants to both sexual violence and physical violence toward women are the unequal proportions of power men hold in comparison to women, and rigidity in gender scripting, both of which stem from society’s prevailing patriarchal paradigms (Ministry of Women’s Affairs, 2012). Ideals intrinsically related to these patriarchal paradigms lead to a culture of bystander inaction regarding trafficking, for example, through the socially sanctioned myth that men must have their sexual wants fulfilled at all costs and that sexual force by men should be excused, whilst women and girls should act as moral gatekeepers to protect against the dangers of men’s natural desires (Burnes et al., 2012). In addition, children’s interpretations of adults’ intrinsic messages about gender norms and sexuality also contribute to girls’ propensity to become victims (Pearce, 2009). For example, girls’ play often depicts situations where girls are the carers or nurturers, whilst boys’ play often positions them as aggressors who exercise power over subordinates (Ennew, 1986). Induction into submissive behaviour for female children, while boys are groomed into exhibiting ‘masculine’ traits such as dominance and aggression sets the foundation for these internalised norms to become deeply

embedded before adulthood. These are theorised to become the unspoken rationales that subtly endorse male perpetration of violence, and the denigration of girls and women (Dorais & Corriveau, 2009; MWA, 2009). Accordingly, because of the widespread adherence to patriarchal norms, male violence toward girls and women is often accepted, normalised, or minimised (Pearce, 2009; Shannon, Kerr, Allinott, Chettiarr, Shoveller, & Tindall, 2008).

Such societal norms and expectations then influence sexual decision-making and consequent vulnerability. Hanna (2002) identifies social norms in adolescence, such as the expectation that it is the role of males to take the sexual initiative, as contributing to adolescent girls' vulnerability to being manipulated into prostitution through intermediaries such as supposed boyfriends. Despite the glamour initially alluded to in these interactions, minors manipulated into these situations typically undergo a seasoning (or 'grooming') process where they become bonded to, and exploited by, the recruiter (Dalla, 2006; Farley, 2003; Parker & Skrmetti, 2013). Grooming, bonding, and appeasement processes as they apply to trafficking situations – including trafficking by intimate partners - will be discussed later in this chapter.

2.2.2. Trauma, distress, and coping behaviour as vulnerability

Given the proportions of victims of trafficking who have been subjected to abuse in childhood, an understanding of the trajectory between sexual abuse and subsequent exploitation is integral to comprehending how this vulnerability may then be exploited. Children who have been sexually abused are more likely to experience additional sexual violence later on in life (MWA, 2012). Child sexual abuse (CSA) is associated with a range of adverse physical and mental health outcomes, which are thought to result both from behavioural changes as a result of abuse, and from psychological symptoms including changes to self-esteem, self-image, agency, and trust in others (Coles, Lee, & Taft, 2014; MWA, 2012). In addition, sexual abuse rarely happens in isolation; conversely, McGregor (2003) found that of sexual abuse survivors, 80 percent had been subjected to other types of abuse, amplifying the psychological impacts. Child sexual abuse is recognised as a common antecedent to sexual exploitation, as it creates vulnerability through harmful changes to thought processes, relational patterns, mental well-being, and physiological stress responses (Ahrens, Katon, McCarty, Richardson, & Courtney, 2012; Holger-Ambrose et al., 2013). Re-enactment of non-consensual sexual encounters may also reactivate traumatic memories of previous unwanted sexual experiences (Stebbins, 2010), reinforcing feelings of powerlessness and experiences of marginalisation originating from the initial trauma (Ahrens et al., 2012). Finally, the abuse and reward patterns established during the grooming of children and sexual abuse may be associated with the subsequent interlinking of sexual activity and tangible reward for young people, effectively conditioning children and young people for normalisation of sexual transactions for their own or others' financial benefit (Stebbins, 2010; Thorburn, 2015). While the incidence of child sexual abuse does not inherently lead to subsequent sexual exploitation, it sets the scene for later methods of abuse through a range of mechanisms. The process through which physiological impacts of trauma manifest is therefore discussed below.

Trauma in childhood has inimical effects on children's physical, psychological, and emotional well-being, and is then influential in later behaviour and decision-making. The severity of these effects is influenced by variables such as developmental stage at the time the trauma occurred, whether it was a single event or cumulative, the availability of supportive and protective attachment figures, the child's

individual characteristics such as temperament, and, if human-inflicted, the relationship between the child and the perpetrator (Alisen, 2003; Marshall-Berenz, 2010; Putnam, 2006). While all stress can have negative physiological impacts, traumatic stress is differentiated by the severity of its impacts on total wellbeing; in other words, on the functioning of both brain and body (Thoits, 2010). Negative health outcomes can result from one of two pathways; firstly, the disruption to neurodevelopment and activation of physiological stress pathways, and secondly, through the uptake of risky health behaviours stemming from changed belief structures and/or mental health symptomatology following exposure to abuse or trauma (Alisen, 2003; Putnam, 2006).

Given the centrality of physiological responses to trauma in later experiences of post-traumatic stress symptoms and according coping mechanisms, I first set out the physiological effects of traumatic stress before delineating the wider range of effects associated with these. The trajectory between these manifestations of traumatic stress is intrinsically linked to negative social outcomes: the 'ripple effect' of trauma that originates in the body affects psychological/emotional processing and subsequently precipitates behaviour changes and, correspondingly, social/relational changes (Thoits, 2010). At the same time, when the body is subjected to physical or psychological stress, physiological responses occur to preserve homeostasis by withdrawing resources from secondary functions and using them to support vital functions (Gianaros & Wagner, 2015). The hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis in children exposed to trauma, for example, is more frequently activated than in children not exposed to trauma, resulting in the secretion of higher levels of cortisol. Increased secretion of cortisol impairs neurons and brain functioning, in turn leading to emotional problems, lack of comprehension about long-term consequences, and anti-social behaviour (Suzuki, 2014). Social outcomes cannot then be separated from these effects of trauma - health outcome statistics demonstrate the far-reaching impacts of trauma, with children exposed to trauma being 12 times more at risk of suicide, three to five times for at risk of developing depression, and 18-21 times more at risk of developing substance abuse disorders (Dalla, Zia, & Kennedy, 2003; Putnam, 2006; Shaw & Dallos, 2005). These physiological processes and corresponding outcomes are useful for understanding victims' range of experiences that position them as vulnerable to recruitment. In addition, as is discussed next, the particular manifestations of physiological arousal in response to stress and trauma is influential in victims' specific experiences of surviving trauma.

Parts of the brain associated with psychological trauma include the amygdala, hippocampus, locus ceruleus and the prefrontal cortex, and I set out the functions of these to explain the relationship between physical impacts and victims' behaviour. The utility of understanding the physiological processes activated by trauma lies chiefly within its role in comprehending individual symptoms and corresponding behavioural responses. Intrusive memories in the form of flashbacks or nightmares following traumatic stress can be explained through the disruption to memory processing functions (Jelinek et al., 2010; Schwabe, Wolf, & Oitzl, 2010). In times of hyperarousal, the transmission of memory information from amygdala to hippocampus is thwarted by an integration barrier, causing traumatic impressions to become suspended in the amygdala without being processed, creating cognitive splitting (Wingenfeld & Wolf, 2014). Further, the locus ceruleus is instrumental in the representation of these memories, as stimulation of the locus ceruleus has found to induce repetitive and intrusive memories. In addition, such stimulation can cause sleeplessness and feelings of relentless fear, which in turn motivate avoidance and/or generalised fear that no longer differentiates

between real and perceived threats (Bangasser, Wiersielis, & Khantsis, 2015). Meanwhile, the amygdala functions as an interpreter of information, essentially producing an internal sensory portrayal of external events and, when stimulated, elicits emotions such as fear, anger, and pleasure (Bucalo, Pinard, & Silverstein, 2015). Re-experiencing in the form of flashbacks or intrusive memories is therefore associated with elevated amygdala activity (Van der Kolk, 2015). The hippocampus, on the other hand, categorises information in the short-term memory, and is essential for the ability to learn from experiences and attribute values to them (Wingenfeld & Wolf, 2014). Stimulation of the hippocampus can cause people to become hyper-sensitive to stimuli, in part explaining the phenomenon of hypervigilance following trauma (Tehrani, 2004). Studies using neuro-imaging have found that trauma survivors show a right hemisphere (which is involved in attaching emotional significance to experiences) lateralisation of cortical activity while showing no activity in the left hemisphere, indicating that survivors are physiologically prevented both from processing emotional information and speaking or analysing their emotions, which results in hyper-reactivity to stimuli they are exposed to within their environments; in other words, hypervigilance (LeDoux, 1992; Yehuda, Boineau, & Lowy, 2015; Van der Kolk, 2004; Van der Kolk, 2015).

When humans detect perceived risk, this creates physiological stress responses in the body, including increased amygdala activity and neurochemical and hormonal changes (Van der Kolk, 2015). The amygdala connects emotional responses to memory fragments, and uses emotions such as fear to prompt rapid responses to perceived threats. Unlike the neocortex, which also plays a role in emotional responses and attaches memories to specific feelings, the amygdala does not use a cognitive function to logically assess risk, but acts reflexively to direct survival actions. The amygdala and neocortex hold complementary roles in affect monitoring, ensuring that the impulsivity and immediately reactive function of the amygdala is appropriately offset by the slower and more methodical functioning of the neocortex (van der Kolk, 2004). In times of trauma, the emergency state is activated, driven primarily by the amygdala. If the perception of danger is perpetually present, this emergency state can continue to dominate, leaving survivors unable to differentiate between real and imagined danger. Moreover, the mobilising function that this emergency state engenders becomes detrimental when sustained, weakening the sympathetic nervous system and causing the immune system to become suppressed and the body to develop a range of physical symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, sleep problems, aches, and gastrointestinal disturbances (van der Kolk, 2015; Wasco, 2003). The amygdala is believed to increase its responsiveness following perceived threat, causing hypervigilance or overactive startle responses, which precipitate increased stress and anxiety through continual danger assessment. The prefrontal cortex, which usually transmits the message to the amygdala that the threat is contained and flight is no longer needed, is theorised to be damaged by trauma and can no longer fulfil this function in survivors. Some sufferers seek re-activation of this physiological arousal. Tehrani (2004) explains that overstimulation, or the encouraging of intense emotional states, can serve as a temporary coping method as these emotions are powerful, overwhelming, and contribute to a sense of invulnerability that may compensate for feeling continually unsafe or vulnerable. Understanding these responses and the methods employed to manage them becomes crucial when considering the survival-oriented behaviour of individuals subject to prolonged or repetitive traumatic experiences, as will be demonstrated throughout the findings and discussion chapters.

While trauma is a central consideration to distress tolerance and emotional equilibrium (and, therefore, to understanding distress-driven behaviour), the development of emotional coping during distress can be impacted by factors other than trauma – such as intergenerational impacts of trauma and stress (Yehuda et al., 2015). Caregivers' mental health challenges or use of drugs and alcohol can also inhibit children's development and have residual effects in adulthood. For example, parents' pathological emotional functioning such as the suppression of emotion or depressive symptoms can lead to these being mirrored by children's emotional regulatory patterns, which can in turn inhibit goal-directed behaviour in times of stress (Letcher & Slesnick, 2014; Rutherford, & Gorka, 2014). Specific behaviours or symptoms of caregivers are also likely to elicit particular attachment characteristics in the child; for example, dissociation, negative appraisals, frightening behaviour, and anxiety contribute to the development of disorganised attachment, and these behaviours may also be learned and perpetuated by the child (Nadon, Koverola, & Schulermann, 1998; Putnam, 2006). Moreover, physiological stress responses in parents may activate similar or amplified physiological stress responses in the child (Nadon et al., 1998), often termed 'epigenetics', or the links between individual vulnerability and conditioned patterns of behaviour (Roth, 2013; Yehuda et al., 2015). The biological responses of children to the cortisol production of parents therefore precipitates physiological arousal patterns that are almost immutable (Putnam, 2006), highlighting the essential role of caregivers as regulators of environments that facilitate development of emotional functioning for children. As children develop, the modelling of proximal caregivers then governs their development of self-concept and behavioural norms, which ideally takes place in environments that are emotionally safe and supportive (Syed & Seifge-Kenke, 2013). Inconsistencies in these environments, however, preclude adolescents from being able to integrate their memories and perceptions into meaningful frameworks of understanding, and this challenge is further compounded by the transitory demands of adolescence (Bruce & Mendes, 2008). This is therefore linked to attachment style, which provides the blueprints of relational behaviour and associated beliefs about the self and other, and influences behaviour based on these beliefs – underscoring the nature of transmitted trauma and the consequent disruption to attachment relationships. The evolution of and disruption to attachment patterns is therefore discussed next.

2.2.3. Attachment

Dodsworth (2012) looked at sexually exploited young people's emotional and social well-being, and found a range of attitudes and social functioning linked to attachment style. Attachment theory originated with Bowlby (1982a; 1982b), who theorised that children developed their beliefs about self, other, and relationships between self and other by means of repetitious interactions with their parents or caregivers. Attachment theory is therefore a crucial framework for making sense of how experiences in early childhood are perceived and integrated into frameworks of understanding (Dodsworth, 2012). According to Bowlby's (1982a; 1982b) theory, the transfer of knowledge that occurs between babies and parents is essential for survival, and that working models about self, other, and self-other dyads are predominantly constructed within the first 12 months of a child's life, thereafter dictating children's expectations of relational experiences (Collins, Welsh, & Furman, 2009). According to attachment theory, infants use the 'data' they perceive from parents' and caregivers' consistency in their relationships with them as the foundation for two internal working models: the

parents' reliability as a source of protection and support, and the worthiness of self to be a recipient of that protection and support (Dodsworth, 2012).

Attachment is first and foremost classified as secure or insecure. Secure attachment refers to the process through which children develop positive views of both self and other. On the other hand, insecure attachments often manifest through anxiety and/or avoidance as a by-product of the negative view of self and/or a negative view of other (Letcher & Slesnick, 2014). Bowlby (1982a; 1982b) evaluated the attachment styles of infants by having the infant and parent interact, and then removing parents from infants' proximity and observing their responses, followed by reuniting parent and child and observing infants' reaction to the reunion. There are consequently three aspects to infants' positive attachment style according to Bowlby's theory: emotional connection to and dependence on the parent (as the figure of attachment), positive emotional reactions to the return of the parent, and evident distress at separation from the parent (Putnam, 2006).

Attachment, and levels of self-esteem associated with it, are also believed to be associated with patterns that are either adaptive or disruptive, and thereby linked to pathological personality development (Bowlby & Robertson, 1969). Bowlby argued that if parents are unresponsive to a child, the child would interpret that as being inherently unlovable by any figure of attachment. Similarly, children who are consistently shown love interpret this as them being worthy of love, and consequently anticipate love in future attachment relationships (Bowlby, 1982a; 1982b). Ultimately, these early working models act as the moderators of children's developing self-concept (Bowlby, 1982a). As parents' appraisals are the most powerful messages for children because of both their proximity and their role as arbiter in children's knowledge development, these are absorbed as further data to integrate into working models of self and other. The power of these appraisals is dependent on the frequency with which they are given, their consistency of content, and what meanings can be interpreted from them. Negative feedback from a proximal appraiser that is both continuous and consistent causes the child to develop almost unalterable negative self-perception (Gergen, 1971).

Bowlby's initial classification into insecure and secure attachment styles was then expanded by Bartholomew and Horowitz (2002), who believed there were four distinct styles of attachment: secure, fearful-avoidant, preoccupied, or dismissive-avoidant. Fearful-avoidant denotes the attachment pattern where children have negative internal models of both themselves and others. A preoccupied attachment style refers to the negative internal model of self, but positive model of others. Finally, children with a dismissive-avoidant attachment style are those with a positive understanding of self, but negative working model of others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 2002). Putnam (2006) proposed an additional category labeled disorganised attachment or type D attachment, which comprises a set of behavioural patterns commonly found in abused children. Children exhibiting a disorganised attachment style have typically had inconsistent caregivers and consequently unpredictable boundaries and reduced emotional intimacy with parents (Fredlund, Svensson, Svedin, Priebe, & Wadsby, 2013). Common traits in these children include low academic achievement, low self-esteem, cognitive immaturity, and dissociation (Putnam, 2006). Cognitive models are closely associated with these outcomes and are affected by individual patterns of attachment; for example, those with negative working models about self (fearful-avoidant or preoccupied attachment) more commonly use negative self-descriptions (Shaw & Dallos, 2005; Witten-Hannah, 2001).

Children's reliance on parental guidance and soothing is reduced as they enter adolescence, and is instead typically supplemented with increased reliance on peer relationships, the development of romantic relationships, and diversification in their patterns of attachment (Scharf & Maysleless, 2007). This erodes the protection offered by the presumed 'secure base' of primary attachment with family members and renders children more vulnerable to external influence, but also serves an evolutionary function by promoting autonomy and interest in extra-familial connections. The increasing variety of types of attachment is integral to understanding how methods of recruitment that are premised on apparent attachment relationships wield such power. The beliefs of and feedback from peers, including experiences of stigmatisation or social exclusion, are then integrated into their working models of self, influencing their expectations about their future selves (Prince, 2013). On the other hand, the formation of attachments with a diverse range of figures may also act as protective during periods of stress, where there is a wider range of figures from whom to draw emotional support. In addition, for children whose primary attachment figures are potentially unstable sources of support, this decentralisation of emotional responsiveness may result in validation-seeking being less risky (Shaw & Dallos, 2005). Adolescence is also characterised by a peak in conflict frequency and in conflict intensity between young people and their parents or caregivers, and by heightened sensitivity to perceived rejection (Collins & Steinberg, 2006; Scharf, Maysleless, & Kivenson-Baron, 2004). This, however, presents a significant pathway to vulnerability when relationships with primary caregivers are perceived as non-protective, and alternative sources of apparent love and protection are sought.

Attachment is closely associated with adolescent identity. Socialisation with peers forms an important part of this, and is believed to have a bidirectional relationship to self-esteem and self-knowledge: socialisation abets the healthy indexing of personal memories and therefore contributes to past-present consistency of self, which in turn improves knowledge of self and, consequently, the ability to form emotionally meaningful social bonds with peers (Shaw & Dallos, 2005; Thorne & Michaelieu, 1996). While these peer bonds may lack the assumed stability of the attachment with proximal caregivers developed in early childhood, they contribute towards the development of young people's blueprints for structuring reciprocal relationships of choice, which are then replicated in mature adult relationships (Scharf & Maysleless, 2007). Moreover, the influence of attachment style on adolescent behaviour has been a specific focus of research. Sexual decision-making, for example, is impacted by attachment style, with avoidant (negative view of others) adolescents motivated to have sex to fit in with peers, and anxious (negative view of self) adolescents are motivated to have sex as a method of seeking security and emotional responsiveness (Letcher & Slesnick, 2014), and may also contribute to expectations of partners (including exploitative partners) during this time. Attachment, and attachment theory, therefore relates to many aspects of social behaviour relevant to potential victim-abuser dyads; namely, the valuing of the self and the setting of expectations regarding what constitutes affection and security, the formation of self-perception and vulnerability to external influence, the seeking of diversified figures of attachment, and the potential for acceptance of unpredictable relationship behaviour. This, then, is closely associated with recruitment, entrapment, and victimisation during trafficking, as we consider next.

2.3. Trafficking Dynamics

2.3.1. Entrapment

Vulnerability through trauma and disrupted attachment can be directly associated with the contextual characteristics of trafficking; in particular, the potential to be recruited and entrapped into a trafficking situation. I use the term 'entrapment' to denote the processes through which continued adherence to the abusers' directives is effected. In this section, I begin by discussing the nature and exhibition of coercive control, followed by survival-oriented responses such as trauma bonding, and then conclude with a summary of research supporting arguments for behaviour such as appeasement strategies.

Copious parallels have been identified between the coercive relationships inherent in intimate partner violence and those in trafficking. In both situations, the victim is isolated; manipulated through fear and lack of exposure to alternative realities; and controlled physically and psychologically (Bullard, 2011; Farley, 2003; Kennedy, Klein, Bristowe, Cooper, & Yuille, 2007). Coercive control often manifests in abusers' strategies of intimidation, emotional abuse, coercion into activities, and threats of violence to the victim or their family (Kelly & Johnson, 2006). It does not always entail physical violence; rather, it is often perpetrated through psychological means that induce anxiety, fear, loss of self-esteem, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (Chang, 1996). These methods of coercive control can become enmeshed within every facet of the victim's life, such as their economic power, relationships with family and peers, ability to work, and their sexuality. The intermittent or threatened use of violence increases the efficacy of these methods. For example, abusers might conduct surveillance of victims' homes, workplaces, and forms of communication, and determine victims' styles of dress, diets, and sleep routines (Ludsin & Vetten, 2005). Obedience may be secured through various combinations of deprivation of the necessary tools for social inclusion and participation in society, the micro-regulation of the victim's activities and movements, and the denial of independence of thought or access to support that may enable autonomous judgment (Stark, 1995). Forced engagement in sexual activities often features in situations of coercive control, as this both shows dominance and simultaneously degrades victims, making them more pliable (Kelly & Johnson, 2006). Ludsin and Vetten (2005) state that:

Coercive control theory explains many features of abusive relationships that puzzle people—such as the woman's loyalty and attachment to her partner in the face of her great fear of him. It illustrates how these features exist not only in situations of domestic violence but also in other situations where people are held captive (p. 75).

The three key components of coercive control can thus be seen as intimidation, isolation, and control (Stark, 1995). Victims of coercive control may require a great deal more support than simply safety planning and injury treatment, due to the multi-dimensional and insidious nature of the techniques used to ensure cooperation, which, as demonstrated above, include physiological, psychological, emotional, behavioural, and relational components. Ultimately, coercive control causes victims' sense of self to fragment, and their identities to become reliant on the abuser's projections (Ludsin & Vetten, 2005).

Coercive control in its extreme form may trigger trauma bonding; in other words, the attachment that some victims form with their abusers in situations where the victim-perpetrator relationships are characterised by fear, violence, and gratitude. This has been likened to the process through which

methods to facilitate dependence, such as violence, affection, and degradation, lead to the set of behaviours termed 'Stockholm Syndrome' in victims (Jordan et al., 2013), arguably a popular construction of specific situations of trauma bonding. This bond, once established, may be used to accustom girls to gradually worsening degradation scenarios with clients, after which 'normative' perceptions of bodily sovereignty and sexual integrity become distorted. Degradation and violence also function as mediators of victims' feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness; accordingly, exposure to degrading or physically abusive situations reduce self-efficacy and therefore victims' efforts to leave (Dorais & Corriveau, 2009).

The term 'Stockholm Syndrome' was coined in response to a hostage situation that occurred at the *Kreditbanken* in Stockholm, Sweden in 1973 and lasted six days. Researchers observed that after being released, the hostages paradoxically showed signs of emotional attachment to their captors, and defended their actions (Carver, 2011). It was then theorised that identification with perpetrators of violence is enacted in hostage situations as a defensive mechanism, because it reduces the threat of further violence to the victims (Kelly & Johnson, 2006). In short, Stockholm Syndrome features identical indicators to those related to trauma bonding - the construct that appears preferred and much more commonly utilised in the literature, and which, arguably unlike the popularised construct of Stockholm Syndrome, has been empirically validated.

Trauma bonding can flourish within situations where there is perceived threat to survival, perceptions of 'small kindnesses' by abusers, isolation from any perspectives other than the abuser's, and the perception that escape is impossible and/or futile (Carver, 2011). Perceived threat might be direct, indirect, or witnessed, and victims may believe that violence will be carried out if they do not comply. These threats may be extremely subtle – for instance, alluding to previous victims who have disappeared, or how revenge has been exacted (De Fabrique, Romano, Vecchi, & van Hasselt, 2007). Furthermore, trauma bonding is not maladaptive in nature; rather, it improves the likelihood of victims' survival. However, in order to maximise these chances of survival, it compels victims' focus on the needs and responses of their abusers, rather than their own honest responses to risk and danger (De Fabrique et al, 2007). To elicit favourable treatment from abusers, victims must develop traits that are desirable to them, such as dependency, passivity, compliance, and suppression of their own motives, reactions, and thoughts. Victims then generate methods of securing approval to ensure survival, which may include denial of their own cognitive-emotional responses, viewing the abuser with both fear and fondness, adherence to the abuser's perspective, and overemphasis on occasional kind behaviours, to the exclusion of consideration of their brutality (Fuselier, 1999).

As indicated by this description of victim behaviour when confronted with abuse threatening to survival, the relationship between experiences objectively deemed traumatic, the onset of trauma symptoms, and the development of trauma bonding within perpetrator-victim relationships can appear paradoxical. Explanations of the psychological processes facilitating trauma bonding have featured identification with aggressors, and adherence to their desired traits; correspondingly, victims may regress and respond to abusers in a manner identical to that of a child with a violent parent (Auerbach, Kiesler, Strentz, Schmidt, & Serio, 1994). Additionally, the changes to thought patterns and suppression of objective analyses of risk suggest the presence of cognitive dissonance among victims, enabling victims to separate their cognitions to align with survival and suppress those not

conducive to this goal (Carver, 2011). Experimental testing of trauma bonding has been undertaken simulated captivity experiments, using the interpersonal dimensions of control and affiliation (Auerbach et al., 1994); however, the conditions necessary to evoke such responses are difficult to ethically test in artificial conditions; accordingly, little laboratory-based testing (or other artificial replication) of trauma bonding dynamics is evidenced in the literature.

Much of the research into the hypothesised antecedents (specifically, brainwashing and hostage responses) to traumatic bonding took place from the 1940s to 1970s, and showed that sensory deprivations involving fatigue, disorientation regarding place and time, and silence are influential in facilitating susceptibility to 'brainwashing' (Heron, 1957; Zubeck, 1969). Humans naturally seek out cortical stimulation from multiple sources (Moruzzi & Magoun, 1949), and trafficking situations, like other hostage situations, often employ sensory deprivation techniques by restricting interpersonal contact and freedom of movement. Accordingly, McKenzie (1981) after analysing 100 hostage incidents, concluded that traumatic bonding is "a normal process of bonding accelerated by severe conditions coupled with attitude change resulting from an inability to refute arguments" (p. 11).

Appeasement may co-occur with trauma bonding or discretely as a response to fear. In situations of risk, humans are programmed to react defensively: to avoid, to fight, to flee, or to freeze. However, when traumatic entrapment occurs, avoidance, withdrawal, and aggression are impossible or dangerous, leaving appeasement as the only viable option (Cantor, 2005; Price, Sloman, Garber, Gilbert, & Rhode, 1994). Cantor (2005) explains that:

Appeasement comprises pacification, conciliation and submission... If trapped subordinate individuals under serious threats from dominants attempted to use withdrawal or aggressive defense they would escalate the risks. Appeasement serves a deescalating function. Subordinates using appeasement suspend efforts to win the contests, but thereby decrease the costs of losing. (p. 379).

Primates' behaviour can yield important insight into how affiliated tendencies have developed in humans, and how these are ingrained within situations of coercive control (Cantor, 2005). Monkeys, for example, seek comfort from their aggressors after an attack, rather than other members of their group (Chance, 1988). Correspondingly, chimpanzees demonstrate affiliative behaviour between the aggressor and the attacked after combat, which assuages their post-conflict anxiety (Aureli & De Waal, 2000). Moreover, the aggressor, after accepting and soothing the attacked, later replicates threatening behaviour, causing the attacked to have additional physiological arousal, and reinforcing the traumatic bond between dominant and subordinate (De Waal, 1988). Animals display a range of appeasement actions, such as reducing their size (kneeling, or cowering,) or portraying themselves as weak and non-threatening (Price, Garder, & Eriksen, 2004) – indicating that behaviour resembling helplessness and submission is considered to reduce actual threat, and is therefore highly relevant to victims trapped in situations where threat is detected. These behaviours are inherently motivated by the emotion of fear, which elicits defensive strategies, and the emotion of shame, which shows the victim is non-threatening to the abuser (Keltner, Young, & Buswell, 1997; Shalev, 1996). Such examination of appeasement behaviour, however, has (like exploration of trauma bonding phenomena) arisen from negative analyses of trauma and thus precludes consideration of the ways in which resistance and agency may still be exercised. This will consequently be discussed in later

chapters.

2.3.2. Role of intermediaries

Within these social structures, and the accordant survival behaviour associated with them, there is significant scope of proximal others to take on the role of abuser to exploit victims. While there is not a uniform narrative within the literature regarding the exploitation of young people, abuse through trafficking within a domestic context is typically facilitated either by caregivers or by men fulfilling a 'boyfriend' role, either as part of a wider gang or individually (Dorais & Corriveau, 2009; Reid & Jones, 2011; Reid, 2014). When children and young people are domestically trafficked by a parent or caregiver, the attachment desire may further preclude them from being able to recognise the exploitative nature of the relationship and from being able to escape such situations (Smith et al., 2009). However, there are minimal studies on caregiving trafficking relationships in Western countries. Much more commonly analysed is the development of a 'relationship' between young victim and adult abuser that poses as a romantic partnership before the abuser introduces force or coercion (Brayley et al., 2011).

Despite the relative breadth of information available regarding the methods used to recruit young people, there is minimal literature that discusses the mechanisms through which they feel compelled to stay despite opportunities for escape, support, or assistance. Reid (2012) found that, unlike in other studies, girls she interviewed disclosed that traffickers used a strategy whereby they positioned themselves as 'allies' against authority figures in the girls' lives, securing their loyalty, which she argues was instrumental in sustaining their support for their abusers. However, other authors argue that entrapment in these situations mirrors that witnessed in other manifestations of coercive control relationships, such as with domestic and sexual violence. Parallels between domestic violence and sex trafficking include the insidious development of the perpetrator's power and control over the victim, and corresponding tactics such as various manifestations of abuse, financial constraints and isolation, grooming, manipulation of victims' self-perception (for instance, that they are 'crazy'), and positioning themselves as the sole source of both affection and potential for safety (Busch, Fong, & Williamson, 2004). The establishment of such a power differential will typically follow a pattern - beginning with the perpetrator presenting as charming and trustworthy, giving of gifts and other methods of 'cherishing', followed by systematic introduction of mistreatment and simultaneous cutting of bonds with family and friends, and then physical, psychological, and sexual abuse that erodes self-esteem and prevent attempts to escape (Busch et al., 2004). In this way, they 'groom' children similar to grooming seen in situations of child sexual abuse, where the trusting alliance is betrayed by increasingly demeaning or abusive acts (Sher, 2011; Smith et al, 2009).

Intermediaries such as gang members or boyfriends are therefore frequently instrumental in facilitating girls' dependence, and their subsequent immersion in trafficking – illustrating that the underlying methods of entrapment (the meeting of physical and emotional needs) are then instrumentalised via attachment vulnerability. To understand how this vulnerability is transformed into a mechanism for entrapment thus requires some understanding of the context in which the intermediary is operating. Despite some attention globally about the roles of and impacts to women within gang cultures (see, for example, Dorais & Corriveau, 2009; Kolb & Palys, 2016), there is limited literature available within New Zealand. Two theses in particular, and their authors' subsequent publications, stand out as the

exceptions to this. The first is Glennis Dennehy's (2000) Master's thesis titled *Troubled journeys: an analysis of women's reality experience within New Zealand gangs*, which she then used as the basis for a co-authored book. Dennehy, as a survivor of violence at the hands of a gang-affiliated partner, explored the stories of women who had been involved with gang life (spanning seven different gangs) and were now separated from it. Her thesis found that despite women often being deeply entrenched within various functions of gangs, they typically entered the gang scene from a position of marginalisation engendered by childhood exposure to violence, and sought protection from 'powerful' gang members, who eventually became abusive toward them. This violence was largely normalised and viewed as an inevitable aspect of femaleness (Dennehy, 2000). Jarrod Gilbert's (2010) doctoral thesis, followed by his acclaimed book *Patched*, later provided an overview both of the inception of gang culture and of the impacts of various policies on gangs' organisation, profile, and function. However, despite the thoroughness of both theses, neither included a focus on the use of women for trafficking.

As seen in international literature, entrapment through intermediaries such as gang members or boyfriends can occur through the process of 'love-bombing', where gang members or boyfriends induce the girls to trust and love them by declaring their affection, love, or promises of protection, giving gifts, and then systematically subjecting them to increasingly degrading situations until the girls become accustomed to forced and exploitative sexual exchanges (Dorais & Corriveau, 2009). Several models have been developed to illustrate the progression of this treatment by abusers as constituting entrapment. In the United Kingdom, the organisation Barnardo's noted the increasing rates of clients affected by gang-facilitated forced prostitution of young people, and developed a 'grooming model' to denote the process through which young people were being induced into prostitution. According to this model, recruitment begins with the stage of professing love and offering gifts, excitement, and escape, and culminates in victims being entirely emotionally, physically, and financially dependent on abusers, (Pearce, 2009). Similarly, Chase and Statham's (2005) theory comprised of four stages; namely, ensnaring young people through emotional attachment and affection, isolating them from families and communities, progressively increasing control over the girls' lives, and assuming total dominance. Finally, the 'exposure model' proposed by Cobbina and Oselin (2011) is premised on the theory that most young girls involved with underage sex work are inducted into the work by male intermediaries, who exploit their emotional vulnerability and then demand that they sell sex for money. The congruence between these models suggests growing consensus of the role of the 'boyfriend' recruiter and the power of the prospect of protective love.

These models indicate that children and adolescents may be drawn toward (generally male, either adolescent or adult) gang figures as a means of obtaining protection, especially in contexts of unstable family environments, and this often leads to girls being coerced into group rape situations or sex with other gang members. They may then compel the girls to prostitute to earn money for the gang (Smith et al., 2009). Recruitment into an organised situation of trafficking may be preceded by a period of 'survival sex', where runaways who do not have access to basic necessities exchange these for sexual acts and are subsequently positioned as property and used to generate income for others (Birkhead, 2011; Smith et al., 2009). Inducement by intermediaries into sex work can fall on a continuum, ranging from encouragement to violence or blackmail, and may use deception, emotional connection, addiction, authority, threats of violence, or financial bondage to secure victims'

cooperation (Birckhead, 2011; Cobbins & Oselin, 2011; Ennew, 1986; Kennedy et al., 2007; Lukman, 2011). This intermediary inducement appears consistent in research findings across a lengthy time-span, and has significant implications for engagement with victims – identification with abusers and continued subjective primacy of abusers' positive regard pose barriers to fostering more accurate re-appraisal of abusive dynamics (Kennedy et al., 2007; Lukman, 2011). The exploitation that then occurs has far-reaching impacts on victims, and we now turn our attention to the nature and breadth of these impacts, how victims being exploited might be identified, and the challenges of considering 'choice' in a context where constraints to autonomy (at both individual and structural levels) are manifold.

2.4. Exploitation

2.4.1. Impacts

Above, I have explored the preconditions that give rise to vulnerability to trafficking and the pathways through which victims are recruited; in short, the 'before' factors in the organising framework of temporality as it applies to victims' experiences. Now, I consider the impacts that result from the 'during' stage of this trajectory, including the physical, the emotional, and behavioural, and the social/relational. Based on studies into victims' health after escaping trafficking situations, a number of injuries appeared to be common impacts from either victim-abuser or victim-client interactions, including broken bones, lacerations, head injuries, and vaginal or anal trauma or tearing, and injuries may become infected if they are unable to seek medical attention (Judge & Murphy, 2011; Stark & Hodgson, 2003; Stotts & Ramey, 2009;). Moreover, continuous sexual abuse, and particularly sexual acts without condoms, lead to further medical concerns, including HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. (Dozydaitis, 2009; Stotts & Ramey, 2009; Zimmerman et al., 2008). Pregnancy is sometimes forced in order to encourage dependence (Williams, 2007), (Dovydaitis, 2010; Zimmerman et al., 2008), however it is unknown to what extent this is true of domestic, disorganised forms of trafficking.

In addition to these physical outcomes, the array of experiences consistent with complex trauma such as trafficking has inimical outcomes on all aspects of psychological functioning (Zimmerman, Hossain, & Watts, 2011). Past research has found that while some symptoms begin to present while the victim is still trapped within the trafficking situation, others are likely to emerge within the weeks following escape (Reid, 2015; Reid, 2016; Stotts & Ramey, 2009; Zimmerman et al., 2011). Anxiety disorders are the most prevalent of these effects, and manifest at varying levels (Hossain et al., 2010) Correspondingly, survivors have described compulsions, obsessive thinking, shaking, breathlessness, extreme fear, and avoidance of situations likely to precipitate panic attacks (Hossain et al, 2010; Tsutsumi et al., 2008). The second most prevalent diagnosis is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Hopper & Hidalgo, 2006; Hossain et al., 2010; United States Department Health and Human Services, 2010; Zimmerman et al., 2011). Trafficking victims are more likely to develop PTSD than other types of victims, due to the multiple and intersecting forms of abuse they are typically subjected to, which compound the effects of a single type of victimisation (Hossain et al., 2010; United States Department Health and Human Services, 2010; Zimmerman et al., 2011). Practitioners believe symptoms begin to present within three months of escape. Depression is believed to occur in 25.8 to 95 percent of victims (Hossain et al., 2010; United States Department of Health and Human Services,

2010a). Dissociation is also common, but extent and time of presentation varies significantly between victims (Courtois, 2008; Hossain et al., 2010). However, while such 'disorder' labels are frequently ascribed to victims and are presumably closely associated with the cognitive-emotional and psychological experiencing of trauma, such 'symptoms' are likely to overlap, be nonspecific in origin, and be difficult to attribute to discrete causes – accordingly, diagnoses should be regarded as only one way of categorising pathways out of trauma (Zimmerman et al., 2011).

Both personal and societal beliefs may prohibit victims from being able to identify their experiences as abusive either to themselves or to others. Women who are assaulted (particularly if the assault is sexual in nature) are often reluctant to report the assault due to the belief that it will not be taken seriously (Roxburg et al., 2006). These impacts may then be aggravated by societal or peer norms that implicitly sanction the abuse or violence, and therefore preclude the trauma from being recognised as abusive and therefore as an acceptable cause of distress (McMillan, 2013).

PTSD is commonly found in the literature as a documented impact of trafficking or sexual exploitation. The diagnostic criteria for PTSD encompasses repeated intrusive memories, flashbacks, or dreams that replay visual or auditory elements of the trauma; heightened emotional distress and/or physiological arousal occurring after exposure to stimuli associated with the traumatic experience; avoidance of potential stimuli associated with the traumatic experience; problems with emotional regulation, such as feeling depressed or numb; and disruptions to memory, interpersonal relationships, concentration, and the expression of affect (American Psychiatric Association, 2015). In addition to these symptoms, to meet the diagnostic criteria sufferers must also have perceived a threat to their lives or physical integrity, or have experienced equivalent levels of horror or fear (APA, 2015).

Criticism that these criteria overlook the subjective experiences of sexual violence, which are often shaped by societal messages about sexuality and blame and consequently result in significant cognitive-emotional impacts that are not adequately captured by the symptomatology set out (Wasco, 2003), led to adjustment of the criteria in partial recognition of these impacts (APA, 2015). The expanded criteria recognise the impacts of trauma on belief systems about 'self' and 'other', which, following trauma, frequently undergo disruption as survivors call into question their deepest senses of identity and safety (APA, 2015). These impacts are particularly relevant for survivors of complex trauma. Differentiated from PTSD in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) classification system but not included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM), the notion of 'complex trauma' diverges from single-incident experiencing of trauma in that trauma events are prolonged or repetitive, and psychological sequelae includes affect, self-concept, and emotional disturbances (Cloitre et al., 2013). These cognitive-emotional effects may prove influential in subsequent decision-making and therefore exposure to further harm, as levels of risk-taking escalate in direct proportion to declining perceptions of the intrinsic value of self (Ayre & Barrett, 2000).

While susceptibility to developing PTSD varies significantly between individuals, people trapped within sexually exploitative situations are more likely to exhibit clusters of risk factors that increase susceptibility, such as adaptive coping strategies developed through positive role modelling, traumatic dissociation prior to exposure to additional traumatic experiences, and negative self-perception (McNally, Bryant, & Ehlers, 2003). In addition, social stressors commonly faced by trafficking victims, such as homelessness, involuntary transience, addiction, and a lack of enduring socially supportive

relationships, may preclude recovery from traumatic experiences (Briere, 2006) and exacerbate the negative impacts of trauma on mental health when it does occur.

2.4.2. Identification

Given the range of impacts that victims may experience, identifying and responding appropriately to victims can be inherently problematic. Traumatic effects, attachment desires and disruptions, and psycho-social needs may collude to prevent presentation to services or to investigators. The 'during' stage of victimisation, and the social conditions that allow this to go unnoticed, are arguably equally as relevant as the resultant effects. I therefore set out below various approaches to victim identification and initial response.

Victims are identified primarily through reporting following presentation to medical services (Clawson & Goldblatt Grace, 2007). However, given that Aotearoa has no screening in place for trafficking victims, this is unlikely to be the case here. When medical screening is implemented, it includes assessing for sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, and other illness correlates of trafficking, and should be delivered by specially trained, sensitive doctors and nurses, and ideally also with local emergency departments or accident and emergency clinics (Clawson & Goldblatt Grace, 2007; Hossain et al., 2010). However, without screening, and the sufficient training to administer it, victim identification and appropriate treatment is far less likely.

Context-specific discursive tensions are also inextricably linked to the appropriate classification – or otherwise – of victims of trafficking, and this is principally related to the problematic conflation of terms described in chapter one. The use of language to denote situations can be instrumental in assigning culpability (Schmidt, 2014). Victims can be mislabelled by both themselves and others through the terms 'sex worker' or 'prostitute', which imply consent or choice where in reality a victim is being forced or coerced into participation in sexual acts by a trafficker or abuser (Birckhead, 2011). It is argued that language and social perception are unavoidably intertwined; correspondingly, the use of the term 'sex worker' conveys a perception of a sexual transaction as being driven by two parties with equal power, and engenders a set of assumptions that create misleading and often subjectively derogatory perceptions of the trafficked person's involvement (Goddard, 2005). Use of the term 'sex worker' in popular discourse to refer to situations where there is a lack of bargaining power for one party, such as in the case of trafficking, unfairly conveys moral judgment and minimises the abusive nature of the transaction (Whibly, 2001). Accordingly, use of the word 'client' in these situations lends false legitimacy to the transaction (Goddard, 2005). This social perception can also unfairly disadvantage legitimate sex workers who are working by choice, and can impute notions of victimhood onto those exercising their choice to participate in the sex industry. In these contexts, the term 'victim' negates this potential for agency, and ignores or marginalises sex workers' use of social and transactional power.

2.5. Responding and Intervening

2.5.1. Considering intervention: scope of practice considerations

Having discussed the difficulties in attempting to disrupt the 'during' stage of victimisation through trafficking, I now turn the reader's attention to the 'after' – victims' needs from services once the nature of the abuse is discovered. Examination of such services assists in contextualising participants'

experiences of accessing services, and enables identification of barriers to service access, service gaps, and service delivery issues as they relate to specific dynamics or experiences pertaining to this type of victimisation. This section consequently covers four core aspects of service provision: attending to immediate needs, the uptake and benefits of multi-agency initiatives in other jurisdictions, the current lack of a uniform and validated treatment approach, and the psychotherapeutic needs that require consideration when designing therapeutic intervention, and the principal barriers that individually or in combination act to preclude either service availability or uptake.

2.5.2. Immediate needs

Attending to presenting risk and possible medical needs must take precedence for helpers; however, the possibility of pursuing a criminal justice system pathway should also be considered by helpers at all stages. Guidelines in the United States recommend that victims' initial explanation and subsequent explanations for injuries, descriptions of injuries and photos should be documented by all helping staff, and the victims' languaging used to explain the injuries also documented, in addition to whether injuries are consistent with explanations given by victims (American College of Emergency Physicians, 1999; Isaac & Enos, 2001). Schmidt (2014), however, interviewed clinicians currently working with victims of trafficking (predominantly in residential programmes) and found that they considered physical safety to be the immediate priority. Residential shelters are the most common form of assistance offered to victims, and the shelter model generally includes a range of services, beginning with the most immediate need of safe secure accommodation and then including activities and characteristics designed to rehabilitate and reintegrate victims (Surtees, 2008). Clawson and Goldblatt Grace (2007) emphasised the importance of there being a safe haven for victims, stating: "It was stressed that the future safety and stability of this vulnerable population of girls rests on our ability to provide a home in which they can recover from the trauma of their trafficking situation and be given a chance at a new life free from exploitation" (p. 11). Shelters help to address both immediate danger regarding physical safety, and the emotional risks that are associated with leaving intensely traumatic situations. Correspondingly, Zimmerman et al (2006) found that victims who had been in a shelter reported having access to significantly more services, and to services that were much more appropriate for their experiences, than victims who had not. However, it should be acknowledged that these practice guidelines have predominantly been developed in contexts where victims have often been moved across international or state borders, may not have legal status, and may represent a range of cultural norms that are not transferable to victims in Aotearoa.

2.5.3. Multi-agency systems

In this 'after' stage of victims' temporal experiences of the progression through recruitment, victimisation, and survival/recovery, they may have complex needs that cannot be served by single-system interventions. As demonstrated above, the literature into intervention for victims shows consensus in regarding immediate needs as the priority for interveners. However, authors researching the effectiveness of such services also note that follow up and wrap-around services are imperative for ensuring sustained engagement. Australia (arguably our more comparable nation given its relative geographical isolation from neighbouring countries) has a range of government-funded initiatives that ensure victims have access to a range of support pathways. This is predominantly accessed through Red Cross Australia, which is funded to offer emergency accommodation, individual case-

management that provides social support, advice on legal avenues, financial assistance, and help with accessing longer-term psycho-social support (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2009).

Other jurisdictions have programmes that incorporate:

- basic needs;
- life skills and training programmes;
- youth development programmes;
- education;
- family reunification;
- intensive case management where victims are paired up with staff with the aim of optimising relational development by modelling healthy, supportive relationships; and
- collaboration between agencies such as sexual violence services, counselling providers, social workers, and police. This last component is incorporated with the goal of meeting victims' needs for safety, empowerment, education, and participation in the justice system, provided that the coalitions devote sufficient resources to developing and exchanging information about best practice for this population (Busch-Armendariz et al., 2009; Clawson & Goldblatt Grace, 2007).

At present, no such system exists for domestic survivors of trafficking in Aotearoa, despite such theoretical provisions being made (though solely involving governmental agencies) for international victims of trafficking in Aotearoa's 2009 Plan of Action to Combat People Trafficking (Department of Labour, 2009).

Multi-disciplinary systems that are utilised for domestic violence and sexual violence can also be instituted for suspected trafficking cases, but may need to actively integrate trafficking situations into their operating agreements and protocols, including their Memoranda of Understanding with other agencies, such as police, child protection agencies, and social services (USDHHS, 2010). For instance, the tripartite model often used for sexual assault and comprising medical care, specialist policing teams, and immediate mental health crisis support (such as that currently operating for sexual assault in Aotearoa) is effective in facilitating timely and competent care for victims (Campbell & Patterson, 2011), and could potentially be adapted to respond effectively to victims of trafficking. Similarly, screening initiatives for domestic violence or sexual violence may be adapted to include indicators of trafficking, and, as with victims of any type of interpersonal violence, such screening should be conducted in private rooms, away from any support person present (irrespective of gender) in case they are involved with the trafficking operation and inhibit the victim from speaking freely (Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement, 2006).

These approaches, however, require both intervener motivation and specific helper attributes to be successful. Given the uniqueness of this population group, training for all staff likely to encounter survivors of trafficking is paramount and should encompass sensitive questioning, understanding of common dynamics and traumatic effects, and systems knowledge. It is essential that helpers differentiate between sex workers (voluntary) and victims (forced) even if this boundary line seems arbitrary to the victim (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2009). One practitioner commented that: "these girls require staff to be real, use lots of humour, have street credibility, and be able to

compassionately confront their behaviours without judgment” (Clawson & Goldblatt Grace, 2007, p. 9). In addition, there is a risk of compassion fatigue, burnout, and vicarious traumatisation. Schmidt (2014) recommends hiring staff that have experience providing trauma-informed care, are comfortable working with high-risk populations, can set interpersonal boundaries, communicate compassion, discuss trauma, use supervision effectively, and can identify personal limits and implement strategies to mitigate these risks. Helpers should also understand and protect the rights of trafficked people by being familiar with the legislation specifying what constitutes trafficking-related crimes, including servitude, debt bondage, age of consent for providing sexual services, and deception or coercion into sexual services; the legislative provisions around visas for international victims of trafficking, and eligibility for compensation (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2009). Finally, practitioners should have advanced knowledge of trauma and recovery and be prepared for victims to move among these stages, so that they can communicate these stages to victims and empathise with the difficulties of treatment that victims may experience at each stage (Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2017). While these findings collectively constitute a comprehensive guide to building (or selecting) practitioner attributes, each publication assumes a basic level of endorsement from policymakers and consequent resourcing and commitment to interagency initiatives. Literature regarding practitioners working with victims in the absence of access to such supportive contexts, on the other hand, is notably absent.

2.5.4. Designing interventions

The majority of studies referred to in this literature review focus on victims’ presenting needs and presenting outcomes, with few stating the assumptions implicit in their service design or the theoretical constructs utilised (see Judge & Murphy, 2011; Kalergis, 2009; and Schmidt, 2014, for exceptions). As a ‘treatment model’ begins to emerge for treating survivors of trafficking, the emphasis increasingly appears to be on services that are ‘survivor-led’, in recognition of the variance among victims’ experiences (Judge & Murphy, 2011; Kalergis, 2009). Kalergis (2009) argues that survivor mentoring is a promising model of assistance, suggesting that rehabilitated survivors can aid incoming victims. However, participants in Schmidt’s (2014) study recognised that, as with practitioners with lived experience in the addiction and mental health fields, this could be problematic as victims may not have developed the necessary skills or wholly resolved the potential cognitive distortions that initially facilitated their own survival in such situations. They instead proposed that this be offered as a distinct ‘pathway’ after an initial period of treatment (Schmidt, 2014).

In addition to social reintegration and the development of new networks, psychotherapy is widely recognised as a necessary component of intervention. To date, there are no empirically validated psychotherapeutic approaches developed specifically for treating survivors of sex trafficking, despite some evidence validating the effectiveness of specific approaches in this population group (see, for example, Cohen, Mannarino, Kliethermes, & Murray, 2012). Due to the congruence between characteristics inherent in domestic violence (DV) and child sexual abuse (CSA), aspects of treatment modalities such as trauma therapy may have some success with this population group (Busch et al., 2004). However, some of the dynamics specific to trafficking may not be directly transferable to existing treatment paradigms; correspondingly, it is crucial that treatment is survivor-driven and that a lack of positive outcomes be interpreted as indicative of treatment ineffectiveness, rather than reluctance on the victim’s behalf (Schmidt, 2014). Such reluctance may be partially explained by the inhibiting effects of complex trauma, which refers to exposure to abuse over an extended time period,

often involving betrayal of attachment relationships or grooming (Courtois, 2008), and accounts for much of the symptomatology described in earlier sections of this chapter.

Complex trauma has commonly been associated with interpersonal abuse where victimisation is persistent and disclosure may be precluded by the nature of the relationship with the abuser, such as with child sexual abuse or domestic violence (McGregor, 2003; MWA, 2012) and more recently with sexually exploited youth (Bancroft & Silverman, 2002; Cohen et al., 2012), underscoring the paramountcy of prioritising recovery from complex trauma – and on circumventing the barriers to engagement that this poses – in treatment goals for therapy with this population group. Correspondingly, as with other forms of victimisation, particularly those that occur in childhood, shame and humiliation emerged among trafficking victims in treatment as further barriers to effective engagement, with participants in Schmidt's (2014) study stating that to acknowledge such victimisation can cause "a breakdown of the psyche" (p. 89). This is particularly present amongst victims who have been forced to be complicit in the recruitment or mistreatment of others, and should be countered with messages from helping professionals that they are not alone in their experiences, and that they are not at fault for any actions they performed while being coerced (Cohen et al., 2012). This, though, signals an unrealistic expectation unless responders – both law enforcement and therapeutic – are cognisant of the range of abuse dynamics and patterns of coercion that may be enacted within trafficking relationships.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), which is aimed at identifying opportunities for disruption of problematic and interlinked thoughts, emotions, and behaviours (Cohen, Mannarino, & Kinnish, 2017) and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT), which was developed specifically to target symptoms of Borderline Personality Disorder, which often emerged out of disturbances to early childhood attachment development (Görg, Priebe, Böhnke, & Steil, 2017) have both been clinically demonstrated to have some effectiveness in treating individual symptoms. However, more recently multi-modal approaches have been employed (Courtois, 2008; Herman, 1997) to form a more targeted model, focusing on safety, mourning, resolution, and self and relational development. Because of the frequency with which sexual assault victims experience and exhibit symptoms of trauma, immediate mental health responders are typically cognisant of the nature and impacts of trauma; in particular, immediate impacts such as changes in sleep, appetite, energy, and changed perceptions of self-efficacy, safety, and self-worth (Campbell & Patterson, 2011). This knowledge can be similarly employed with trafficking survivors. Cognitive restructuring to challenge perceptions of self-blame, together with relaxation strategies to target the symptoms of anxiety and physiological arousal have been proven to be effective with this group (Bennice & Resick, 2002; Campbell & Patterson, 2011). Typically, on-going treatment will contain an element of cognitive therapy, which seeks to increase self-understanding in how cognitive schemas may enable, support, and ultimately perpetuate cycles of crisis, violence, or associated harm (Petretic-Jackson, Witte, & Jackson, 2002). Further, it involves emphasising individual strengths and redressing the internalised beliefs about the self that are instilled by perpetrators (Petretic-Jackson et al., 2002). There is a particularly notable barrier to the application of these knowledge bases and techniques in Aotearoa, however: as set out in chapter one, there are no established avenues to access first responders specifically for trafficking, and the absence of acknowledgement about the potential for abuse dynamics to be occurring in the context of sex

trafficking may preclude the appropriate interventions being applied. The findings of this thesis may begin to identify potential points of intervention where these models and therapies may be applied.

2.5.5. Barriers to accessing support

Social constraints, including confusion regarding definitions of trafficking and issues with identification, also impede the provision of support (Jordan et al., 2013). In addition, practitioners' expectations about what constitutes victimhood and which victims are considered blameworthy or blameless may influence the potential for help to be provided (Dabby, 2013). In trafficking situations in particular, this boundary line between 'sex workers' and 'victims' may seem ambiguous (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2009).

In addition, circumventing victims' reluctance to engage may constitute a key component of intervention. This may be necessary for a variety of reasons, some of which have been alluded to above in regard to readiness to engage in treatment, structures and service design that make treatment unwelcoming, and the psychological processes that may inhibit the intervention process. In addition to these barriers, many victims (often justifiably) fear violent repercussions from offenders if it becomes known that they are cooperating with law enforcement and are therefore reluctant to give information or to appear as witnesses (Gajic-Veljanoski & Stewart, 2007). Conversely, some trafficked or prostituted girls do not identify as victims of trafficking and attempt to return to their abusers as soon as they escape custody, and these relationships of trauma bonding (and consequent inability to recognise instances of victimisation) preclude the successful identification of victims and prosecution of abusers (Geist, 2012; Reid, 2010). Based on the earlier discussion of definitional issues and the identity constructs inherent in victims' relationships with perpetrators, we can also hypothesise that this is also likely to pose challenges to the effective therapeutic engagement with victims, particularly in the absence of practitioners' knowledge and skills in this area.

Trafficking victims are commonly exploited for a number of years before they either escape or are otherwise removed, and while levels of dependence on traffickers, exposure to abuse, and histories of trauma prior to becoming involved in trafficking vary between victims, the combination of these stressors and consequent patterns of disorganised attachment patterns often result in victims having difficulty trusting others and developing interpersonal boundaries (Yakushko, 2009). Distrust and suspicion may therefore pose additional barriers to the identification of victims and the ability of professionals to develop a working knowledge of victims' situations (Dorais & Corriveau, 2009; Yakushko, 2009). Other emotions that may inhibit alliance-building between victims and prospective helpers may include shame, paranoia, and fear. The implications for this are twofold: they may preclude engagement with helping services or law enforcement (even in the face of overwhelming fear for personal safety), and they prevent the retention of social support, which plays a vital role in contributing to the likelihood of success of mental health interventions (Erez, Ibarra, & McDonald, 2004).

Finally, a key barrier for many victims – and the professionals supporting them – is active addiction. Many survivors of trafficking use substances, despite this being commonly overlooked in analyses of psychotherapeutic approaches to intervention. In some cases, dependence on substances was developed intentionally by traffickers, or used by victims to insulate them from some of the psychological impacts of their 'work' (Stark & Hodgson, 2003; Zimmerman et al., 2011). Survivors may

therefore resist entering a programme that will prevent them from using or eliminate their access to substance suppliers (Schmidt, 2014). The potential for survivors to be addicted needs to be catered for specifically within programmes (Savino & Turvey, 2011; Stark & Hodgson, 2003; Zimmerman et al., 2011), and withdrawal symptoms should be actively and expertly managed from the time of initial presentation to services (Stark & Hodgson, 2003; Yakushko, 2009).

It remains unclear which of these barriers are transferable to an Aotearoa context, and which interventions would be applicable to domestic victims' experiences of trafficking. The introduction of any intervention would need to be predicated on the known experiences of local victims; to understand these, we first need to identify the situations in which trafficking occurs and how this influences victims' experiences. This, and the later theorising of intervention imperatives specific to Aotearoa, is thus one of the explicit purposes of this study.

2.5. Conclusion

Consideration of sex trafficking is inextricably entwined with the way that sex work, victimhood, and trafficking are understood and presented within legislation, helping agencies, and literature. The conflation of terms, combined with the contentious and inherently political nature of identifying boundaries between and within often overlapping terms makes analysis of extant literature that solely applies to victims of forced sex work difficult. Moreover, empirical evidence on aspects of trafficking – such as the methods through which cooperation is maintained and how this is perceived both by victims and bystanders to be voluntary – is lacking. This means other bodies of knowledge, including psychological and biophysical, must be drawn upon in an attempt to identify phenomena that may be pertinent to victimhood and survivorhood. There is an abundance of literature documenting vulnerability factors (despite the lack of clarity regarding the distinctions between forced and consensual sex work); methods of recruitment, although few of these appear immediately relevant to an Aotearoa context; and adverse impacts. It is therefore evident that trafficking involves the exploitation of vulnerabilities based on age, gender, class, race, and social situation; is typically precipitated by other, earlier abuse; is enshrouded by political debate and competing human rights frameworks; is often dependent on physical and psychological methods of ensuring compliance; and is difficult to design effective interventions for due to the myriad complications regarding interpersonal relationships, substance abuse, victim identification, safety considerations, and the realities of ensuring realistic long-term alternatives exist for people who have been subject to intersecting points of marginality.

However, there are rather fewer analyses of treatment approaches that are both empirically validated and specific to this population group, although congruence between abuse experiences across categories of interpersonal violence suggests that some approaches may be transferable, and that both psychosocial and psychotherapeutic interventions are beginning to develop an evidence base. In addition, the multi-agency models and the design of services in other jurisdictions are clearly absent from Aotearoa's (lack of) intervention strategies. The considerations presented here, however, provide a useful backdrop against which to consider participants' experiences of accessing or attempting to access services, and experiencing intervention.

In the following chapter, I explore the challenges inherent in conducting research in a context with socio-politically ambiguous conceptualisations of what constitutes domestic sex trafficking, and set

forth my methods for doing so in a way that maximises the safety of participants while collecting data that may facilitate the development of Aotearoa-specific findings that can be used to develop practice knowledge and inform policy in this area.

3. Methodology and Research Design

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I canvassed the literature relating to domestic sex trafficking, and topics with apparent convergence to this phenomenon, such as the effects of abuse, the physiological and psychological impacts of trauma, and the approaches currently employed to prevent, address, and understand sex trafficking. This literature outlined the multiple loci of marginality often faced by victims in international studies, the range of traumatic experiences and traumatic impacts many face, and best practice approaches internationally – many of which were not immediately transferable to an Aotearoa context. The anticipation of comparable experiences of trauma and marginalisation in particular informed my decisions about research design. In this chapter, I set out how I conducted the research and the rationale behind my epistemological and methodological decisions and how I conducted the research. Specifically, I explain why I have used social constructionism and feminism to underpin the research, the application of narrative inquiry as a guiding methodological paradigm and the dominance of qualitative methods in a mixed-method design, the use of interviews and surveys as methods of data collection, the sampling strategy, and the application of narrative analysis. In addition, I explain how I traversed the challenges inherent in doing sensitive research, including recruitment issues, difficulties with initial contact, and maximising safety.

3.2. Epistemology

3.2.1. Overview

Sexual exploitation through trafficking is a deeply personal experience and occurs in the context of wider societal structures determining power, agency, and opportunity. This research is therefore embedded within social constructionist ideals of lived experience and a focus on meaning-making, and is underpinned by a feminist stance aimed at recognising how power relations – particularly those specific to gender – create and perpetuate situations of sexual victimisation.

3.2.2. Social constructionism

While the true origins of social constructionism are debated in various texts (see Steier, 1991, and Velody & Williams, 1998), Berger and Luckman's (1996) explanation clearly sets out the evolution of social constructionist research, particularly within the academic field of sociology. Their work was premised on the assumption that social realities are individually and collectively constructed, and that, accordingly, the researcher's task was to identify the process through which reality came to be constructed and to provide as accurate as possible description of this constructed reality and its implications (Berger & Luckman, 1996). Their work has been foundational in developing contemporary approaches to conducting social research, as they explicitly situated the exploration of individual and diverse understandings of regular life as a legitimate, and indeed arguably crucial, area of academic inquiry and argument (Berger & Luckman, 1996; Burr, 2003). Moreover, their principal contribution of the empirical process of phenomenological analysis as a method of understanding inter-subjective construction of everyday realities (Berger & Luckman, 1996) was instrumental in facilitating the application of social constructionism to a diverse range of fields and topics.

Beginning from a social constructionist epistemology necessitates the consideration of knowledge and meaning as being contextually situated, and relationally formed (Berger & Luckman, 1996).

Furthermore, it requires analysis of knowledge to be premised on the idea that innate or overarching truth is non-existent; rather, 'truths' are contingent on their subjective historical, cultural, and social bases. It is this conceptualisation of the subjective nature of knowledge and meaning that has been influential in attending to individual recounting of knowledge within the therapeutic endeavour (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Accordingly, there are significant parallels between the use of social constructionism in research and in therapy (Freedman & Combs, 1996). In addition to this structurally informed understanding of 'truth', social constructionist perspectives have evolved to locally constituted meanings and emphasise the role of social relationships on the attribution of meaning to experiences (Smith, Taylor, & Gollop, 2000). While this poses some tensions with feminist analyses that compel the identification of overarching power structures as irrevocably influencing individual experiences, my research has been equally and jointly informed by both theoretical frameworks as assisting the development of essential, if at times divergent, perspectives of experienced social phenomena. This, at times, requires a reflective journal detailing both ways of understanding and privileging each.

As this research is informed by social constructionism, my role included developing an awareness of the context in which the phenomenon being studied is occurring (Darlington & Scott, 2002; Shaw & Gould, 2001), so that I could gain as much insight as possible into the researched perspectives of the individual or group. Moreover, it required me to largely forego the detached diagnostic stance natural to quantitative approaches in favour of a collaborative partnership with the subject(s) of the study (Cardino, 2003). Consequently, both sets of experiences – participants, and my own - form an integral set of data to be considered in the analysis process.

In sum, social constructionism recognises the existence of multiple and subjective realities, which must be co-constructed by the participant and researcher, thereby rejecting the dualism of positivist and post-positivist approaches, and focusing instead on the communication of participants' experiences.

3.3.3. Feminist perspective

While hidden crimes appear to only affect the immediate victims, they have a contamination effect on the community as a whole. Given that trafficking clearly represents a type of gender-based violence as illustrated in the literature review, with perpetrators typically being male and victims typically female and/or children, the use of feminist research methodology is fitting. Feminist research is centred on prioritising the lived experiences of women, and in particular, women whose expression of experiences have historically been silenced (Ezzy, 2002; Oleson, 2000; Sands, 2004). Moreover, as identified by Padgett (2008), the principles and practice of qualitative research (and, in particular, narrative research) are analogous to those inherent in social work. Similarly, feminist research shares foundational values with social work practice, as feminist perspectives of knowledge has contributed to the deconstruction of mainstream (patriarchal) policies, norms, and structures of understanding in social work research (Gibbs, 2001; Yegidis, Weinbach, & Myers, 2012).

Feminist theories highlight the oppression of women by patriarchal systems of power, identify contributing factors and avenues for change, and situate present situations within a historical context of gendered oppression (Tong, 1989). The application of such theory is active, not passive; as bell hooks (2000) states, "one does not become an advocate of feminist politics simply by having the

privilege of having been born female. Like all political positions one becomes a believer in feminist politics through choice and action.” (p. 7). It is premised on the beliefs that the meanings assigned to gender differences create collective social norms that are implicitly and explicitly applied to individuals, and that patriarchal dynamics in society have been largely unnoticed by traditional research, further perpetuating the oppression and objectification of female subjects (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). Fonow and Cook (1991) identify the key principles of feminist methodologies as including a gendered analysis; recognising the paramountcy of consciousness raising; the positioning of the participant as a partner, rather than subject or object of the process; maintaining an ethical stance regarding process, discourse, and dissemination of findings; and the intended outcome of elevating silenced perspectives and challenging inequality. Given the close attention feminist theorists pay to prevailing power structures and the conscious repositioning of oppressive dynamics, many feminist researchers often seek to establish researcher-participant relationships that are non-exploitative, collaborative, respectful, and feature the shared construction of data (Dey, 1993), which I believe to be possible following close attention to opportunities for implicit or explicit expressions of mutuality.

Simply put, feminist research seeks to avoid the replication of oppressive attitudes toward and experiences by women (Yegidis et al., 2012). Contiguous goals include the consideration of women in the context of the entirety of their social lives and individual situations. Furthermore, it entails the researcher’s commitment to furthering the interests of women involved with the study, take into account the wider policy context of both the stated problem and the research findings, and acknowledge the subjective position of the researcher with regard with their background, worldview, sexual identity, and social influences (Alston & Bowles, 2003). While there are multiple and at times disjunctive feminisms, my stance as both a social worker and a researcher tends towards intersectional feminism: understanding and addressing how power structures manifest in relation to gender, but centrally in relation to the intersecting power dynamics as they take shape according to oppressions around factors such as race, class, sexual and gender orientation, and (dis)ability (Dey, 1993). Accordingly, I conducted this research mindful of the intersectional feminist imperative to distinguish which voices were silenced, to privilege marginalised narratives using the platform inherent in my use of academic voice, and to attend to individual participants’ wishes, needs, goals, insecurities, oppressions, and victories as their equal. I did this by acknowledging my own wishes, needs, goals, insecurities, oppressions, and victories as formative to my worldview, my response to their narratives, and my engagement with them as valued individuals throughout the entirety of the research process. The challenges, requirements for reflexivity, and (re)negotiation of role boundaries that this required cannot be fully captured within a chapter dedicated to methodology; consequently, these are set out in greater depth in chapter four.

The interface between social constructionism and feminism as research approaches is common in research into family violence. This is chiefly evidenced in studies into domestic and sexual violence, which examine both the overarching social structures that precipitate and perpetuate violence (from a feminist lens) and the collectively constructed and constituted understanding of violence by both victims and observers (see Kahn, 1998; Loseke, 1989; Muehlenhard & Kimes, 1999; Stoppard, 2000). It is this synergy of approaches that I have employed throughout this research; the simultaneous attention to the influence of the social world on individual and collective meaning-making, and the

ways that normative behaviours, attitudes, norms, and beliefs are underpinned by structures of power that act to govern, privilege, oppress, and silence women.

3.4. Methodology

3.4.1. Introduction

In accordance with the principal aims encapsulated in social constructionist and feminist theories, my priority was developing methodological processes that supported the goals of privileging the subjective, relational, socially- and structurally-situated, and multi-faceted experiences of victims. This was supplemented by exploring the knowledge depth of professionals whose actions and perspectives ultimately impact such victims' experiences. The thesis consequently employs a narrative inquiry methodology, and uses mixed methods design comprising three phases: surveying of two groups of professionals (medical staff and social service professionals); interviews with survivors; and interviews with key informants who had worked closely with victims/survivors. This choice of research design placed the primary focus on survivors' experiences of victimisation, with a secondary focus on the experiences of professionals working with these survivors. These choices are discussed in depth below.

3.4.2. Narrative inquiry

I chose narrative inquiry as the overarching methodology. This then guided my selection of specific methods in participant recruitment, data collection, and data analysis. Narrative inquiry is consistent with the values of social constructionism; specifically, the privileging of individual experience and individuals' interpretations of their own experiences, and the potential for plurality and multiplicity within and between experiences of events. Narratives illuminate meanings in individuals' stories, and identify personal 'truths' that are negotiated and constructed based on both internal and external systems of meaning-making; consequently, the value of narrative analysis is less in determining decontextualised 'fact' and more in discovering subjective meanings and understanding how these were formed (Bailey & Tilley, 2002). A narrative ontology recognises the iterative and changeable nature of experience and recounts of experiences, whereby events and surrounding situations are synergistically interactive (Dewey, 1938).

The act of telling a story is posited to be a universal ability, relatively unconstrained by unequal distributions of literacy, educational achievement, and articulacy. Communities and subcultures all relay stories that are specific to their individual perspectives, and the lexicon of these groups represents this subjective experiencing and conveys it in an authentic, genuine manner (Bailey & Tilley, 2002). Narratives feature many indexical statements; they are centred on personal experience, describe specific actions, events, and sequences, and include places and times as central to the narrator's system of reference (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004). Typically, they are comprised of several constituents, the most prominent of which are context, purpose, sequential events, descriptions of actors, and a retrospective outcome evaluation or reflection (Bruner, 2004), although these are arguably culturally bound.

Narrative inquiry and narrative analysis gained traction in proportion to the decline of the monopoly of positivist methodologies (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), and narrative as a research methodology particularly gained popularity in the 1980s, when numerous scholars became interested in the depth of

human understanding and the ways that individuals create meaning through the sharing of stories (Gergen, 1990). More recently, researchers have differentiated between event-focused and experience-focused narratives, the latter being generally considered as the more robust and person-centred by the nature of its recognition of multiple meanings and their relationship to the teller's interpretation of their identity, the co-constructed nature of any storytelling and consequent importance of the researcher role, and the intrinsic transformative function of re-telling stories (Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou, 2008). This study consequently endeavours to engage with experience-focused narratives, in order to construct whole-life storied selves rather than limiting story-telling to those events deemed directly associated to stories of victimisation.

Previous researchers have documented the risks inherent in research with groups exposed to experiences that have the potential to be traumatic. These include reactivating trauma symptomatology; misrepresenting the experiences of specific groups, particularly those historically silenced or demonised; therapeutic misconception; and contributing to on-going stigmatisation (Morse, 2007; Shaw, 2003; Tee & Lathlean, 2004). Given the potential for data regarding the experiences of such historically silenced subpopulations to be misappropriated and used in a way that is not beneficent, a narrative research approach has great potential to mobilise the aspects of the self impacted by socially-situated trauma, and to promote participants' use of voice, power, and agency in storying their own experiences.

Many narrative researchers acknowledge the lack of consensus regarding how narrative analysis is actually performed (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006; Clanindin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007; Smith, 2007; Spector-Mersel, 2011). However, Smith (2007) contends that there are fundamental points of agreement; namely, that stories are told for a unique purpose, that they are constructed in order to represent storytellers' versions of their realities, that they can be reproduced and either reinforce or deconstruct meta-narratives (the shared and replicated beliefs underpinning groups' perceptions of normative beliefs, behaviours, and regulations), that they are reflective of greater societal norms, and that they yield insight into storytellers' personal identities and contexts. How stories are told is therefore considered equally as important as what they contain (Spector-Morsel, 2011; Pitre, Kushmer, & Hegadoren, 2013) – highlighting the fit between a narrative ontology and social constructionism. Further, as discussed below, these values intersect with the research design and inform the selection of methods.

3.4.3. Mixed method approach

When focusing on individuals' lived experiences in their entirety – especially when they feature problematic and/or sensitive social phenomena - it is vital to firstly ensure that the research methods chosen are ethically sound and preserve participant safety. Accordingly, I considered a mixed methods approach to be most appropriate for this particular project, it enabled me to maintain a strong focus on maximising participant power by locating the exploration of survivors' experiences as a primary priority, with the experiences of professionals working with survivors as a secondary focus.

Beyrer and Kass (2002) discuss the ethical imperative of including an advocacy goal in research relating to human rights violations, stating “we owe it to the individuals who are suffering to have violations and their effects documented and publicised widely, with the eventual aim of political and interventional remedies” (p. 250). Accordingly, mixed methods approaches are increasing in research

in counselling, psychology, and social work (Wisdom, Cavaleri, Onwuegbuzie, & Green, 2012). To use mixed methods effectively, researchers must be competent in both quantitative and qualitative methods and adhere to research ethics (Badiee, Wang, & Creswell, 2012; Bryman, 2007; Clarke, 2009; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2010). Cautions against using mixed methods include the risk that a study will be diluted through spreading time and resources across multiple avenues; lack of training in mixed methods design; and the risk that having originated from oppositional paradigms, they may be irrevocably incompatible (Giddings & Grant, 2007; Ponterotto, Mathew, & Raughley, 2013). However, by incorporating multiple methods through the 'third methodological way', researchers can transcend uni-paradigmatic limitations, surpassing the limitations of each and providing alternative forms of data for a single question (Gelo, Brasskman, & Benetka, 2008).

Mixed methods approaches have the dual benefits of simultaneously answering quantitative questions, such as those related to prevalence or relationships between factors, and qualitative questions, such as about experiences and perceptions, and meaning-making (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). However, despite the acknowledged benefits of utilising both paradigms equally and wholly, this study did not rely heavily on quantitative data. My decision to restrict the use of data to primarily qualitative methods of analysis was chiefly driven by my desire to maintain congruence with my epistemological stance – that is, the need to consciously reposition researcher-participant power dynamics to be non-exploitative, collaborative, and jointly constructive in keeping with feminist research principles (Dey, 1993), and to reject the notion of a universal or objective 'truth' in favour of recognising the plurality of experience inherent in any phenomenon, as is consistent with social constructionism (MacGibbon, 2003).

However, even for research grounded in constructionist theory, inferential statistics can be used to support qualitative findings – provided these are interpreted with the intention of developing insight into social phenomena that may be largely transferable, rather than assuming total generalisability (Schwandt, 2000). Accordingly, to maintain congruence with traditionally qualitative-based research values, mixed methods can be incorporated using a 'qualitative dominant crossover mixed analysis' (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013), where the researcher may maintain a constructionist stance and use quantitative measures as supplementary to inform analysis (Wisdom et al., 2012). Moreover, while traditional conceptualisations of 'validity' and the corresponding use of triangulation of method, investigator theory, and data source (see Patton, 1999; Polit & Beck, 2012) are fundamentally redundant within the paradigm of social constructionism and accordant privileging of multiple truths, I believed the use of multiple methods would nevertheless provide additional sources from which to enrich understanding of survivors' experiences, contributing more greatly to the more constructionist goals of transferability and depth. Accordingly, the survey data produced useful descriptive statistics to evidence practitioners' attitudes to and understandings of sex trafficking and the gaps in practitioner knowledge amongst the two samples.

3.4.4. Qualitative Dominance

Qualitative approaches are idiographic by nature; they allow researchers to discover and engage with individual experiences and the range of variance among these, rather than adhering to preconceived frameworks or generalised hypotheses as occurs in deductive processes (Flick, 2014; Sandelowski, 2004). Further, in fields of research where findings may be unpredictable, they typically provide scope

for participants to identify aspects of their experiences they regard as integral, rather than this being decided by the researcher, therefore giving rise to potentially new avenues for consideration (Alasuutari, 2010). Growing acknowledgement of the value of qualitative approaches was accompanied by increasing recognition that statements of 'truth' are necessarily subjective, as the researcher brings his or her own background, beliefs, and moral and social conditioning to the research project, which shape the lens through which they view, analyse, and interpret their data (Barusch, Gringeri, & George, 2011; Gringeri, Barusch, & Cambron, 2013). Accordingly, proponents of qualitative approaches typically locate 'truth' as socially or collectively constructed, and subject to contextually-shaped interpretations of meaning (Willis, 2007). As is put forward by narrative approaches, the co-creation of 'truth' by participants and researcher(s) does not inexorably reduce credibility; rather, reflection and self-awareness of personal biases and assumptions can allow these to be presented transparently, and may add additional quality or insight to the research findings (Barusch et al., 2011), enabling a conceptual complexity deeper than those typically yielded through quantitative research (Dowling, 2006).

Quantitative research was traditionally considered higher up the hierarchy of 'valid' research, reflecting the dominance of the positivist paradigm and the hesitance to consider subjectivity as relevant and informative (Barusch et al., 2011). The value of qualitative research has been increasingly recognised over the last several decades; however, it is often still viewed as less valid and as having less utility than its quantitative counterpart (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013; McLeod, 2001). In an increasingly market-driven policy context, there remains a focus on producing measurable and quantified findings (Alasuutari, 2010). However, this presents a value crisis for social work and social workers, as positivist paradigms can be notably divergent to the established and humanistic nature of social work values; for instance, honouring a diverse range of experiences, actively raising the individual voices of disadvantaged groups, and resisting the pressure to create generalisations and therefore contribute to marginalisation (Barusch et al., 2011). The values of social work are better served by qualitative approaches grounded in theories such as social constructionism and feminism, which value the individual and, correspondingly, individuals' experiences. Accordingly, while qualitative research has been criticised for having less rigour and generalisability than quantitative, it has immeasurably greater potential to yield in-depth insight into experiences and social phenomena (Dawson, 2009).

Qualitative approaches reflect goals ingrained in social work practice such as reflexivity and partnership in the research process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). They also effectively answer questions relating to the 'how' and 'why' of social phenomena, making them highly appropriate for a study such as this which attempts to seek understanding about experiences that there is not a great deal of existing knowledge on. Further, these approaches lend themselves easily to conscious consideration of context, which can serve to highlight power imbalances, challenge hegemonic viewpoints and elevate silenced populations (Takacs, 2003), which is particularly pertinent for a study with participants who were undoubtedly subjected to numerous instances of marginalisation.

3.4.5. Doing sensitive research

The inclusion of research participants from groups that have been conceptualised as hard-to-reach, vulnerable, or traumatised presents weighty issues relating to ethics and recruitment methods (Benoit,

Jansson, Millar, & Phillips, 2005; Liamputtong, 2007). Participants' histories of traumatisation and/or victimisation further compound these challenges (Zayas, Hausmann-Stabile, & Pilat, 2009), which I have attempted to learn from and address in this study. Campbell, Greeson, and Fehler-Cabral (2014) developed recruitment protocol using feminist evaluation theory, on the basis that the guiding principles of feminist evaluation theory are applicable to all situations in which there is a power differential. This protocol is not, however, directly transferable to this study, primarily because of the tension between the stated belief in an intrinsic power differential in the researcher-participant relationship, and the social constructionist argument that this is situation-dependent (McCosker, Barnard, & Gerber, 2001). Correspondingly, I viewed participants as typically agentic, with the potential for this agency to be constrained by previous or continued actual, threatened, or symbolic violence – and the paralleling need to respond to each of these possibilities proactively and comprehensively. Campbell et al. (2014) did however identify three aspects of feminist evaluation that are transferable to the methodological considerations involved in recruitment irrespective of constructions of shared or unequal power; namely, focusing on 'lived experiences', irrespective of whether these align with the researcher's preconceptions; identifying and challenging (the potential for) power imbalances in the participant-researcher relationship; and a focus on the emotional experience of sharing personal experiences with a researcher. I addressed these primarily through my attention to principles of engagement with participants and both fluid and static aspects of 'power' inherent in this engagement, and a focus on participant-led and researcher-reciprocated disclosure. The latter two are further discussed in the following chapter.

Violence against women fits naturally into the category of sensitive research (Fontes, 2004), as it contains threats to both physical and emotional safety, and also contains themes of family, sexual integrity, and personal power (Lee & Renzetti, 1990). Survivors of gender-based violence have often been subjected to secondary victimisation through widely held societal attitudes that support victim-blaming (see Buchwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 1993; Stanko, 1985), again emphasising the need for a feminist approach. Feminist thinkers advocate for the consideration of personal impact arising from research participation to go beyond that demanded by institutional ethics committees, and to consider the distress, harm, well-being, and insight that may result from participation (Sielbeck-Bowen, Brisolara, Seigart, Tischler, & Whitmore, 2002). Participants with histories of victimisation may be selective about their choices of people with whom they share their stories (Ahrens, Campbell, Ternier-Thames, Wasco, & Sefl, 2007), indicating the need for researchers to protect participants from inadvertent disclosure of their stories through the sheer nature of their participation in a project. In addition, both ethicists and feminist researchers advocate for ethical thinking rather than simply regulation-following when making ethical decisions about research (Clark & Walker, 2011; Harding & Norberg, 2005; Mulla & Hlavka, 2011). Central to understanding ethical thinking is the concept of 'virtue ethics', which assumes that decision-making about ethical research is underpinned by privileging the researcher-participating relationship and elevating the relative and subjective above the absolute or principle, while adhering to an 'ethic of care' that is characterised by genuine responsiveness (Noddings, 1984). It is therefore a way of being, rather than particular decisions, that is seen as epitomising the application of virtue ethics (Mulla & Hlavka, 2011).

Prior to beginning the study, my chief concern was the potential for emotional impacts on survivor participants; consequently, I sought insight into the experiences of previous participants of sexual violence research. Reports of participation experiences were reassuringly positive. Authors researching violence against women and other 'sensitive' experiences found that rather than regretting their participation in sensitive research, survivors found their experiences of volunteering for face-to-face interviews satisfying, and were motivated by the idea of helping others, helping themselves through gaining self-understanding, and supporting research on the topic, and that overall they benefitted from participation (Campbell and Adams, 2009; Edwards, Kearns, Calhoun, & Gigzycz, 2009). Relatedly, whether an interview topic is considered 'sensitive' depends on how it is regarded within social and cultural norms (McCosker et al., 2001). Lee (1993) argues that the three topics that are typically considered sensitive include stressful or sacred events such as sexual abuse, identity issues that are stigmatising, and topics with political overtones that may be invite controversy. Sex trafficking, with its nuances of sexual violence, stigmatisation, and political positioning can be seen containing all three elements. However, topics considered sensitive might not necessarily be viewed as such by prospective participants, as many report positive outcomes resulting from their opportunities to speak freely and in a safe environment about these personal experiences (McCosker, 1995).

Literature concerning the issues of safety in research into experiences of violence is scarce (McCosker et al., 2001), and my hope is that the clear explanation in following sections may then contribute to this literature on navigating safety-related ethical challenges. Some studies focus on the psychological safety of the researcher and/or participants (see Burr, 1996; Hom & Woods, 2013; Mulla & Hlavka, 2011; Rowling, 1999; Young, 1997). Strategies suggested to mitigate the risks of psychological harm and triggering of painful emotions for participants include building rapport prior to the interview, taking steps to preserve confidentiality and anonymity if there is potential danger, ensuring researchers have appropriate professional backgrounds that enable them to manage sensitive disclosures, providing information about options for crisis counselling and on-going support, and using debriefing to assess immediate impacts (McCosker et al., 2001). In this study, I took these concerns into account. My social worker background, previous Masters research into the sexual exploitation of adolescents, and consequent baseline competence in responding to people from a range of backgrounds who are experiencing or have experienced distress or trauma, was integral to my confidence (and, hopefully, competence) when engaging with participants.

3.5. Ethical Approval

The study received ethical approval from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (Appendix A). However, considerations of ethics were dynamic, fluid, and included attending to events, interactions, and experiences beyond those able to be anticipated prior to beginning the research. These ethical challenges and considerations, including safety, researcher reflexivity, maximising opportunities for power-sharing, and use of a depth psychological approach are discussed in depth in chapter four.

3.6. Methods

3.7.1 Overview

As set out above, I selected a predominantly qualitative approach, with a quantitative approach included as a lesser focus. Given the presumed sensitivity of the topic and the imperative to attend to participants' needs and promote comfort, confidence, and agency throughout and beyond their participation in the study, I chose methods that would lend themselves to this focus on participant care. Consequently, my research design included multiple methods, beginning with surveys to guide question development for later stages. The second stage was interviews with survivor participants, and the third was interviews with key informants. Surveys were distributed through district health boards¹ and helping agencies. Convenience sampling, and to a lesser extent snowball sampling, was used to recruit survivor participants and key informants. I adapted and applied an existing framework of narrative analysis to the survivor participant data, and analysed the supporting data both thematically and descriptively.

3.7.2 Data collection

Initial questionnaire

Questionnaires or surveys are one of the most commonly used methods of data collection (Rowley, 2014). The surveys conducted for this research are predominantly qualitative, and are designed to provide preliminary insight into whether (and how) respondents have encountered people who have been, or demonstrate signs that they may have been, forced into prostitution or sex trafficked. The analysis of measurement data was therefore descriptive only, and qualitative data from open-ended questions in the survey was analysed thematically.

Two surveys were distributed in an attempt to maximise response rates. The first was very short (approximately one A4 size and taking less than five minutes to complete) and was aimed at medical personnel working at emergency departments, sexual health clinics, and GP clinics (see appendix B). This was distributed to clinical managers of targeted services with the request that they disseminate the link to the web-based survey by email. The second was more comprehensive (the equivalent of 2 A4 pages and taking a maximum of ten minutes to complete) and was distributed to social service professionals via an email link. This survey includes questions regarding knowledge of, exposure to, and experiences of working with clients who have been affected by trafficking (see appendix C). My aim was to attract sufficient responses to enable the development of a thematic overview of helping professionals' responses, beliefs, and knowledge bases, rather than to establish the generalisability of findings; accordingly, I was more focused on achieving a wide reach and consequent variance in respondents than on a pre-set response rate. However, both responses to the emailed request to distribute the survey as well as responses within the survey itself demonstrated both a reluctance to engage and a remarkable lack of knowledge about the topic, and many of the responses were unable to indicate anything other than a pervading lack of knowledge. One health provider in particular conveyed that their research committee had concluded that it was of no potential benefit and was unlikely to concern any past or prospective clients/patients, despite other respondents answering to the contrary. This widespread lack of understanding – and at times outright refusal to recognise the

¹ Local health authority

potential that agencies might unwittingly be encountering a well-hidden phenomenon – posed a significant roadblock to attracting respondents and arguably constituted an institutional silencing of the unfamiliar narrative of trafficking. Despite these challenges, the surveys attracted 70 and 61 responses respectively, and, more importantly, were answered by a wide range of both medical and social service professionals. Responses from these surveys then helped to refine research interview questions to be used with key informant interviews.

Interviews

The second stage of data collection, interviewing of survivors, was carried out during the same period that the surveys were open to respondents. Interviews are the most common form of data collection in qualitative research, and usually take place face to face (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). These can occur on a continuum ranging from highly structured to unstructured, and styles are chosen based on the researcher's preference for material to be directed or naturally evolving without researcher input or agenda (Thomas, Nelson, & Silverman, 2011). This study utilised semi-structured interviews, on the basis that these will enable targeted domains of information to emerge according to research questions and simultaneously allow participants the flexibility to introduce topics they regard as relevant, which may not be anticipated by the researcher (Gill et al., 2008). In Baker's (2005) reflection on her research with victims of domestic violence, she states that "a prime focus has been to foster the accurate expression of the perspective of each respondent involved" (p. 105); similarly, to allow the natural storytelling of individual perspectives and experiences of survivors is an important aim in this study. Semi-structured interviews provided a valuable means of achieving this aim, and have been shown to be useful (and positively experienced) with survivors of interpersonal violence (Punch, 1998; Urquiza, Wyatt, & Goodlin-Jones, 1997). The interviews used a conversational style and were between 45 minutes and 90 minutes in length, depending on participants' signals that they had conveyed all that they wanted to convey. Survivor interview questions (appendix D) were based on commonalities in experiences presented in international research, informal personal communication with survivors prior to the research beginning, and allusions to aspects of forced prostitution such as those found in Aotearoa-based research articles. Survivor interviews included questions about the trajectories of (and events within) their lives thus far; the dynamics they have experienced and observed whilst involved with trafficking, particularly in regard to their relationships with their abusers; and their experiences of and needs (if any) for service interventions. Findings from survivor interviews then generated questions for later interviews with key informants (appendix E).

The third and final stage of the research involved key informant interviews. As with the distribution of the survey, the hidden nature of the category of victimisation being researched precluded representation from key agencies, including sexual health organisations and community-based social work organisations, limiting the breadth of the data collected. The questions for these interviews focused on the nature of informants' interactions with survivors; their knowledge of survivor clients'/patients' histories, challenges, strengths, and future goals; and their perceptions of intervention and prevention needs.

Interview style

In the survivor interviews in particular, I aligned my interviewing style with techniques associated with narrative inquiry. Schütze's (1977) work, although unpublished, first developed a systemised

technique labelled 'narrative interviewing', focused on reconstructing events reported through narratives to develop understanding. It was then used by Bauer (1991, 1997), who reported success. He explains that a 'story schema' guides story production, which is a self-sustaining sequence involving detailed texture (the desire to give information that contextualises transitions between discrete events), relevance fixation (the selective reporting of events based on the narrator's subjective judgement), and closing of the gestalt (the key event or situation with a beginning, middle, and end). Narrative inquiry is therefore commonly conceived of as the learning of 'what people say', but it is equally concerned with the question of 'why people say' – in other words, an inquiry into people's narratives (Clandinin, 2006). Correspondingly, in each survivor interview, I began with reiterating what the topic of my research was and emphasised that I was interested in whole-of-life stories, not just aspects pertaining to the topic. After switching on the recorder, I then opened with the statement: "I'm interested in whatever you'd like to tell me about what's happened in your life – and you can start with whatever you're most comfortable starting with". In many cases, this was the only contribution other than minimal encouragers or invitations to expand on any comment that the interviewee needed. In some instances, the stories they told were chronological accounts of sequential challenges and consequent actions; in others, their recounts involved frequent switching between time periods and contexts. Key informant interviews were also semi-structured, but had comparatively more pre-developed questions informed by earlier contact with survivors.

My understanding of feminist scholarship as attempting to deconstruct patriarchal norms and structures (see Gibbs, 2001; Yegidis et al., 2012) strongly influenced my interviewing methods. Accordingly, I aimed to explicitly acknowledge and explore the depths of individual experiences through open and inviting questioning congruent with feminist research methods, such as those explicated by Dey (1993). In the beginning two interviews, I found that by answering a passage of narrative with the phrase 'that's really interesting' led to the majority of the remainder of the interview focusing on aspects of interviewees' lives that were relevant to the preceding passage – on reflection, I decided that this was unduly influencing interviewees' choices about what to share based on their perception of what I was most interested in, and reverted to more neutral encouragers. However, there were certain aspects of their lives I was drawn to that occasionally did not emerge spontaneously other than very brief mentions (for example, mentions of a validation/abuse dichotomy within relationships), and in these instances I intentionally invited additional openness by expressing my interest in those aspects of their narratives. Otherwise, their choice of story was largely indicative of the salience these stories held for interviewees.

3.6.3. Sampling and Recruitment

Recruiting survivors

Given my emphasis on full consent to participate and my focus on the relational nature of research participation as discussed in relation to sensitive research, I had intended to use a combination of convenience and snowball sampling. Convenience sampling refers to recruiting participants or respondents based on accessibility (Hoskins & Mariano, 2004; Morse, 2007), accordingly, I shared flyers in community Facebook pages, with an invitation for any community members to share amongst their networks. Snowball sampling, on the other hand, refers to the process of additional participants or respondents becoming involved after hearing about it, or being referred to it, by others (Auerbach &

Silverstein, 2003). Participants were invited to forward the recruitment flyer (see Appendix F) and participant information to other prospective participants. Participants were not asked how they came across the flyer or what compelled them to participate, so it is unknown how effective the snowball strategy may have been – however, only one mentioned having passed on the recruitment flyer to others. From this, and from participants’ statements about the secrets they had never shared, I concluded that it was likely that the majority of participants had not known others who had participated.

Recruitment of vulnerable participants was carefully managed, as set out in Figure 1. While all ethical requirements usually demand that consent in writing be given, there remained a risk that without additional strategies, participants may not have been fully aware of the nature, process, or potential implications of participating in the research, especially given that victims of violence often live in unpredictable environments, where the level of risk is changeable and subject to fluctuations in both circumstances and personal coping mechanisms (Fontes, 2004). Participants therefore gave verbal consent instead of written. In addition, no person under 16 was selected to participate. Prospective participants were invited to text me on a number I had obtained specifically for the purpose of this research.

A sample size of 16 victim/survivors of trafficking was achieved, which, while a small sample size, is arguably appropriate given the inherent difficulties of reaching this population. As anticipated, not all prospective participants met the safety criteria for participation – eight other survivors expressed interest in participating and began the interview process, but were subsequently excluded as I judged them to be at risk of physical and/or emotional harm.

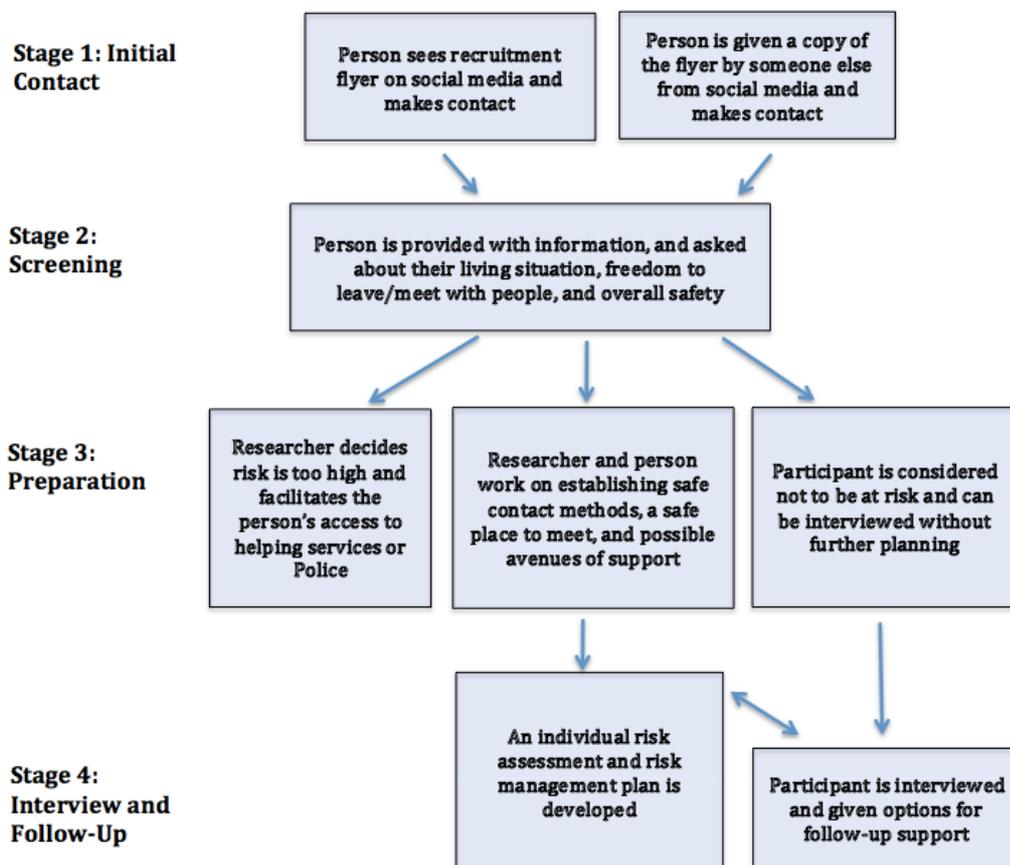


Figure 1: Survivor participant recruitment process

In addition, six key informant interviews were carried out with professionals who had worked closely with survivors of trafficking. Two of these (First Responder1, whose role entailed providing initial assessment, support, and referral to victims of trafficking; and Solicitor1, whose role was to provide expert policy advice regarding domestic and transnational organised crime) were based in the United Kingdom, and these interviews were arranged as part of a trip to London to visit agencies working with trafficked populations after email exchanges demonstrated reciprocal interest regarding best practice across jurisdictions. The remaining four self-selected by indicating in one of the practitioner surveys that they would be interested in being interviewed. These four included Counsellor1 (a private practitioner specialising in sexual violence), Social worker1 (an advocate at a domestic agency organisation), Social worker2 (a private practitioner doing both domestic violence and sexual violence work), and Social worker3 (an employee at a community social work agency).

Using social media

Social media seemed the obvious method of circulating an open invitation to participate in a study about a topic shrouded in secrecy and, potentially, shame. Social media platforms are increasingly gaining popularity as recruitment forums, as they present the potential for a greater reach of potential respondents to research invitations (Wilson, Gosling, & Graham, 2012). Facebook, for example, allows users to create personal pages, enter into online groups with like-minded others, and interact with (and present representations of themselves to) their peers. They may therefore respond to research invitations through a variety of messages – posted advertisements in their newsfeeds by peers or trusted others, publicising of research initiatives in online groups or organisational Facebook pages, or through targeted private messages (Wilson et al., 2012). However, Dillman (2000) argues that gaining participants through Facebook is not as simple as posting an invitation; rather, a ‘tailored design method’ is required – in other words, a method premised on establishing trust, reliability, and perceived benefit to participation. Wording of the posts accompanying the flyer was therefore carefully crafted to indicate non-judgement, and uptake was reliant on others re-sharing the post. In addition, I aimed to demonstrate transparency through answering questions about the study in both public and private forums and explaining my own position within social media posts.

Recruiting survey respondents and key informants

Relevant agencies were contacted directly with a request that somebody from the organisation be invited to participate in key informant interviews. As expected, this had a low response rate – agencies typically agreed to distribute the invitation but declined to appoint someone to be interviewed on behalf of their organisation. Given the often limited capacity and crisis-driven nature of many of the services contacted, and presumed lack of knowledge about the topic or acknowledgement of its existence, response was minimal. Key informants therefore were only successfully arranged through personal relationships, following opportunistic meetings (such as at conferences, or network meetings) and explanations of the types of situations involved, resulting in individual workers recognising parallels with their own work and expressing interest in being involved. Of the agencies that received an invitation to participate, few volunteered to have a representative participate in an interview. In addition, many replied saying it was not a topic encountered by their staff – later contradicted by some staff members’ responses to the survey indicating significant experience with clients subjected to sex trafficking. It is therefore unclear whether reluctance to designate a staff member to participate

principally arose out of capacity constraints or out of disinclination to be associated with such a topic (or, potentially, a genuine lack of knowledge about staff's experience in this area).

The questionnaire was distributed using both convenience and purposive sampling. An invitation to participate was distributed through professional associations, including the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers, the New Zealand Association of Counsellors, and the New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists. It was also posted as a link in closed social work Facebook groups. The survey included an option for participants to also volunteer to be part of individual interviews. In addition, District Health Boards (in five regions, selected based on their proximity to suggested areas of trafficking for the purposes of expediency) were approached and asked to distribute a link to an online survey by email to their medical staff working in emergency, mental health, and sexual health departments.

Participants

The 16 survivor participants who met all safety screening and eligibility criteria either selected a pseudonym themselves, or opted for me to select one for them. The demographic and basic information of these participants, whose quotes are used throughout chapters five, six, and seven of this thesis, are set out in the table below.

Table 1

Survivor participants' demographic and basic information

Name	Gender	Ethnicity	Age first trafficked	Relationship to first trafficker	Children during trafficking
Shar	Female	Pākehā ²	16	Mother of boyfriend (Black Power ³)	None during
Michelle	Female	Māori	16	Mother of friend (Black Power)	1 (left while pregnant to abuser)
Jessica	Female	Māori	10	'Boyfriend' (aged 19)	1
Sophia	Female	Māori	12	'Boyfriend' (adult, unknown criminal gang)	3
Shannon	Female	Pākehā	14	Mother and stepfather (affiliated with The Mothers ⁴)	0
Des	Female	Pākehā	14	'Boyfriend' (aged 24)	0

² New Zealand European

³ A well-known New Zealand gang

⁴ A New Zealand regional gang

Tiffany	Female	Māori	22	'Boyfriend' (Black Power)	1
Stacey	Female	Māori	15	'Boyfriend' (Black Power)	1
Laila	Female	Pākehā	14	Older sister	0
Kate	Female	Pākehā	20	'Boyfriend'	1
Kayla	Female	Pākehā	13	Teen girl gang (believed run by Mongrel Mob ⁵)	0
Jack	Male	Māori	14	Black Power	0
Hope	Female	Māori	15	Youth gang	0
Celeste	Female	Māori	18	'Boyfriend'	1
Sarah	Female	Pākehā	15	'Boyfriend'	0
Corith	Female	Māori	17	'Boyfriend' (White Power ⁶)	4

The six key informant participants included counsellors, social workers, a solicitor, and a first responder. The counsellors and social workers are New Zealand-based and practice in private and/or community settings, while the solicitor and first responder are both United Kingdom-based and work with the larger context of human trafficking.

3.8 Data Analysis

Given the subjectivity involved in how people experience violence and the ways in which these experiences are shaped by wider contexts, and my commitment to narrative inquiry, I chose narrative analysis as a method of analysis that would yield the greatest insight into these subjective experiences.

According to Boonzaier and van Schalkwyk (2011), narrative analysis is well suited to exploring hidden types of marginalisation that have typically been excluded from mainstream conceptualisations of a particular issue, and to providing a culturally embedded account of experiences. Its usefulness in constructing subjectivity is particularly popular in the field of psychology, where it is considered to offer a valuable method of reconstituting inner realities through interpretation of events through narratives (Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011). However, Murray (2003) argues that its utility extends beyond the intensely personal representations of individual internal realities to incorporate multiple, interlinked social and environmental contexts. The potential for subjectivity construction is therefore the defining feature of narrative analysis when compared to other qualitative methods (Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2012). Feminist narrative analysis in particular positions participants as the experts in their

⁵ Another well-known New Zealand gang

⁶ A less-known, racially motivated New Zealand gang

own lives, and uses a dialogic strategy both during conversational interviewing and in subsequent multi-level (literal, symbolic, and with attention to socio-political) analysis of data (Collins, 2000, Krumer-Nevo, 2005).

I used a method of narrative analysis that captured key components of narratives such as interaction (including the personal and the social), and temporality (namely, the past, the present, the future, and the situation/place), as well as giving scope to identify additional or subordinate themes within these overarching elements. This method, named the ‘three-dimensional space narrative structure’, was developed by Clanindin and Connelly (2000) and was developed based on Dewey’s (1938) philosophy of temporality between experiences and the actors involved in their social and personal contexts.

Table 2

The Three-Dimensional Space Narrative Structure (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002, p. 41, adapted from Clanindin & Connelly, 2000).

<i>Interaction</i>		<i>Continuity</i>			<i>Situation/Place</i>
<i>Personal</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Past</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Future</i>	
Look inward to internal conditions, feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, moral dispositions	Look outward to existential conditions in the environment with other people and their intentions, purposes, assumptions, and points of view	Look backward to remembered experiences, feelings, and stories from earlier times	Look at current experiences, feelings, and stories relating to actions of an event	Look forward to implied and possible experiences and plot lines	Look at context, time, and place situated in a physical landscape or setting with topological and spatial boundaries with characters’ intentions, purposes, and different points of view

Narrative analysis, using the three-dimensional space narrative structure to begin with, began with reading and re-reading transcripts to facilitate familiarity, iteratively creating tentative links and associations that were then recorded for further analysis (Boeije, 2002). During this initial phase of familiarisation, it became apparent that the identification of aspects of survivors’ narratives encompassed a wider range of ‘interaction’ aspects, contained a greater focus on the self or ‘character’ in relation to the story, and required a contextual focus different to that identified by Clanindin and Connelly. Consequently, I adapted this method - while adhering to the use of a three-dimensional structure of analysis, the dimensions were altered to capture the breadth of the data. While Clanindin and Connelly’s method labels the second overarching category as ‘continuity’, I replaced this with the term ‘temporality’ in the analysis process in recognition of the limitations of continuity and the more appropriate changeable, adaptive, and contingent nature of experiences in time. In addition, I added a third overarching category of ‘context’ to capture the breadth of backgrounds and influences reported by participants.

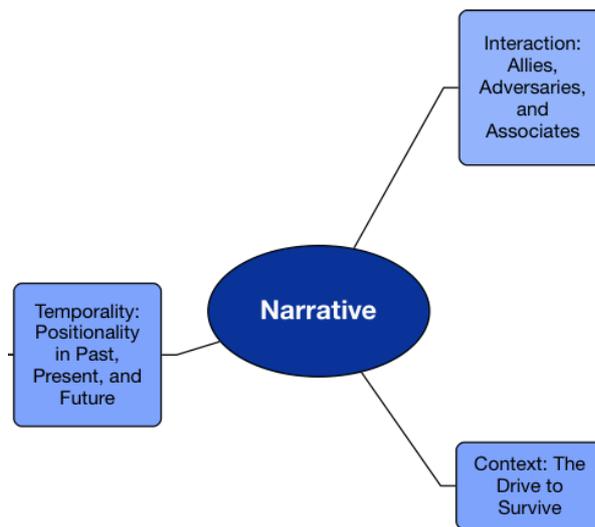


Figure 2: Narrative categories

After establishing the need for these overarching categories, I used Nvivo (QSR International, Version 11) to code, annotate, and note observations. During this process, diagrams were iteratively created to reveal associations, differences, and absences of information, as recommended by Elo and Kyngas, (2008). The coding was descriptive in order to allow greater subjectivity (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), as I considered this to be consistent with the goals implicit in narrative approaches – the exploration of all components of narratives raised by participants, rather than solely those interpreted as relevant to the phenomenon under study. Codes were then separated and organised into words, phrases, and basic themes, and subsequently synthesised into larger themes.

For the first three transcripts, this was done iteratively; that is, the process completed for each transcript before being repeated with the next. However, I then considered that this precluded effective identification of similarities and differences that occurred between as well as within transcripts, and that greater meaning may be ascribed to individual codes if coding was done for all of the transcripts and later grouped. I therefore began analysis at the beginning, with each of the transcripts coded and then all of the codes later separated, refined, and synthesized. Overlapping codes were collapsed into a single code (for instance, ‘making me feel inadequate’ and ‘ideals of being a perfect partner’ were condensed into the single code of ‘psychological coercion’), and codes that spanned a wide range of experiences were expanded (for instance, the ‘experiences with clients’ code was expanded into ‘first interactions with clients’, ‘violence or abuse by clients’, and ‘clients’ attitudes’). These codes were categorised into themes, and the themes were then grouped in accordance with the above categories of context, temporality, and interaction, as set out in Figure 3.

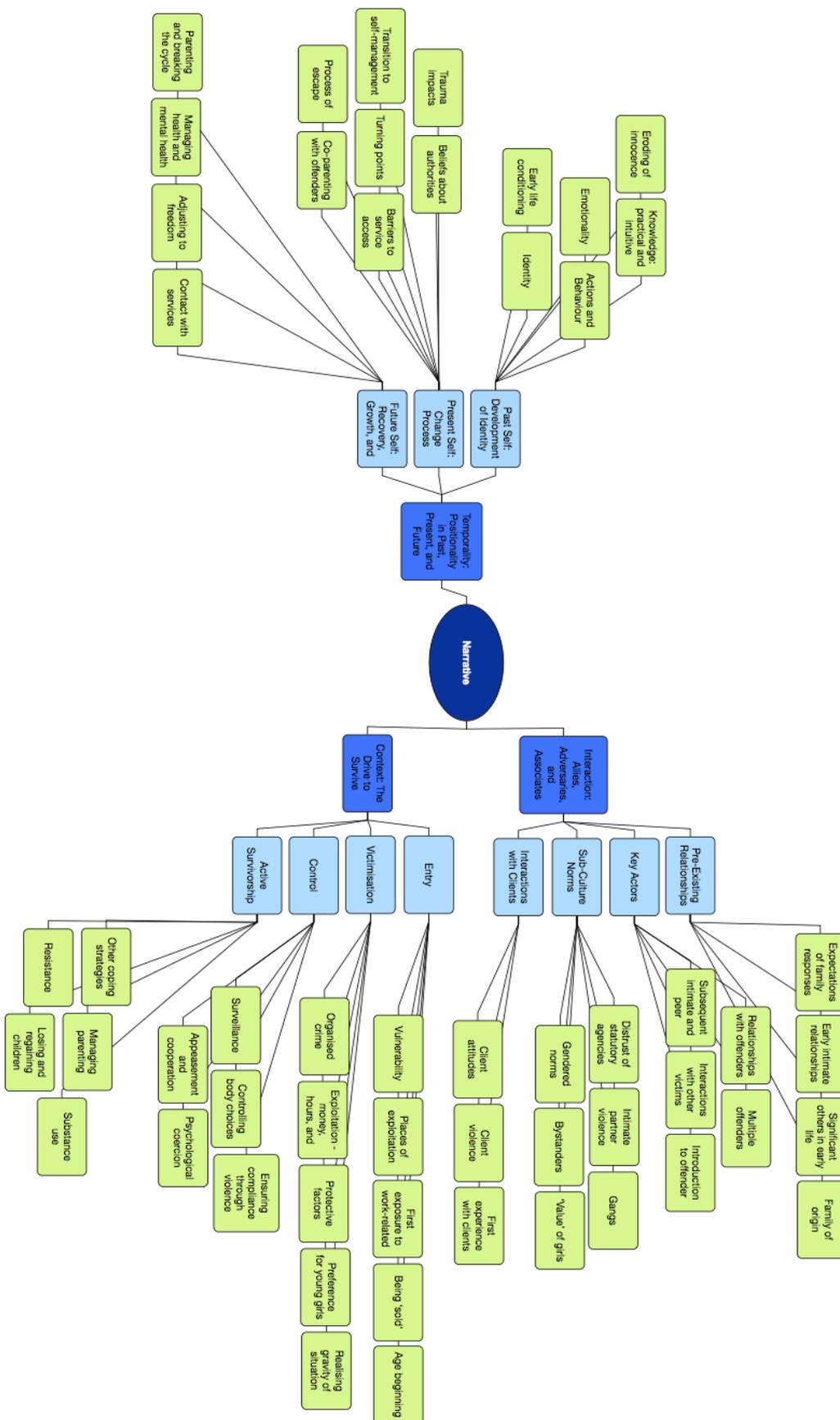


Figure 3: Organisation of codes and themes within narrative categories

The use of reflexivity in qualitative research has become more recognised over time (Northway, 2000), as it became apparent that researchers distancing from data excluded their ongoing use of self and

identity (Koch & Harrington, 1998). Intentionally including the self and identity, on the other hand, is argued to add authenticity to the research process, through explicit consideration of personal preferences, prejudices, and beliefs, and conscious explication of theoretical and analytical choices that inform the research findings (Polit & Beck, 2006). Accordingly, field notes were recorded during and after interviews, containing observations and personal queries that arose throughout the process, as recommended by Clanindin and Connelly (2000). These were then used to inform the analysis of the collected data. In addition, hesitation or pauses in story-telling led to notes that informed a focus on identity issues that emerged at that stage in the story – such as when participants appeared to anticipate negative judgments, or when they added justifications or rationalisation to their recounts of their own behaviours. These were therefore reviewed periodically throughout the analysis of data – both at the stage of initial coding and at the stages of identifying themes and searching for underlying connections between themes. In addition, the use of personal emotional and embodied responses as valuable data sources was integral to flagging potential topics to be considered while reviewing transcripts, and the role of ‘self’ as it related to the research process, including data analysis, is further discussed in the chapter four.

3.9 Selecting an Appropriate Organising Structure

While the themes were organised into several, overarching schemas in my mind, I struggled to find a way to link the sociological and psychological aspects of these themes and to organise these into a coherent presentation that traversed each domain comprehensively but logically. After further reading into the nature of marginalisation within groups, I stumbled upon the works of Pierre Bourdieu (1985; 1990; 1993; 2002), and felt that although premised on sociological scholarship, there was scope to incorporate psychological concepts to support the contextual explanations of a specific context (as exhibited in chapter 10). However, an aspect (silencing) of the themes spanned my use of both sociological and psychological constructs, and a chapter dedicated to the numerous ways in which this was manifest throughout the findings preceded the more detailed analysis of the specific contexts of trafficking situations. Thus, my organising structures emerged as two distinct but significantly overlapping chapters of discussion: first, of silencing (chapter nine), and second, of the field of trafficking organised by Bourdieu’s core concepts (chapter 10).

3.10 Conclusion

The development of my epistemological stance, key assumptions, and methodological decisions in this study were driven by a desire to acknowledge the role of (unequal) power structures that influence individual agency, and to avoid replicating oppressive dynamics within the research process. Consequently, I drew heavily from both social constructionism and feminism as conceptual frameworks from which power-sharing and equality-based values could be derived, and selected narrative inquiry as a primary methodology on the basis that it represented these values of privileging lived experience and recognising the plurality of experiences. In keeping with this stance and methodology, I used a qualitative-dominant mixed methods approach. Specifically, I used a sequential research design beginning with surveys of medical and social service professionals, interviewing survivors, and interviewing key informants. Much of my focus in this chapter has been on survivor interviews, as they constituted both the priority group for the research and, arguably, the group with the most potential to be harmed by their participation, given that their exposure of their experiences can easily be conceptualised as constituting ‘sensitive’ research. Consequently, I attended to issues of

comfort, consent, and safety at each stage of the process, and utilised the principles of narrative inquiry while interviewing. In addition, because of this presupposed sensitivity, issues such as using social media and attracting responses from agencies all posed unique challenges, demonstrating the invisibilised, controversial, and often ambiguous nature of domestic sex trafficking. In the following chapter (chapter four) I look at the ethical difficulties inherent in this research, the challenges of engaging with survivors informally and then with participants formally, and the use of and impacts to the self within the research process.

4 Researcher Ethics, Reflexivity, and Process Reflections

4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I set out my methodological decisions and my research process. It is important to state, however, that my own experiences cannot be extricated from the data analysis process; rather, I attempt here to make explicit the linkages between my own background, my position as researcher, and my analysis of participants' transcripts. My frustration at the lack of guidance accessible in accounts of others studies I perused during my planning stages led to a commitment to detailing the positive, negative, complex, and novel aspects of this research, irrespective of the personal vulnerability this would inevitably involve. As I outline shortly, the influence of 'self' in this research process can be linked to my childhood, my adolescence, my practitioner identity, and my socio-political ideology. My topic of sex trafficking, and the overtones of violence, exploitation, and oppression contained within narratives of these experiences, means that informal contact with people who have experienced some of these dynamics presented myriad ethical challenges, many of which were shrouded in ambiguity or which circumvented typical frameworks for ethical decision-making. In addition, the nature of the topic demands significant attention to the emotional wellbeing of participants, their ability and opportunity to give or rescind consent, and their physical safety. However, much less attention in previous studies – not just into trafficking, but into any topics of abuse or trauma - is given to setting out challenges relating to researcher safety – in particular, the safety of the emotional self (see Gabriel et al., 2017; Lalor & Devane, 2006; McCosker et al., 2001; Woodby, Williams, Wittich, & Burgio, 2011 for exceptions), particularly in relation to isolation from conventional modes of support. Correspondingly, when I experienced significant emotional distress and disruption as a result of secondary experiencing of participants' trauma, I was initially unable to either recognise the adverse impacts of this or to channel them in a productive way, and had few studies to draw upon to guide this process. This had temporarily severe implications for my own wellbeing and my capacity to continue with the research. However, I discuss here how my background and personal responses to research, once made explicit through reflection, supervision, and personal therapy processes, acted as a tool for guiding interviewing and analysis with participants through a depth psychological approach – and the steps I took to ensure that this was applied carefully.

4.2. Personal Reflexivity: Background and Bias

My personal experiences and accordant politics informed my choice of topic, my epistemological stance, my choice of methods, and my key assumptions. Equally, my epistemological stance (underpinned by social constructionism and feminism) and methodological decisions necessitated consideration of these assumptions and biases. Narrative researchers have provided extensive guidance on the need for self-awareness regarding their participation in the data collection and analysis processes. Clandinin (2006), for instance, states that researchers cannot disregard the impact of their own participation; rather, they need to give continual attention to the experiences of the narrator, how this intersects with their own experiences, and how the relational approach produces a co-constructed version of experience. Similarly, Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk (2012) also urge researchers to acknowledge, in accordance with postmodernist recognitions of researcher subjectivity, that others may draw additional or alternative themes from the same data. During each stage of the research, therefore, I consciously examined my own responses and tried to question how these

intersected with, influenced, and were influenced by the research I was doing, in keeping with what Luca (2009) terms a 'circling of consciousness'; in other words, a constant reflexive approach that situates the researcher's agency within the research and utilised self-awareness and self-reflection to assist with and improve the research process. I begin with examining how my personal background shaped my research interests and influenced my engagement with participants and their stories.

I was raised in a white, middle-class, single-parent family in a wealthy community. My childhood was (mostly) idyllic, safe, and fostered secure attachment relationships with family members, who had high expectations regarding my future but who also provided all the nurturing, resources, and guidance necessary to fulfil these expectations. As a child, poverty, abuse, control, substance use, and mental illness were not facets of my privileged life. However, at age 14, I was targeted by an adult man who posed as a romantic interest, sexually groomed me and my friends by supplying alcohol and encouraging our dishonesty to our parents, and who eventually fostered sufficient familiarity and trust to give my peers and me the confidence to be alone with him without concern for our safety. After one such night, instead of driving me home, he took me back to his house where he violently raped me, without any pretence of desiring or preferring a more consensual encounter. Having disobeyed the family rules by attending a party and consuming alcohol, and having very little knowledge of what constituted rape or how experiences of sexual violence intersected with adolescent development of sexuality, I assumed the event was my fault. Accordingly, I told no one. This was my first real experience of concealing a shameful truth, an experience I later found to pervade the abuse stories of innumerable others who had been similarly victimised. This event, while singular, devoid of other markers of marginality, and separate from what was otherwise a privileged life, nevertheless denoted a marked shift in my life trajectory, and would later form the basis for my intense interest in, and commitment to, combating sexual violence.

This experience of sexual violence gave rise to a period of intense fear, shame, and erosion of self-worth. In the following years I continued to believe I was directly responsible for (and deserving of) this violence against my body. Accordingly, I directed my anger at this violation at my own identity, my body, and my sense of future, manifesting through self-destructive behaviour, relational changes, and self-imposed social isolation. Despite occasional queries into my behaviour and emotional state – arising after the discovery of self-harm, substance use, and ultimately a suicide attempt – I largely concealed these symptoms and believed that when these were witnessed, they were perceived by others to be weaknesses, reinforcing my commitment to self-concealment. Reviewing this journey retrospectively, it appears there was some truth to my belief that others would not (or could not) respond positively, as I will discuss shortly. As will become evident in the findings chapters to follow, this trajectory is a familiar one – it speaks to the suppression of unspeakable trauma and the ways in which it struggles to become a 'heard' experience.

When I reflect on my adolescence with the benefit of professionally-informed reappraisal, I view the destructive trajectory I embarked on as both a method of self-destruction and as a set of actions that, collectively, amounted to a desire to access safety in the form of a trusted relationship with an adult that might eventually be conducive to breaking the silence of rape. This manifested through repeated seeking of figures that I assessed as capable of representing this safety, followed by acts that demonstrated personal pain in the hope that these would be interpreted as cues to intervene and

make this potential safety explicit. Specifically, I hoped for others to demonstrate this safety by asking questions that would indicate a willingness to tolerate a narrative of violence and the voicing of emotions associated with it. Whether due to the clumsiness of my enacted (but never spoken) request, or to others' unpreparedness to consider such unpalatable explanations for my seemingly inexplicable displays of destructiveness, my behaviour attracted the opposite response. The people from whom I craved an invitation to speak about these experiences shut down attempts to disclose and instead implicitly reinforced the message that emotionality was inherently shameful - and distress unacceptable - unless it was objectively justified. Shame then became linked to (a lack of) voice, and I interpreted silence as the comparatively safer option. However, the self-concealment that necessarily accompanied silence meant that the conscious self was separated into two parts – the publicly accessible and acceptable version, devoid of intense emotion and absent of confronting disclosures, and the private, concealed version, characterised by pain, secrecy, and ingrained feelings of worthlessness. These attempts to tell a story that was not welcomed taught me the feeling of being silenced – an experience threaded throughout the narratives of many clients I later worked with as a sexual violence counsellor.

Although I now believe my (arguably consequent) rage at the suppression of women's stories of victimisation precipitated my commitment to breaking successive silences and challenging constraining societal discourse, this was not apparent to me until it emerged as an overarching and jarring finding in this research. As I will discuss later in the thesis, in participants' stories this suppression of voice was much more explicit than in my own experiences, but recognising and situating the silencing of some victims could not occur until I recognised such an explicit manifestation of this. However, it is likely that the profound sense of injustice this engendered in me was, in part, because of the congruence between these experiences and those experienced by many of my counselling clients, and indeed myself (albeit to a much lesser extent). It is also possible that given the relevance to my own experience, this was an aspect of survivors' experiences that I unconsciously privileged: once labelled, it became apparent across multiple domains of their experiences and I became immensely interested in the ways in which this was perpetuated by others' actions and by structural facets of their experiences. Correspondingly, I now believe the central theme of silencing across participants' stories enabled me to recognise the experiences of this that manifest in my own experiences.

While I believe it is important that the possible precipitants to the focus on voice and silencing be disclosed, the lived experiences contributing to this do not detract from the legitimacy of survivors' accounts, but rather indicate how, of all experiences that could be told, experiences relating to trauma and the cognitive-emotional and psychological sequelae of this came to the forefront of such conversations. Correspondingly, it was through discussions in supervision that I recognised the centrality of silencing at multiple levels to victims' narratives of being trafficked, and I do not believe the findings could be contextualised without attention to this. However, there were other aspects of my experiences that clearly paralleled those alluded to by participants, such as the illusion of 'choice' in adolescent activities and the justifications for substance use. While I could identify aspects of these in the data collected during this research, I chose not to pursue these lines of analysis on the basis that my attentiveness to these topics was not integral to the research, and clearly emerged through

analysis of my own experience and was therefore antithetical to the feminist principles of privileging findings that naturally emerge from participants' stories (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2000).

This research is also bracketed by my stance and experience as a practitioner in the field. As a newly qualified social worker, I was drawn to sexual violence as a field of practice, and as a beginning practitioner immersed myself first in child protection, and then in sexual violence crisis response work, and, later, specialist sexual violence counselling and social work. Additionally, all of my research was focused on sexual violence, and later sexual exploitation, and I maintained an activist presence in the political sphere pertaining to sexual violence, government response, social awareness, and the normalisation of harmful gendered beliefs that underpin sexual offending. My interpretation of this drive to continue my immersion into sexual violence through both practice and research is twofold. Firstly, my own experience makes blindness to sexual violence in Aotearoa impossible, and working in the field means this interest is both validated and positively channelled. Secondly, the continued rawness of my own experience resulted in a profound sense of societal injustice that I felt I could not morally turn away from, and that to do so would be to become silently complicit in others' victimisation (a moral imperative which later became extended to intimate partner violence as well as sexual violence). My Masters study into underage sex work further cemented my interest in this particular form of sexual violence, and prompted an interest in sexual exploitation, although participants of that study were typically working for themselves rather than others. My background therefore irrevocably shaped my career, and, in particular, my commitment to working in the area of violence against women. There are also many aspects of these experiences – from the privileged and protected, to the raw and traumatic - that I bring to this research and that shape my personal framing of the narratives I hear, engage with, and analyse. My intention is therefore to raise the influences of these experiences to a conscious level wherever possible, and identify when and how they influence the construction of narratives both within interviews, and during data analysis.

Adhering to my goal of raising personal biases to a conscious level involves an additional degree of reflexivity beyond consideration of which aspects of survivors' experiences I recognise and explore – both in my own internal comprehension of narratives, and in my interviewing style. Listening to recordings after each interview helped me to be aware of my own intrinsic biases, privilege, and disparate privileging of specific types of knowledge. Paying attention to this enabled me to also recognise, note, and analyse the ways that the flow of dialogue within interviews was influenced by my wording (framed, naturally, by my own positionality). Accordingly, this listening enabled me to correct certain prejudices in subsequent interviews by minimising this projective manifestation of my own cognitive framing of others' experiences. For example, classism, sexism, and racism were all evident in my own analyses of my interviewing styles, evidenced by my personal responses (for example, surprise, shock, unspoken judgement, and lack of understanding) following particular statements or presentation of contextual information as normative. I was particularly aware that situations involving parenting, gender-typing, and normalisation of sexual violence toward young people invoked these responses. Supervision provided a natural avenue for me to confront these biases and socially situated responses, and to challenge them and work through concerns about my ability to overcome these – the utility of which was evidenced in my own recognition of changes in thought patterns in these areas. However, I also recognise that there are inevitably additional biases that went unnoticed or unchallenged. Having made my positioning clear, and indicated how my personal experiences with

sexual violence and sexual exploitation inform my understanding of this research, I now move to discussing the experiences of recruiting, interviewing, and supporting my participants.

4.3. Pre-Project Contact: Risks and Benefits

There are very few studies detailing the risks at the pre-interviewing stages of trafficking research. Most studies proposing techniques to maximise safety (see Baker, 2005; May, 2001; Northcutt & McCoy, 2004; Shuy, 2002; Stringer & Simmons, 2014; Sullivan & Cain, 2004) focus on the researcher's stance and approach within interviews, the methods employed to coordinate meetings while safeguarding both the researcher and participant from harm, and strategies to increase participants' perceptions of their safety during their involvement. However, such studies rarely expound on researchers' strategies to mitigate the risks and vulnerabilities arising from informal contact, or on the enmeshment between researchers' academic, professional, and personal lives as they become involved with inherently dangerous phenomena. I encountered such challenges from the outset of the research, and discuss these below.

The relationship-building stage of research occurred almost accidentally, and prior to gaining ethics approval for the study. Contact from victims/survivors (I could only interview those who had 'crossed over' into the latter) was unsolicited, arising instead from media coverage of my previous research on adolescent sex work. Various authors have provided guidelines regarding initial contact with individuals who may become prospective participants in sensitive research (see Benoit et al., 2005; Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, & Liamputtong, 2007; Cotterrill, 1992; Duong, 2015). However, at a time when practitioners, policy advocates, and members of the interested public were initiating contact to discuss my Master's research findings, it was difficult to identify which of these individuals might be motivated to make contact with me because of their own experiences. In some cases, young women who initiated contact had social media accounts indicating that they were feminist activists; in other words, whose public presence was consistent with that of other interested parties who contacted me with a view to engaging in academic debate. These young women became Facebook 'friends', and only much later revealed their status as victim-survivors of sex trafficking. In other instances, the perception of me as an advocate because of my previous research led to young women obtaining my contact details and giving me information, despite my continual reminders that I was not currently approved to do any research and could therefore not use any data they provided. However, potentially due to the dearth of knowledge about (and informed or trusted advocates against) sex trafficking, this unsolicited contact continued.

These young women then informally shared their stories with me, which, aside from disqualifying them from later being interviewed as participants and the consequent loss of valuable data, presented an assortment of challenges. Firstly, I did not have ethics approval and, aside from being unable to use the information shared with me for the purposes of data collection anyway, it meant that the 'researcher role' and the accompanying luxury of clearly defined criteria and procedures for responding to crises, threats, and disclosures of harm did not apply. Secondly, as a registered social worker, I had a mandated obligation to report situations where children are at risk of harm, meaning that any stories implying the abuse of anyone under the age of 18 presented an immediate dilemma of whether or not to report. The implications of this mandate were far from straightforward; often the allusions to underage involvement of victims were vague and lacking in any kind of detail that could be

realistically reported to statutory agencies. Thirdly, the issue of confidentiality became unclear outside of the research relationship – there was no official requirement to remain silent about the experiences I was witnessing; at the same time, talking to people about these experiences could have put victim-survivors in danger (Sullivan & Cain, 2004). The implications for this are twofold. There was the natural tendency to work through distressing content with others to mitigate the potential for vicarious traumatisation, and the regular avenue for this (academic supervision) was precluded by the informal nature of these conversations. Moreover, there was no clear consultation pathway in order to work through the decision-making process regarding what (and when) might have to be reported to the police or other organisations. These decisions consequently end up being almost entirely subjective, without the safeguards inherent in formally obtaining secondary input. While I was not accessing personal supervision during this time, I did consult with trusted friends and advisors regarding the best course of action, which did in one instance necessitate police involvement, and in another instance resulted in my decision to discontinue contact with one survivor.

Despite these challenges (and the emotional stress, uncertainty, and at one point, implied danger) of this informal contact, building relationships with both survivors and sex workers who approached me (once they became known as such) was intended to lay the foundations of trust and knowledge with this population group, and this strategy proved successful. Both survivors of sex trafficking and sex workers with whom I had developed trust and familiarity shared the online recruitment flyer amongst their own friend networks, reaching survivors that may not otherwise have been accessed through posting in community groups. These acquaintances also reported being contacted and asked questions about whether it was safe to talk to me, indicating that they fulfilled an accidental role of informal gatekeepers to access to survivors.

4.3 Ethical Considerations

4.3.1 Confidentiality

Confidentiality (and its limits) was explained to participants prior to and at the beginning of interviews. The interviews took place in suitably confidential locations, and identifying information was excluded from the findings. Confidentiality, while a paramount consideration in all research with human participations, was especially vital given participants' potential to attach emotional and physiological arousal to perceptions of risk (Baker, 2005). Consequently, interviews were recorded, but were only listened to by me and were transcribed as soon as possible following the interview, at which time the transcripts and recordings were stored on a secure university server.

4.3.2 Informed consent

Prospective participants were given a participant information sheet (Appendix G for survivors, Appendix H for key informants), which detailed the purpose and nature of the research, how the research is to be conducted, and how information will be both used and stored. It also explained participants' right to confidentiality and time limits for withdrawal of their contributions. A voucher system was used to encourage participants, and each survivor who volunteered to be interviewed after pre-screening was given a \$40 petrol or supermarket voucher (key informants, on the other hand, were each given a \$20 voucher). However, in instances where participants showed discomfort or uncertainty about participating, they were given the vouchers regardless and assured they had no obligation to continue. Participants were invited to contact the researcher at any time during the

research process, and were asked to give oral consent in accordance with the consent form (for survivors, appendix I) or to sign a consent form (for key informants, appendix J) prior to beginning interviews. For the survey component, participant information constituted the first page of the survey.

4.3.3 Risks to participant safety

Identifying and responding to specific risks

Despite widespread concern amongst researchers about re-traumatising survivors of trauma through research participation, few authors have articulated specifically what these risks are, other than 'increased distress' due to revisiting traumatic content, or (less commonly stated or explained) the risk of retribution from perpetrators of violence (Clark & Walker, 2011; Cromer & Newman, 2011; Newman, Willard, Sinclair, & Kaloupek, 2001). The exceptions to this (see Decker, Naugle, Carter-Visscher, Bell, & Seifert, 2011; and Newman & Kaloupek, 2004) describe possible ramifications to participants such as reactivation of intrusive memories and other trauma-related sequelae, the legal consequences of disclosing events that include criminal activity or might be perceived to have an impact on parent capacity, and social shame and stigmatisation if their identities become known, such as through identifying features shared within research outputs. While each of these were planned for within the risk matrices, the risks of physical harm and emotional harm (and, in some situations, the actuality of this harm) repeatedly arose; consequently, I describe the management of each of these situations in greater detail here.

Given that the extent to which participants' experiences of sex trafficking is associated with organised crime was unknown at the outset of the research, maximising safety for both participants and the researcher required attention. Although in order to satisfy the criteria, only participants who had managed to leave the situations of violence or trauma related to the topic were selected to be interviewed, I recognised that they may still be connected to these situations, or be involved in other precarious living situations, and that therefore contact with participants would need to be managed exceedingly carefully to avoid putting them at risk (Sullivan & Cain, 2004). Establishing methods and preferred times of contact, as well as the acceptability of leaving messages, was done in advance with participants at the first contact, which Baker (2005) believes enhances participants' level of comfort with their participation as they gain confidence in the researcher's approach to maintaining their safety. Moreover, relationships were developed with the police in advance, in order for participants' needs for police support, if they arose, to be expedited. Ultimately, however, when issues of safety did arise for participants, they elected not to involve police and instead either work solely with me to identify safety options or to work with helping agencies within their communities.

In previous studies into slavery and exploitation, strategies such as intimidation, threats, and surveillance have been used against researchers and translators (Stringer & Simmons, 2014). I therefore removed my enrolment to vote and car registration (which contained home address details) from being accessible to the public, and used the mobile application Life360 when interviewing, which enabled me to record any locations visited and share them with trusted individuals (and which also provided a panic alarm function that transmits the current location to a designated individual). In addition, careful measures were taken at each interview and risk assessments developed accordingly. The risks inherent in initial contact with prospective participants (primarily to them, but secondarily to me) are also discussed in greater detail in the risk matrices later in this chapter.

Risk to participants from others

There were several occasions where I terminated interviews with participants partway through, or subsequently discarded the (at times immensely valuable) data they had provided due to immediate or high risks to their safety. In one memorable occasion, I screened the participant's safety both prior to and during the interview, as well as checking in twice in the two weeks following the interview – these screening questions included current proximity to and relationship with the abuser who was discussed in the interview, acceptable means of contact and the likelihood of these being intercepted, signs of abuse such as monitoring, physical violence, suspicion, and verbal violence or emotional manipulation in current relationships, current household dynamics, and on-going contact with anyone the participant was afraid of. Despite the breadth of these multiple conversations about both static and dynamic states of safety, the participant contacted me several weeks later to let me know that her current partner (despite not having played any role in her story of victimisation through trafficking) had discovered her messages to me and had beaten her so severely as a result that she was admitted to an intensive care unit at her local hospital. The only action available to me at that stage was to facilitate her contact with Women's Refuge, which she was, thankfully, receptive to.

Other risk-management interactions were more straightforward – participants disclosed, at the safety screening phase at the beginning of interviews, that they were still in contact with the primary abuser of their narratives and feared retribution if their participation was discovered, or that their current partners were either connected to these previous abusers or also demonstrated abusive or controlling behaviour. In these situations, the interview was cancelled and I worked with these women to identify the nature of the risks they were facing, strategies they used that had been effective in the past at mediating this risk, and what additional resources could possibly be accessed to promote their safety – such as women's refuges, stopping violence programmes, individual counselling, or accessing informal supports such as from family or friends. This greatly limited my access to data, as those who had to be excluded on the basis of safety concerns indicated that they had complex and compelling narratives relating to forced prostitution that represented vastly differing sets of victimisation dynamics from those who had been able to forge lives in which on-going abuse played a much smaller role. This, to me, exemplified the ways in which some groups – often those most subject to marginalisation – continue to be silenced through exclusion from participation on the basis of evident risk, despite the value of their experiences to others.

Emotional/psychological risks to participants

Sex trafficking is, by its very nature, distressing. In addition, given the likelihood of multiple adverse experiences as set out in the literature review, participants who have been trafficked are likely to have been subjected to numerous traumatic experiences throughout their lifetimes. Interviewing participants about sensitive subjects may cause them personal distress (Enosh & Buchbinder, 2005). However, “the decision to interview people about sensitive topics stems from the epistemological and ontological stance that knowledge and reality can only be sought from those who experience it” (Elmir, Schmied, & Wilkes, 2011, p. 13). Strategies to mediate this are suggested in the literature, such as maximising reciprocity and therefore reducing the potential for power imbalances, building rapport through initial phone calls and emails, demonstrating empathy throughout engagement, using appropriate self-disclosure, and using open-ended but sensitively phrased questions (Elmir, et al., 2011; Enosh & Buchbinder, 2005). The risk of exacerbating distress through discussion about sensitive experiences

was partly mitigated by allowing participants to pace the interviews; however, for some, the process still triggered distressing emotions or memories. When this occurred, participants were offered the option to stop or continue with the interview, and were given information about potential sources of support.

Baker (2005) also notes the risk of emotional harm that may be caused by rejection, and suggests proceeding with the interview stage and later discarding it rather than risking unintentionally reinforcing themes of rejection or unworthiness in the survivor's life. Correspondingly, in situations where the interview was unlikely to yield any useful data, it was completed anyway rather than stopping midway. I was also acutely aware that victims of interpersonal violence have also often been disempowered, silenced, and controlled. To avoid any replication of these dynamics within interviews, principles of Roger's Person-Centred Counselling were employed (for example, active and attentive listening, explicit empathy, congruence, warmth, and unconditional acceptance) to provide comfort throughout the research process, as discussed by Corey (1991), Nelson-Jones (1995) and Prochaska and Norcross (1994). This is consistent with the goal of wanting participants to *feel* heard, rather than just be heard (Baker, 2005). In Hom and Woods' (2013) study, informants discussed the "need to approach and engage women with non-judgmental attitudes and words, as sexually exploited women are extremely sensitive to any type of verbal and non-verbal judgment" (p. 80), and although this statement insinuates a definitive universal experience that poses some tension with my beliefs about plurality within and variability of such experiences, I heeded this caution in interviewing. Repositioning the balance of power to lie with the participant, rather than researcher, also helps to avoid (the potential for) re-experiencing dynamics of control as a result of the research (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). In accordance with Baker's (2005) recommendations, I also paid close attention to issues such as dress style, speech, cultural identity, and professionalism as potential barriers to engagement.

The likelihood that participants would have histories of prolonged and complex trauma, often coupled with the absence of supportive social structures, led me to anticipate, based on my experience working as a counsellor with survivors of sexual violence, that some participants may present with concerning psychological symptoms that could preclude them from giving coherent accounts of their experiences, or prompt reactivation (or 'triggering') of trauma and concurrent significant distress. This expectation proved correct – in one case, what I interpreted as a dissociative state led me to conclude that the participant in question was not in a safe emotional space to continue to participate. In another, distress and tearfulness effectively prevented the participant from being able to speak, and I felt that to reschedule would put her emotional well-being at risk. The first participant was currently engaging in brief counselling referred by her doctor; regardless, we discussed additional forms of support such as rape crisis helpline support. The second was not engaging in any formal support but was open to the idea of engaging with a therapist, and contacted me on two subsequent occasions to discuss this and to identify suitable low-cost or fully state-funded options, such as through an ACC-registered psychotherapist. Others showed low to moderate levels of distress, but simultaneously indicated a dedication to continuing with the interview and, when questioned, a firm belief that to do so would serve a therapeutic function and was therefore preferable to stopping the interview. In these situations, I focused less on responding in ways that would evoke additional disclosure or clarification, and more on responding in ways that validated their emotional responses, affirmed the 'rightness' of their actions at the time, acknowledged the depth of their distress and the validity of this, and provided space for

these emotions to be felt and expressed. As with perceived threats to physical safety, I considered the need to attend to participants' well-being as taking precedence over the potential to gather data.

4.3.4. Risk analysis matrices

These risk matrices were developed in an attempt to anticipate and plan for possible ethical challenges that may arise, and were separated into three separate sections – potential harm to participants, potential harm to me, and potential harm to the credibility or reputation of the research. These arose principally out of early discussions during supervision regarding the risks that could arise from the informal contact I had with (non-participating) survivors, and by the feedback I received and concerns that were shared at the doctoral seminar in my first year of candidacy. The nature of the research meant that supervision time was initially preoccupied with identifying and managing risk – much of it ambiguous. The early stages of research (particularly just prior to beginning recruitment) were particularly fraught with concerns about safety, many of which were raised by supervisors, colleagues, and friends rather than identified in advance by me – prompting the development of the matrices to assuage concerns and pre-empt possible threats. These matrices and advanced consideration of potential risk therefore provided a guide to consider challenges as they arose, allowing supervision time spent managing such challenging to gradually reduce. These served as a guide during unexpected periods of risk, such as unanticipated disclosures of harm. The only instances in which they were less effective were when they were overridden by concerns about appearing incapable, and therefore not following the intended debriefing or breaks from content exposure, as are detailed later in this chapter.

Table 3

Risk matrix of potential harm to participants

Category 1: Risk of Harm to the Participant					
	Potential Risk Situation	Likelihood	Potential Result	Protective Strategies	Actual Risk
1	Perpetrators discovering participants' contact with researchers (such as through monitoring of their phone or email accounts, or following them to interviews)	Possible	Moderate harm	Participants will only be selected to participate if they are no longer in exploitative situations. Pre-planned contact methods will be established with participants, including method, time, and who initiates contact; possible safe times and places to hold an interview; and giving the participant the option to not take anything away with them (such as participant information sheets). Specifically, counselling rooms convenient to the participant will be used, and participants can suggest ones that are close and that will preserve their anonymity, or, alternatively, will be given options to choose from. Aside from needing to be within business hours, participants can elect the time of the interviews. While hard-copy consent forms, referral information, and participant information sheets will be offered to participants at the time of the interview as well as being emailed or sent to them prior, they will be invited to discard these before leaving to minimise the risk of these being inadvertently discovered. Relationships with local sexual abuse help or rape crisis organisations and other support services have been developed in advance (for example, Lifewise Trust) in order for support-seeking to be expedient. Finally, care will be taken with all electronic data such as minimising contact by email (and not discussing sensitive information with participants via email), deleting recordings as soon as they have been uploaded to a secure University server, transcribing consent separately, and asking participants whether they would prefer hard or soft copies of their transcripts to review and amend.	Low
2	Talking with participants about their psychological survival strategies when this might preclude these continuing to be used as a protective mechanism	Possible	Extreme harm	In the event that emotional distress occurs and I pick up on this before, during, or after the interview, participants will be given options to either access support for their emotional experiences (such as accessing therapy through ACC-registered practitioners or community organisations) or options to help them to leave distressing situations that require those active coping mechanisms (such as through Women's Refuge).	Medium
3	Risk of triggering emotions associated with traumatic memories	Likely	Moderate harm	Post-interview debriefing will be provided, as well as the opportunity for additional meetings and/or ongoing contact via phone, text, or email if desired by the participant. Information about sources of potential support will be provided, including both general support (such as mental health services) and specialist services (such as domestic violence and sexual violence services). The participant will also be invited to contact the researcher in the days, weeks, and months following the interview if anything arises emotionally that they would like support in managing.	Low
4	Participants wanting help or support to escape dangerous situations, and being a target of violence, threats, or intimidation.	Unlikely	Extreme harm	Screening for risk (both physical and emotional) will take place with each prospective participant before it is decided whether or not they are suitable candidates. Prospective participants will be excluded from being to participate if they disclose currently being in dangerous situations, regardless of whether this risk is related to the harm being researched. However, if residual risk arises during the interview (for example, a long-standing threat from a non-cohabiting person) or if subsequent risks occur (such as a partner becoming violent), the participant will be assisted to access services such as through the Police, Women's Refuge, sexual violence services, or community social work agencies. Pre-screening will also serve the dual purpose of attempting to discern whether the participant themselves are the ones receiving and responding to messages (messages will be kept intentionally vague until contact by phone is able to be established for this reason), and to ask participants about their perceptions of their own safety, what they perceive as the main risks to their wellbeing, and what they believe the consequences might be if their involvement in the research is discovered.	Low

Table 4

Risk matrix of potential harm to researcher

Category 2: Risk of Harm to the Researcher					
	Potential Risk Situation	Likelihood	Potential Result	Protective Strategies	Actual Risk
1	Perpetrators knowing the research is being done	Likely	Minimal harm	A media presence will be avoided until the completion of the project; and discretion will be exercised in discussing anything about the project. In addition, specifics will not be discussed on social media, to protect against this being viewed by people who would react negatively to that knowledge. Public and media advocacy on behalf of the Child ALERT board that I sit on will therefore be undertaken by others for the duration of the research. While I may discuss risk with Police or other agencies if necessary, I will avoid going into detail about the specific situations, and will concentrate instead on seeking advice or securing assistance for participants, or on imminent risk situations if and when they arise. If people do contact me, I will confirm that forced prostitution and trafficking are the foci of the project without going into detail about progress or specific knowledge gained.	Low
2	Perpetrators of sex trafficking or forced prostitution knowing the researcher has received information about their offending from participants, and threatens and/or attempts violence or harm to the researcher	Unlikely	Extreme harm	As above, and conversations about progress will be limited to supervisors and advisors only. In addition, I will take safety precautions such as removing personal details from being publicly accessible, increasing personal safety measures (such as ensuring doors are locked and avoiding sharing details of whereabouts on social media), using a buddy system for any meetings that could be considered risky, and not meeting participants in unsafe or isolated places. If any threats arise, I will notify the Police, irrespective of whether these are conveyed directly or via participants.	Medium
3	Perpetrators knowing or suspecting that the researcher has relayed information to the Police, and directing threats, intimidation, or violence toward the researcher	Unlikely	Extreme harm	As above, in addition to discretion in communication with Police and other involved parties.	Medium
4	Risk of emotional harm to the researcher as a result of continuous, cumulative, and/or significant exposure to traumatic content	Possible	Moderate harm	I will schedule regular breaks from content exposure, and the I will debrief regularly with supervisors, ensure health-building activities are happening in other areas of life (including exercise, diet, sleep, and social time), and seek therapy and a break from research if the emotional impact becomes temporarily unmanageable.	Medium
5	Being around risky activities (e.g. drugs, violence, and gang involvement)	Unlikely	Minimal harm	Meetings will be planned so that research takes place in a setting considered safe by both researcher and participants (e.g. a counselling agency in a place populated by other people in an area where the participant resides. The researcher will confer with colleagues/supervisors about additional risks if they arise with individual participants or proposed meetings, and will have a safety plan and escape plan for each face-to-face meeting with participants.	Low

Table 5

Risk matrix of potential harm to the research

Category 3: Risks to the Integrity and Credibility of the Research					
	Potential Risk Situation	Likelihood	Potential Result	Protective Strategies	Actual Risk
1	Legality issues, such as witnessing illegal activities (for example, drug-taking), or hearing disclosures that compel statutory notifications	Unlikely	Minimal harm	I have set clear limits prior to conducting the research regarding what must, may, and may not be reported, regarding all conceivable activities that might be witnessed or learned (particularly with respect to children being present or exposed to illegal or harmful activities, or the imminent risk of extreme violence to the participant or others). I will not partake in any of these illegal activities, promise to keep these confidential, or participate in the minimising or hiding of such activities. Any interview will be discontinued if it becomes apparent or suspected that the participant is under the influence of substances, or if they attempt to take substances while with I am present.	Low
2	Discovering illegal activities involving violence or harm, and being questioned about the decision not to report these.	Possible	Moderate harm	I will seek second opinions from supervisors or advisors on 'grey areas' regarding situations that may fall into the category of mandated reporting, and a record will be kept of these and the personal decision-making process.	Medium
3	Risk of media coverage of the research/associated events	Possible	Minimal harm	I will maintain a low public profile regarding any media interest until the completion of at least data collection, and more likely completion of the analysis. Supervisors and/or advisors will be consulted with prior to any media involvement, and any requests will be carefully thought out before accepting in order to weigh up the potential benefits with the purposes and goals of the project and the readiness to engage with public opinion. In addition, I will access some form of media advice/training before engaging with the likely media interest, and will only agree to be interviewed when there is the potential for sufficient preparation and consultation with others.	Low
4	Disagreement with other groups who are opposed to the research purposes, methods, or findings	Likely	Minimal harm	I will only engage with groups who I suspect may use intimidation tactics or be confrontational with a support person present and/or in a public or neutral place, and will utilise support and/or supervision to develop a planned response to any likely questions they may have.	Low

4.4. Maintaining Integrity of Stories

I was principally concerned with allowing participants to exercise the agency they possessed based on their own interpretations of 'risk' and 'safety' rather than disempowering them by imputing assumptions about vulnerability or victimhood onto them, and sought guidance from previous authors. Mulla and Hlavka (2011) express their discomfort with the generalisation of all victims of violence into a particular 'class' of vulnerable participants, suggesting that victimhood, or victim status, is a fluid state and does not invariably distort levels of safety or risk involved in interviewing survivors of violence. The concept of 'risk' to participants should be considered within the contexts of social position, culture, and environment; for example, a participant whose daily life is saturated by 'risk' may view the potential for psychological distress to occur during an interview to be minor in comparison (Miller, Forte, Wilson, & Greene, 2006). The concept of vulnerability must therefore be interpreted as dynamic, and 'vulnerability' therefore assessed on a case-by-case basis (Alcoff & Grey, 1993; Lamb, 1990). Accordingly, research with any supposed 'vulnerable' group must be both intentional and reflexive, and privilege both process and outcome (Fonow & Cook, 1991). Researcher preconceptions and biases were therefore deliberately explored, as these are inevitably present in any study where the researcher has personal experience of the field (Ahern, 1999). However, my own personal experience is by no means representative of all survivors of sexual violence or exploitation, and especially of those subjected to extreme forms of exploitation such as trafficking. All efforts were therefore made to preserve the integrity of individuals' perspectives and convey these accurately to portray the wide range of experiences experienced by victims of trafficking.

During interviewing, I found that my own self-disclosure often precipitated deeper self-disclosure (or lessened self-concealment) in participants. Given the safety concerns that had preceded the data collection phase, this self-disclosure had to be carefully considered, used sparingly, and limited to information that could not negatively impact either personal safety or reputation. However, despite these pre-determined boundaries, the decision to reveal aspects of personal experiences within interviews was invariably based on intuitive judgement at the time. There were several interviews in which self-disclosure was felt to be paramount to put the participant at ease, minimise the potential for shame, and reassure the participant that their own disclosure would not elicit judging responses; such as during discussions about reliance on substances to maintain emotional coping, or during descriptions of inaction (often associated with intense shame) in the context of physical or sexual violence being perpetrated against participants or against people close to them. While at these times I alluded to aspects of shared experience, I was careful not to redirect the conversation to my own experience or share more than what was required for the participant's comfort in the process.

An unanticipated concern emerged in the form of my memory of stories and consequent querying of my integrity as a listener. After each interview, I was certain that the participant's stories would be indelibly etched in my mind; in particular, the minute, personal anecdotes that spoke of hope, pain, trust, and betrayal. When I went to begin re-reading stories, I was horrified at how many serious instances had slipped out of my mind, and began to wonder how the accounts of horrific and violating instances of abuse could be so quickly erased from my

psyche. However, the anecdotes that had been supplementary to the main plot, and told almost as incidental asides, had remained firmly in my brain and enabled me to picture each participant and to personalise them. I concluded that as shocking as the stories of interpersonal cruelty were, they did not epitomise or personalise the character of the participant; accordingly, they were not held in such a protective manner. On reflection, I believe this, in part, served as a mechanism through which my commitment to participants' stories and experiences could be upheld without either significant re-traumatisation or the reduction of participants' lives to their stories of victimhood. While this did not intrinsically threaten the integrity of data, it did raise personal questions about my capacity for continued compassion and consequent ability to treat the data and therefore the participants with integrity. My concluded rationale for defending the psyche while continuing to personalise participants and their stories, while theoretical, reassured me of my own capacity to undertake the research with integrity. Further, my academic supervisors offered the equally likely alternative explanation that my level of emotional engagement was mirroring that of my participants – if they recounted stories of trauma dispassionately, they are likely to expect a similar capacity to manage such disclosures without an outward outpouring of emotion.

4.5. Research Challenges

4.5.1 Challenging messages

Initial confronting messages through text or social media followed distribution of the recruitment flyer. One unpleasant surprise came in the form of a sexual gratification 'participant', who responded to the recruitment flyer online, initially presenting as a female survivor. They (gender unknown) sent several text messages to my research-specific phone number, inquiring as to what exactly constituted sex trafficking, which, as this had been a fairly common question both for legitimate participants and interested members of the public, did not seem suspicious. However, the tone quickly changed when the individual first refused a phone call before meeting (at which point I explained that I could not talk to them any further), asked for a picture, and then asked for a hug and a kiss on the lips if we did meet. Despite my request to stop messaging me, they sent a number of increasingly sexually explicit text messages until I had their number blocked. While unexpected, this could still be classed as a 'threatening' contact and was thus covered by the second risk matrix.

Within two days, the recruitment flyer I had posted in various community groups had been re-shared 56 times, and I had received 13 messages from women and girls expressing their interest in participating. One acquaintance then shared the flyer on the social media website Reddit, and a woman from one community online group asked if she could print the flyer and give it to some of her friends. The initial responses often consisted of either 'Hey' or 'I might be interested'. Upon receiving these responses, my training as a volunteer counsellor for Youthline⁷ became useful, as text messaging was one of the primary mediums used to connect with youth and so drawing out hesitant, wary individuals who had tentatively made contact was a familiar experience. Some initial responses were a little more challenging. One woman sent

⁷ A youth counselling service operating primarily through phone, text, and email.

me a message saying “What makes you qualified to understand people’s stories, and why do you want them?” and another opened with “Do you want my story so you can gossip about it with your mates?” Both led to excellent discussions about the duty of a listener and advocate, my hopes for what the research might achieve, what they might see at the value of researching the topic, and the role of the storyteller in determining what stories are told and how they are framed. I also emphasised to everybody who made contact that their stories, especially about a very difficult and emotionally charged experience, should only be told if the teller feels comfortable to do so. Both women ended up deciding to take part in the research.

4.5.2. Estimating eligibility against incentives

As anticipated, there was some confusion over the distinctions between intimate partner violence, stranger sexual assault, intra-familial sexual abuse, consensual sex work, and trafficking. Many women contacted me with stories about how they had been forced to have sex with somebody while out with friends, how their partners had made them have sex and hit them when they resisted, or how they were regularly beaten by their partners, who also gave them money, food, and clothing. In addition, others said they would happily share their experiences of doing sex work in the past but, when gently questioned about the context in which it occurred, said they were doing it because they were poor, homeless, or desperate and nobody else was involved in their choice or profiting from it. Evidently, they conceived this sex work as ‘forced’, but the nature of the force was not within the scope of my research; thus, they also did not meet the criteria. I did however direct them towards appropriate Women’s Refuges and sexual violence help organisations in their areas, and invited them to contact me if they needed further options for support.

In two cases, I suspected (based on their questions, answers, and demeanours) that participants were either participating for the voucher incentive while not necessarily being forthcoming about their experiences, or participating in a state of intense emotional distress (despite answering screening questions to the contrary) in order to obtain the vouchers for groceries. In the first instance, I believed the participant was shaping her responses in order to fit the criteria and therefore receive the voucher. I gave her the cash equivalent of the voucher amount, thanked her for her interest, and told her I was not going to interview her. In the second instance, with the extremely distressed survivor who vacillated between unemotional recounting of extreme episodes of violence and periods of tremors, confusion, and shallow breathing, I turned off the recorder partway into the interview, deleted the recording, handed her the voucher and commenced emotional safety planning.

Two participants consistently gave the impression that they anticipated disbelief, with explanations prefaced with ‘I know it sounds crazy, but...’ and ‘I get how ridiculous this all sounds’. This anticipation of disbelief was familiar to me from past work with sexual violence survivors, and did not negate my belief in their stories. Both also showed consistent ‘freezing’ responses when talking about particular offenders (which, as demonstrated in chapter two, is a common response to trauma), which subsided when talking about other offenders, demonstrating aspects of vigilance or dissociation common amongst survivors of trauma. The instinctiveness of these non-verbal cues reinforced my perception of them as being forthcoming

and embodying typical reactions that anticipated disbelief, and I reassured them that the disjointed and often incredible accounts would not be received with doubt. Both then conveyed that they felt comfortable to share these stories.

4.6. Managing (and Valuing) Secondary Exposure to Trauma

4.6.1. Realising the impacts on the self

Several authors have noted the absence of guiding literature focusing explicitly on researchers' lived experiences of connecting with individuals who are sharing experiences that can be emotive, controversial, and deeply relationally embedded (see Dickson-Swift et al., 2007). Similarly, Gabriel et al. (2017) state that "there is a paucity of literature that describes the dilemmas experienced by researchers during an in-depth project with a vulnerable population and the associated decision-making processes" (p. 157-158), in part prompting my commitment to exposing my own complex journey of decision-making and personal process during this research. There were many instances that could possibly constitute examples of parallel process that occurred during the course of the research. Despite my knowledge as a practitioner about the potential for secondary traumatic stress and possible counter-transferential issues, I expected that previous exposure to violence would insulate me from this experience while researching. Other researchers, however, speak candidly about the inevitability of such adverse impacts while researching traumatic or sensitive topics. In Gabriel et al.'s (2017) account of researching trauma, for example, the authors recount their varied responses to bearing witness to one participant's story, such as the desire to help and accordant frustration at being limited to the researcher role; crying when listening to the interview; subsequent reflection of their own childhoods, which precipitated their decisions to disclose their own experiences to others; prolonged despair; and becoming hypervigilant to the potential of violence by others. This range of effects – all arising from one storied account of trauma and the context that it occurred it – clearly exhibits the prospective impacts of secondary exposure, especially when engaging intensely with human emotion.

During the period of deepest personal investment, which was marked by months of prolonged immersion into the narratives gathered from participants, I did not consider the possibility that the unexpected and atypical emotions, thought patterns, and behaviour I was exhibiting was associated with the process of data collection and my personal responses to the nature of the data or my interactions with participants. Given that I was taking a break from social work practice and thus not using clinical supervision, nobody else was in a position to identify this as vicarious trauma either. Rather, I dismissed it as overwork, and later simply as evidence of my own inadequacy at 'living life well', until it reached a point where I could no longer ignore the detrimental impact it was having on my wellbeing, my relationships, and ultimately my capacity to perform well in any of my roles. At this point, I accessed professional help, committed to exposing this vulnerability to friends and colleagues, and consulted trusted others who had done research on topics with similar undertones of violence, abuse, or oppression. While I could have raised these experiences during academic supervision much earlier, the delay between making links between my distress and the stories I was engaging with – and reluctance to repeat such traumatic stories without express invitation to do so – meant that I did not discuss

this until much later, when it had largely resolved. This was a valuable point of learning; if I was to repeat a similar project I would utilise the supervision process differently – and establish the acceptability of following the plan set out in the second risk matrix with supervisors beforehand to avoid all doubt about the appropriateness of doing so. In addition, however, it highlighted the limitations of (particularly often web-based) academic supervision in highly sensitive research – the opportunity for (face to face) clinical supervision, which did not represent the same concerns about being seen to be ‘coping’ or ‘competent’, proved to be an essential component of self-care.

4.6.2. Avoidance of content

At the culmination of the interviews and the transcription of these, I perceived my research as being on track for my intended finish date, and enthusiastically pored over additional texts on related topics - anything, I realised on reflection, that would delay the moment when I would be required to engage wholly, meaningfully, and repetitively with the dialogues of participants, despite my wholehearted and almost obsessively single-minded fascination with my topic and with the experiences of my participants. When I ran out of material that I could reasonably justify spending time reading, I sought other diversions – writing articles, for example, or preparing for conferences. Four months had passed before I came to the conclusion that I could not delay the next stage any longer. It was then that I realised I simply could not read the transcriptions of the interviews, and I sat at my desk, noticing the tension in my body and the powerful desire to physically distance myself from the task, and became convinced that I was not sufficiently equipped to undertake a doctorate. While previously doubts about my academic ability had been periodic and had lingered, causing me considerable distress, I had, until then, felt able to combat these with internal reassurance, reminding myself of my achievements in earlier university courses, the guidance of my supervisors, the faith in my ability from those close to me, and my absolute determination to complete the programme. These reassurances no longer sufficed; for some weeks I did little (other than within the hours of my part-time employment in the field of domestic violence) but weigh up the relative benefits of continuing or quitting. This was so far removed from my typical behaviour that it alone challenged my perception of self and, correspondingly, my belief in my ability to achieve anything at all. This did eventually resolve, aided by the seeking out of comfort and corresponding subjective emotional safety offered by the company of others. What it did illustrate, however, was another dimension of ‘silencing’ – this time, a defensive psychological strategy of self-silencing that prohibited the excavation of these secondary experiences through writing.

4.6.4. Parallel processes and using reflexivity

Unfortunately, no longer being hindered by barriers to actually re-engaging in the research did not equate to being unaffected by the process I was undertaking. At the inception of the project, I had declared myself ready and able to self-identify, manage, regulate, and be reflexive about any secondary impacts of trauma arising from repetitious and protracted engagement with participants’ trauma narratives. Not only was this presumptuous and incorrect, but also, in retrospect, laughable. My experience in the field, while of some benefit to my style of interviewing, was not extensive enough, clinical enough, supervised enough, or challenging enough to have equipped me to elicit and attempt to understand the diverse and profoundly

intimate stories of participants who had suffered immensely without this causing significant impact to the self. Nor did it enable me to recognise these impacts on the self until I began in desperation to seek an explanation for the unfamiliar suffering I had begun to experience. This manifested in three identifiable and interlinked ways: the erosion of my self-perceived competence, confidence, and related identity; the alterations in my relationships that were precipitated by those changes in self-perception; and the felt shame, hopelessness, and distress that evoked an acute craving for self-destructive methods of coping, paralleling those used by my participants.

On noticing this, I sought therapy, having begun to acknowledge the eerily similar emotions (such as shame, inadequacy, and anger), relationship behaviour (such as withdrawal, polarising, or interpreting communication as reinforcing the view of the self as unworthy), and temptation to engage in behaviour seemingly befitting of such emotional turmoil (such as substance abuse) between participants and myself. To my intense gratitude, this proved immediately fruitful, according me the opportunity to give voice to the consuming darkness that accompanied my immersion in participants' stories. Through this process, I managed to extricate the ideal of 'competence' (read: unaffectedness) as being able to maintain my professional self in the presence of any emotionally-charged narrative from the reality of being a woman in my twenties, balancing multiple roles and responsibilities, having had my own personal trauma, and originating from a social background that was both loaded with expectation and differed extremely from those of my participants. This did not eradicate the secondary impacts of trauma or the concurrent issues of 'self' I was facing, but it did equip me to continue, reflectively and reflexively, and to take joy from the process as well as pain.

4.6.5. Staying 'well' through secondary experiencing

Gabriel, James, and Cronin-Davis et al (2017) argue that "central to work within the counselling professions is the capacity to proffer humanitarian values and ethical principles not only to our clients – in this case, our research participants – but also to ourselves" (p. 162) and goes on to identify the prevailing protective factor in their study as the presence of multiple researchers within the research team who could regularly attend to each other's disturbing personal memories, reactivation of personal trauma reactions, and other psychological reactions as they arose in response to participants' narratives. While I had made every effort to attend to the wellbeing of participants, I had prepared less adequately for the secondary impacts on the self (though concerns about this had been raised by supervisors and colleagues in advance of beginning the research, thus contributing to the risk matrices). Throughout the process of interacting with participants and immediately afterward, I tried (often somewhat unsuccessfully) to use methods such as a research journal and, later, psychotherapy, to identify, consider, attend to, and analyse experiences of transference and counter-transference. I did this on the premise that although influenced by my own background, emotionality, and social positionality, as an interviewer I was also functioning to some degree as a mirror (or, arguably, a repository) of the embodied emotional, spiritual, and somatic experiences of clients. As such, I expected that some of these experiences may begin to be reflected in my own perception of my identity and my emotional functioning, and the physiological manifestation of such experiences. However, the comparative emotional safety of such analysis and response transformed, at

some point, into a mass of darkness that transcended my preparedness to attend to minor and discrete experiences of counter-transference or vicarious trauma. This, I presumed, was inextricably linked to both counter-transference and vicarious trauma more generally, although I also acknowledge the liminal state of research and being a researcher – the ambiguous or transitional state where, in this case, the emotional impacts emerging directly from research intersected with those arising from a potential reactivation of personal trauma. Eventually, it reached a level of severity during which I found it difficult to value this as a source of academic insight; rather, I was struggling to maintain any sense of self – an example of secondary experiencing of trauma that I now feel holds significant implications for my own strategies for doing research in this or related areas.

The moment at which I realised the depth of my enmeshment in the ‘badness’ (for want of a better term) that was texturing almost every fragment of participants’ stories of their lives, and, temporarily, my own life, was precipitated by the stark realisation that immersion in the research had profoundly altered my perception of sexuality. I consider, even retrospectively, my previous beliefs about sexuality – even post-rape - to have been healthy, inclusive of emotional state considerations, and positive in the sense that sexuality was conceptualised as a fully-integrated, socially-shaped aspect of ‘self’ with the potential for joy, expression, and honest intimacy. Throughout the interviewing, transcribing, and data analysis stages, this had changed dramatically. While the synergistic nature of impacts from previous experiences precludes absolute identification of what specifically prompted the shift away from the perception of sex and sexuality as relatively ‘safe’, the timing and rapidly cumulative nature of secondary exposure to narratives heavily featuring the body as a designated site of male sexual violence is suggestive that carrying out the research was the likely cause of this shift. During therapy, I became aware that I had begun to regard sexuality as inherently dangerous, and sex itself as representing an inevitable experience of violation, irrespective of the circumstances in which it might occur.

This was invaluable regarding further consideration of survivors’ multiple and often prolonged experiences of rape and rape-related violence and subsequent expectations of (and motivations for engaging in) later sexual encounters, including with partners. However, it also represented the need to extricate myself, to an extent, from the potential for counter-transference and general vicarious trauma, in order to mitigate the risk of further wounding of the psyche that I believed would ultimately have been counterproductive. Therapy provided an invaluable mechanism through which to work out these threats to my sense of self, examine problematic beliefs that had formed as a result of the research, and address the sense of isolation that arose out of the holding of multiple and traumatic secrets – especially those that could not be expunged by writing because of the very specific nature of the violence that would be immediately identifying if it was included. In addition, it functioned as quasi-supervision in the interim between deciding additional help was needed, and identifying a suitable clinical supervisor. Most valuable, however, was the potential to positively utilise the parallel processes that were occurring, which I discuss next.

4.6.6. Using a depth psychological approach

Identifying emotional and bodily responses and establishing their likely origin was instrumental in providing insight into possible links within participants' sequences of experiences – the aspects of experiencing that had been 'silenced' for me, whether socially or psychologically, were possibly echoing those being silenced by participants. As I explored my own responses in therapy throughout the interviewing period, I was able to hold this insight to inform my questioning in later interviews and invite consideration of experiences that could potentially be mirroring my own. This paid off; participants twice made these connections when I gave them space to do so (firstly in relation to sexuality, and secondly in relation to trauma and subsequent substance use). Despite this 'making space' for such connections to become explicit, I was careful not to make these linkages verbally within these conversations, to ensure that these experiences did naturally emerge and were not accidentally imputed on participant dialogue based on my own experiences.

My interest in how this impacted the research process led me to explore previous authors' use of a depth psychological approach, which necessitates the consideration of the unconscious during the entire research process. Concepts central to a depth psychological approach include subjectivity, recognition of context, consideration of diverse perspectives, ontological commitment to multiple truths, integration of the influence of the unconscious, and an open mindset (Yakushko, Buckland, Fullinwider, & Pikiwicz, 2013), and use of these concepts throughout each step of the research process can enable greater subjectivity through the recognition of both the individual and collective unconscious (Coppin & Nelson, 2005). Hutcheson (2013) suggests such research can effectively use "non-conscious, embodied interactions through incorporation of concepts from psychoanalysis" (p. 478), which locates emotion as precognitive and as material that, while not explicitly articulated, can be identified through recognising bodily effects, facial expressions, body temperature, twitches, changes to breathing, and cadence and flow of speech. This is facilitated by the researcher's ability to switch between 'participating' and 'observing'; in other words, managing the emotional atmosphere through empathic reasoning (Bondi, 2003). This attention to participants' emotional presentation was something I had already been automatically practising, given its importance in regular social work interviewing. However, a depth psychological approach also involves advanced researcher subjectivity, which can be conceptualised as a reflexive imperative that develops the researcher's way of organising, interpreting, and understanding their data through analysis of their own beliefs and emotions (Kleinman & Copp, 1993), and requires the recognition and exploration of personal beliefs and anxieties. It was this facet that I found compelling after this experience of parallel experiencing, and utilised these linkages that developed during the therapy process to inform my inquiry during subsequent interviews.

4.7. Conclusion

This chapter covers three core domains – the influence of personal history, the ethical challenges of conducting research into a hidden, controversial, and invisibilised phenomenon, and the implications of parallel experiencing on researcher wellness, as well as the benefits of using insight from this in interviewing. As a qualitative researcher, and more specifically as a narrative inquirer whose research design is premised on the values of social constructionism

and feminism, my personal, academic, and professional history are inseparable from my identity as researcher, and, correspondingly, my identity as researcher informs my engagement with participants and my analysis of the data. Accordingly, my socio-cultural background and my history of personal trauma (and recovery) both influence my understanding of my findings, and my emotional responses to these. This process also occurs in reverse – exposure to and immersion in traumatic content shaped my own emotional experiencing. After seeking therapy to support my wellbeing during this process, I explored the utility of a depth psychological approach that would enable this experiencing to be productively used to add an additional layer of data eliciting and analysis. However, as demonstrated by my discussion in this chapter, conducting this research was far from straightforward – informal contact, preclusion of typical avenues for decision-making, isolation and consequent ‘holding’ of content, and physical and emotional safety issues all had to be navigated over the course of the research.

The use of voice, and the constrained acknowledgements of harm related to sexual violence both individually and secondarily, held significant implications for my interviewing, and my consideration and analysis of data. This, I feel, is both a strength and a weakness – it accorded the elicitation of experiences that may otherwise go unvoiced, and there was already tangible silencing across both my own and participants’ experiences. However, it also potentially informed the direction of conversations, leading to some experiences being explored potentially at the expense of others. I argue though that this would be the case irrespective of the researcher’s background, and, while it should be made explicit, is both an unavoidable and valuable part of feminist, qualitative, narrative research. This chapter thus concludes my analysis of process. In the following chapter, I set out the first of the findings chapters (‘context’) and consider participants’ recounts of their early lives, their recruitment into victimisation, and the facets of their backgrounds that influenced the development of their identities, vulnerability, and agency during this period of their lives.

5 Context: Setting the Scene and Locating the Culture

5.1. Introduction

Chapter two reviewed the extant literature related to sex trafficking, including bodies of knowledge on social, cognitive-emotional, and neurobiological effects of psychological trauma; effectively creating a backdrop of knowledge from which to consider participants' stories of victimisation. However, findings of this research do not entirely align with the presuppositions set out in the literature, such as victims' total reliance on abusers and erosion of independent thought. Conversely, as I will discuss in the following chapters, victim-abuser dynamics represented in participants' narratives resemble some aspects of attachment/bonding, trauma responses, appeasement, and socially shaped vulnerability to grooming. However, throughout these narratives, participants also demonstrate the ability to actively survive hardship, resist hopelessness, and exercise personal power to influence situations of victimisation. In chapter three, I set out my narrative framework for analysis, consisting of the three core domains of context, temporality, and interaction. This chapter focuses on context, and the following two chapters focus on temporality and interaction. Here, I lead the reader through the context of participants' stories. First, I look at what, specifically, about their early lives made them vulnerable and how these experiences acted as precursors to exploitation. Secondly, I consider the ways in which participants were victimised. Third, I look at how abusers established and maintained control. Finally, I set out the survival (and resistance) strategies used by participants.

The beginnings of sex trafficking situations occurred in a multitude of ways; however, commonalities included manipulation of pre-existing vulnerability, the use of physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse, and the assuming of some level of control over the participants' decision-making. The process of victim recruitment as each participant experienced it is set out in this chapter. This is followed by an exploration of participants' perceptions of 'place', and the meanings they ascribe to this. I then examine the range of methods used by abusers to gain and exercise power over victims; the manifestation of participants' appeasement behaviour in response to abusers' violence; participants' strategies for abuse resistance and their limitations, and the potential for severe consequences from attempting to subvert abusers' control. Finally, I conclude by highlighting the methods employed by participants that enabled them to survive (and construct meaning from) the harsh realities of their individual situations, and (re)constitute their self-identities as victims, survivors, parents, partners, and social actors.

This 'context' chapter is set out temporally – it attempts to track the evolving context of participants' lives and settings of their victimisation beginning with the entry into victimisation, how the perpetration of trafficking occurred from the perspectives of participants, how control was established and maintained, and the ways in which participants survived and resisted abuse.

5.2. Entry

5.2.1. Beginning of offending

The periods of childhood and adolescence appeared instrumental in precipitating participants' initial vulnerability to sex trafficking. While the physical risk present in participants' early lives was variable, their home situations ranged from family difficulties and youth delinquency to the purposeful selection and sale of young people. For some, participation in sex work was compelled by groups or gangs; for others, intimate partners or family members became their primary abusers by exploiting them for profit (despite subsequent involvement of potentially organised networks). I first look at group-organised exploitation.

Hope, for example, became involved with a 17 year old male when she was 14, following her parents' separation, and subsequently joined a hierarchically-structured but largely disorganised youth street gang at age 15. The other members of this gang⁸ insisted she begin selling sex for the group's collective profit or face the standard beating (or, alternatively, rape) given to members who were deemed to be demonstrating non-adherence to the group's expectations:

There was actually a group of us that ended up being - well I guess you could call it 'pimped' out on the street to earn money for... the bosses really, of our group. And obviously if we weren't going to abide by what they were going to say then well we would be in danger, whether it would be getting beaten up, whether it be that they decide to have their own way with us, especially the males. – Hope.

This excerpt demonstrates the lack of perceived autonomy Hope experienced in the gang, and her awareness of the ever-present risk of sexual violence by the (more powerful) males. Similarly, Kayla was also forced to prostitute at the age of 13 by a youth gang, although one that appeared disorganised and only minimally hierarchical, with girls close to her age 'managing' her work by identifying and delivering her to clients and handling monetary transactions. She had breached bail, leading her to seek refuge at any place her friends identified as 'safe' from discovery by authorities. At one such place located for her by a friend, an older male raped her and then delivered her to a group of (somewhat known) adolescent girls, who exploited her by forcing her to submit to provide sexual services while retaining the profit for themselves.

I met up with an old friend from the school that I had left and her boyfriend at the time my parents were looking for me when I was I think it was when I was on bail and I had run away... There was no one there, and from that [the friend's boyfriend] had his way with me⁹, and then took me to a couple of girls who lived in a different area. They must have talked when I wasn't around and then the girls decided that they were going to put me to work on the street. They took all of my possessions. – Kayla.

Kayla had no input into the circumstances of her victimisation, as transport, place, and clients were all determined by the more subjectively powerful members of the group, which she

⁸I use the word 'gang' with some reluctance; the group appeared to comprise loosely organised and instructed collection of youth

⁹Kayla later clarified that 'had his way with me' meant rape.

believed was operated by adults behind the scenes. Jack, on the other hand, knowingly entered into a prospecting relationship with a gang in the face of an absence of viable alternative families, and his reliance on substances and his association with this prominent and (as depicted in his description) feared gang positioned him as vulnerable to instruction from higher-ranked members, who ultimately subjected him to forced prostitution at age 14. At the time, he did not perceive this as being 'forced', because he had been given an alternative (beating the gang's adversaries and stealing from people) and so considered sex work to be the more desirable of the two options.

It started off with the drugs and that which was all good, you know, I thought it was ok being a druggie myself at the time. And then when that wasn't cutting it they had me go out to do sex work. – Jack

Despite this illusion of full consent, Jack was not permitted to exercise choice regarding his continued involvement in sex work, or in the organisation of it.

Compulsion into prostitution by gangs/groups as collective abusers, however, was the experience of a minority of participants. More commonly, the primary abuser had been someone with whom participants had been in domestic or familial relationships. Accordingly, I now turn to these situations of victimisation. For Corith, Des, and Celeste, the abusers were their intimate partners – people they met as teenagers after having little sense of family unity, and who gradually groomed them into submitting to their violence. Corith's excerpt illustrates the centrality of 'love' as a prerequisite for abuse in this context.

It was violent, really violent sometimes. I ended up in hospital a few times, just from how abusive, physically and emotionally that he was. There were some days where he actually made me feel good but that didn't last long. I had no one. I got kicked out of home when I was 11, and I've never really had anyone so I think for me it was more just finding someone that would comfort me... At the beginning it was teenage love I suppose. We got on really well, we'd play fight, we'd do everything. – Corith

Des, on the other hand, was entering adolescence and, simultaneously, a relationship with an adult male who opportunistically exploited her.

I was 13 and I went with my best friend to a party and I met this 24 year old. He seemed like a nice guy... so after a while we started going out and that and I told my parents and like they were concerned for me but because he seemed like a nice fellow, they didn't really mind... he said to hop out of the car and I said 'what's going on?' And then he said 'oh I don't have enough money and I need you to prostitute', and I was like 'nah I don't want to'. And he was like 'nah I need you to, you are going to, or else this [a beating] is going to happen to you'. – Des

While Des's 'boyfriend' constructed a space for exploitation that precluded defiance of his wishes, Celeste's induction into exploitation was insidious and premised on longer-term grooming and manipulation.

I was in a relationship with a guy and he was forcing me to start working in a massage parlour...I couldn't understand firstly it was a massage parlour and you had to have sex and found out what it was all about and then I didn't want to do the job. - Celeste

Tiffany's story bore notable parallels to Celeste's. Tiffany met her abuser aged 21, and believes her eagerness to accept his behaviour was driven by the noticeable lack of love and commitment in her family during her childhood. He initially lavished on her the love and commitment she craved. After moving in together, he subjected her to increasing levels of violence and degradation, eventually forcing her to sell sex to people he would select in order to fund his own wants.

I moved in with him like after knowing him four weeks, you know, and then it just all changed. He was so evil shall we say, but even then I don't even think he knew it, do you know what I mean. He just became really abusive. I don't even know why I put up with it. - Tiffany

Jessica's experience of being exploited by an intimate partner was slightly different. She ran away from an extremely abusive home environment aged nine, met a street sex worker, and later began a non-sexual 'relationship' with him that later became sexual after she had begun working for him on the street. He asked her to sell her virginity at age 10, and dressed her up for the 'client'. While she assented to this, her age and corresponding lack of social power (the ability to access a range of choices, access resources, and assert autonomy), dependence on him as a sole source of both affection and provision of basic necessities, and an absence of viable alternatives (in addition to the legislative definitions of sexual connection with children and young people) clearly precluded consent.

I was 9 years old and then I ran away from home and I was left to my own devices on the streets and I [after living with street workers for a year] met this guy and I started to see him. He was a lot older than me, I was 10 he was 19 and yeah I fell for him. I was sort of in exposed [to] sex work you know... but my partner never actually done anything I was a virgin and one night, he was a heroin addict and he was sick [from heroin withdrawal] and I asked how I could help and he said would you do anything for me and I said yeah and he got up and dressed me up and put me on K Road¹⁰ and my first job was this guy he took me to a hotel and he paid \$600 for my virginity. – Jessica.

While Corith, Des, and Celeste's (and to a lesser extent Jessica's) abusers had initially adhered to the 'typical' trajectory of intimate partner violence, Sarah and Sophia's experiences differed significantly in that they appeared to have been purposefully targeted through mediums other than romantic partnership. Sarah's abuser was also an intimate partner, who had selected and groomed her for her potential ability to provide him with money. They met on a chat line when Sarah was 15, after which he exerted psychological manipulation to pressure her into taking

¹⁰ Karangahake Road, a well-known street for sex work to take place in Auckland

part in sex work. He then recanted on his promise of giving her a share of the money, and forced her to continue to sell sex or risk exposure and humiliation.

I first got into it when I was 15 and I lived with my dad in the country, and my dad would often go to the pub and leave me home alone on the week nights. I started ringing a free chat line called Hot Gossip. And I met this older man, on there, and we started seeing each other, he was about 35... He made it sound really good, and he said he knew a way for me to earn lots of money, and he said 'you're really pretty, you'd be perfect for the job, and I could help you find the men and take you to their house'. – Sarah

Sarah's determination to conceal the abuser's offending from her family provides further scope for the abuse to continue. Conversely, Sophia believes her family were actively knowledgeable about, and therefore complicit in, her victimisation. Her abuser inserted himself into her life when she was 12, and her family consented to him moving her to Auckland to live there permanently, despite her age and his obvious intention of beginning a sexual relationship with her.

Um, I actually met an ex-partner, who I'm no longer with now and, um he promised my family he would look after me and he didn't. And he took me from [my home town] and actually trafficked me and sold me out. – Sophia

Similarly, both Laila and Shannon were exploited for profit by members of their immediate family. Laila's abuser was her older half-sister, whom she did not know as a child but moved in with as a young adolescent. In financial desperation resulting from her heroin addiction, Laila's sister invited men to whom she owed money to rape Laila (initially, while Laila was unconscious after being drugged with heroin) in lieu of paying back the money she owed to suppliers. Laila was 14 at the time. Later, Laila's history repeated itself; one of her intimate partners used violence and the threat of social humiliation to coerce her back into the sex industry to provide for his drug habit.

She had drug debts, you know, and she'd be like you can fuck my sister clear my debt because she wanted money... My sister was basically a gang girl yeah and I would baby sit her kids yeah she was doing parties and stuff like that. Afterwards she pretty much sold me to her friends for drugs. – Laila

Like Laila, Shannon was subjected to exploitation by a family member. She met her birth mother, whom she had believed dead, when she was 13. She moved in with her mother and stepfather, enticed by the lack of rules in the household in comparison to the stringent boundaries imposed by her previous caregiver(s), and her stepfather immediately began to sexually groom her. Her mother was complicit in this, grooming her for, normalising, and even promoting sexual contact between Shannon and her stepfather, later expanding this to include other 'clients'.

My birth mother had a lot of input into my later teenage years when she got me to come and live with her and her new husband and allowed her husband to use me as his baby maker because my mother couldn't have children anymore. – Shannon

Home environments also precipitated the introduction of the primary abuser. Stacey, for example, had an abusive father and her father's gang affiliations and associated behaviours pervaded her recollections of her upbringing, and, she believed, strongly influenced her acceptance of what constituted normal adult behaviour in relation to sexual activity, violence, and crime. At 15, she moved in with a gang member to escape the abuse she suffered at home, and was forced by him to make money by having sex with men that he solicited and arranged on her behalf. She believes the money was funnelled upwards within the gang, but expressed uncertainty at the level of organisation involved in her exploitation and that of girls she knew of in identical situations within the gang.

We'd get beaten up [at home] yeah, there's always something you don't want your kids to go through... Now I went to _____ and I hooked up with the Black Power... [I was] nearly 16. - Stacey

Michelle and Shar were the only participants whose exploitation was not facilitated by a partner, gang/peer group they were already associated with, or a family member. However, their exploitation was still associated with gang activity, and the corresponding unofficial sanctioning of the use of underage girls' bodies for income-generation through prostitution within certain gangs, as evidenced by multiple participants' narratives.

Michelle had just turned 16 when her friend's gang-patched¹¹ mother encouraged her to sell sex on the streets, setting up clients for her and taking all of the money while giving Michelle only a hit of methamphetamine by way of recompense. This also functioned as a way of maintaining Michelle's cooperation, along with fear and the abuser's assertions of dominance.

All my mates they were on curfew so they were all stuck at home and one night I just happened to pop in there and they were all getting wasted and the mum was like she wanted to go out and make some money. And all three of my mates looked at me... She was like oh yeah come on then girl jump in the car. She wasn't very talkative to me. She drove straight to Otahuhu get out the car and you stay here I've got some things to do and she'd be back and she got another lady on the street this other old school lady to watch me to make sure I don't [take any of the money], to watch how many rides¹² I do because then she will know. – Michelle

Shar, on the other hand, had what she perceived as a positive relationship with the mother of a high-ranking gang member. When she offered Shar the opportunity to 'work' to benefit both of them, she eagerly agreed, having been dependent on adult 'partners' for financial survival since leaving home aged 14.

So I thought that it was doing a good job, doing what I was doing, because again I had no self-worth, no value, no anything, because everything that I knew was taken from me... I didn't have a say in anything. – Shar

¹¹ The representation of formal admission to a gang by the wearing of gang insignia

¹² Sexual transactions with clients

As shown here, participants were inducted into exploitation through a wide variety of ways and through multiple, and often overlapping, categories of abusers. Their initial (and often evolving) perceptions of these abusers' actions and their victimisation, however, was often embedded within the normalisation of this violence and constrained power. Further, as evidenced by the quotes above, abusers could be individual and opportunistic, could pose as boyfriends/partners, could be organised groups or gangs, and could be family members.

5.2.2. Initial perceptions of the situation

Participants' recollections of their first impressions at the starting point of victimisation was immensely variable. Some were constrained from exercising choices about intimate relationships by the normalisation of the manifold forms of abuse against their bodies throughout their childhoods, adolescences, and early adulthoods. The conditioned acceptance of such abuse appeared to reflect one or both of the following: (1) a lack of exposure to alternative (re)constructions of gender where bodily sovereignty was made possible by other proximal actors, and (2) cognitive (re)appraisal that suppressed any acknowledgement of power-removal to preserve the illusion of choice and agency. We can see this in the stories of Stacey and Michelle, both of whom initially endorsed the apparent unity and inclusion offered by the victimisation.

Well at first I thought it was a family. It felt like we were a family, [even after] I started working. – Stacey

For these participants, awareness of the inherently abusive nature of the abuser-victim relationship did not evolve until much later. Paradoxically, many recalled feeling an intuited sense of unease or discomfort at the time of beginning victimisation even as they accepted and even embraced the contextual relationship of abuse. For instance, although Michelle reportedly 'volunteered' to be 'managed' by her principal abuser despite no recompense (seemingly as an apparent method of accessing excitement, escape, and inclusion) she also states that when she was first introduced to the scene she felt the situation was:

[It felt] gross, disgusting, because that friend [selling sex] I went to school with her at intermediate and I kind of knew her back then, and the mum. So to find out that [she was prostituting for the mum] was a bit really fucked up. That is all I can say: 'Oh my God, you are the lady who used to come to school and pick her up and do all that school mother/daughter shit, and now oh my gosh you are selling your daughter on the streets.' – Michelle

As her narrative continued, she then demonstrated some insight into how exploitative the situation was (and shortly afterward ceased working for the gang-affiliated woman exploiting her, chose another 'patch' and began working for herself). However, she also acknowledged that full comprehension of this exploitation was precluded by the absence of alternative: she had little else to occupy her time, was dissatisfied with her home life, and found the excitement of the regular drug use and easy access to drugs compelling. Similarly, Shar, who sometimes got some of the money earned through selling sex to clients (often up to 12 per day), regarded it as positive because unlike earlier abuse, this was accompanied with a tangible reward.

“I just remember listening to that inner voice [which was] saying you just keep doing it because, you know, you are getting paid for something when someone else decided to take it from you [through sexual abuse].” - Shar

Other participants, on the other hand, immediately classified these experiences as definitively abusive and threatening to the ‘self’. Des, for instance, reported her initial emotional reaction as one of disbelief. She had effectively been taken under false pretences from a home environment she had experienced as safe and secure, and, having had minimal prior experience with sexuality, been forced to engage in sexual acts with unfamiliar people by a ‘boyfriend’ she trusted (thereby compulsorily entering experiential uncharted territory). This arguably represented a precipitous and confronting intrusion into her existing internal working models about the safety of ‘other’ and, correspondingly, her sense of intrinsic safety in the social world.

He [‘boyfriend’] was like forcing me to give him a blowjob and that, and I didn’t really know to do it and yeah we just [had sex]. After that I was just scared and shocked and yeah, that kind of stuff. - Des

Similarly, participants who were ‘sold’ (such as Jessica, Laila, Jack, and Sophia, who were all either forcefully rented out or sold for a sum of money in early adolescence) still exhibited a sense of unreality when speaking about their experiences. During interviews, participants demonstrated an organic process of cognitive reappraisal, where they had updated and reformulated their understanding of what had been occurring as they incorporated new knowledge and ways of being, and compared their experiences to others’ frameworks of what constituted normative behaviour. Shannon is a prime example of this:

So I moved down with her [birth mother] and her new husband and from there in hindsight, now I am the age I am, and being able to look back on my life - they were - herself and her husband - were grooming me to be a sex object. - Shannon

Having originally welcomed the social freedoms promoted by her birth mother, she gradually came to regard this situation firstly as untenable for reasons she could not articulate and then as patently abusive. This reconstitution of exploitation as abusive behaviour exhibits the influence of the proximal and subjectively powerful ‘other’ in conveying relational (including sexual-transactional) dynamics that are subsequently accepted as honest representations of normative behaviour unless subsequently challenged through exposure to alternative (preferred) relational patterns.

5.2.3. Being ‘sold’ or ‘rented’

With the exception of Sophia and Laila, participants were rented in a relatively consistent manner, with overarching similarities in dynamics despite the differences in context. Laila, because she was being injected with heroin to the point of unconsciousness at the beginning of her victimisation, did not realise for an estimated three months that her sister was stupefying her and allowing men to have sex with her unconscious body to pay Laila’s sister’s debts. At the time, her sister was her closest role model and her primary caregiver; there were no alternative caregiving figures she considered able to provide viable homes at that time.

I just handled it I suppose, I blocked it [the men] out. It was like 'oh got my period and a little bit sore yeah', don't really want to look like a sissy in front of my sister either. - Laila

Her reaction upon realising that rapes (framed by her, then, as 'asleep sex') had been occurring, therefore, was to accommodate and dismiss the harm in order to maintain her relationship with her caregiver-sister: in other words, cognitive splitting to avoid fragmentation of the sense of safety ingrained in that particular proximal relationship. Conversely, Sophia was the only participant to have been sold to an 'owner' for a lump sum, rather than be rented out to paying customers (although her 'owners' did rent her out for profit). She recalls being sold several times in quick succession between the ages of 12 and 16.

Money. It was all about money. I used to see people come and buy me and thousands be handed over. Heaps of money handed over. Once he [the first abuser] gave me to that guy [the next abuser] I never saw him. I stayed with this other guy for like two years... I went to other places because after he was done with me, I got sold to the next guy. -Sophia

Other participants' stories had distinct commonalities regarding the first time they were rented – beginning with physical (or, in the cases of Jessica and Sarah, psychological) coercion, followed by the abuser doing the organising, negotiating, and money-handling, and then featuring abusers' surveillance of victims and repetitive 'work' with minimal or no reward.

Yeah they would set it up, they would set it up and make us go in, make us do the work and they would already collect the money. They would already talk to their client collect their money and then make us go in and say that they will give us a puff or something for doing that. - Michelle

My mother, she used to bring punters home and if I didn't do the deed she would bash me. - Shannon

In most cases, the abuser used, or threatened to use, highly lethal forms of violence, which effectively convinced participants that non-obedience was not an option. This is exemplified in Corith's excerpt, and reiterated by Des's story.

I was in a relationship with one of [abusers] and it wasn't too bad but we all went for a ride. Next minute the boys that were in the van had 3 guns pointed at me and a knife in my back telling me that if I don't get my pussy out on the street then they will shoot me, and throw my body through the window of my daughter's bedroom. – Corith

Yeah [it was] my boyfriend, and he said 'can I sell myself for money' and I said 'no' and then he sold me off to this guy... He forced me to give him a blowjob and that too and then I refused and he started punching me and that and I got knocked out for a little while - Des

As shown here, the violence threatened or carried out was severe, debilitating, and precluded defiance.

5.3 Victimization

5.3.1 Organised or opportunistic perpetration

The extent to which the abusers' trafficking of victims was 'organised' was extremely variable. The abusers featured in many of the participants' narratives, seemed to be motivated by the immediate need to obtain money, often for drugs, and did not appear to be cooperating with other abusers or linked to a hierarchical business-model structure. Laila, for example, was forced by her sister so she could pay for her heroin – seemingly opportunistically. Sarah, Celeste, Des, and Kate were all forced by their intimate partners, who appeared to be the sole beneficiaries of the proceeds of their victimisation.

In some cases, even though the abusers were members of or associated with gangs, or controlled victims' transactions in conjunction with their gang relationships, it is unclear whether any of the money was going back to the gang or whether it was solely the enterprise of the individual abuser.

The fact that there was so much going from one house to another house to another house or even going to the street led me to believe that they were just another pawn in the big scheme of things. But who really told them what to do I wouldn't be able to tell you. - Kayla

However, some participants report either knowing or suspecting, based on their experiences, that the abuser(s) were operating as part of a larger, organised business. The involvement of acquaintances, multiple offenders, and assigned roles of associates is suggestive of some level of organisation.

But that didn't work. I then met a new guy [linked to the group]. [I] didn't know he had anything to do with them, [and] didn't know he knew them. But it was all a setup. - Corith

Well [Mongrel Mob] were running all the back streets of K Road back then and had a lot of girls under them and they said 'if you don't you can fuck off' and I was no fuck you and I was taken [kidnapped] by them. – Jessica

Jack, the sole male participant, was the only participant who was knowingly taking part in an organised criminal venture with full comprehension of the function he was fulfilling for the gang's commercial operation.

Yeah everybody had their own sort of [role of] what they had to do, whether it was going around fucking whacking people over. It was that job or doing drugs, doing sex work all sorts of shit... I never had the heart for it, I didn't have the heart for it. - Jack

In sum, although multiple 'structures' of organisation existed, including high degrees of structureless-ness, the exact nature of monetary transactions in relations to collective perpetration or chains of command was often unknown by victims themselves.

5.3.2 Exploitation

Each participant's narrative included dominant themes of exploitation, aside from simply age and the use of violence or force. The most commonly cited was the lack of financial recompense from their work.

He controlled everything, I just worked [as a sex worker], I don't spend and never get to see it. He wanted to make more money and not work. - Stacey

You had to go out and have sex with random people just to make them money, you know, and all I got was a feed for the day until I did some more work and shit like that. - Jack

This was not universal; Jessica, for instance, was permitted a portion of her earnings despite being a child. Most, however, were disallowed from contact with any of the money changing hands, and also described exploitative living situations for the duration of the abuse. Abusers appeared to identify victims' lack of alternatives (for instance, being homeless, or not having access to transport) and exploit these.

[I was] sleeping rough basically, I had no fixed abode. I was just staying on the streets... I was just the person that earned it. I didn't really have a leg to stand on when it come to disputing [where the money went]. – Hope

[Working from] yeah two in the morning until 6.30 at night, six days a week – Celeste

There was another woman we used to work for too, a Mongrel Mob lady. And one day we went with [her and a colleague] and they took us everywhere... They would make us jump out and stand on the corner and the thing is we never had no ride home. So we were kind of stuck with them. – Michelle

During participants' accounts of the daily dynamics in which they had been entrenched, it became obvious that for many, acts of violence and exploitation had become so normalised that it took an extreme (i.e. life threatening) event or expression of threat to traverse their construction of abusive behaviour as normative.

He threatened to kill me and that is why I stayed because I knew he was serious because he had firearms. – Kate

That [sudden immersion into sexual violence] scared the living hell out of me, I had grown up with gangs and things. I mean my dad was a drug dealer. – Kayla

As demonstrated in these quotes, these elevated acts of violence enabled some participants to realise they were trapped in exceedingly dangerous situations, or that there was a genuine possibility that they would not survive continued abuse.

5.3.3 Clients' preference for young girls

Participants' appeal to prospective clients constituted an important aspect of the context in which they sold sexual services. Some participants believed they had been targeted because of their young age, and that they were considered more desirable by clients solely because they were below the age of consent.

I think the desire for males to have someone that is younger and the fact that I was naïve played in their favour I guess. – Kayla

I was an asset I think to their business because I was young. I was actually very young and so when it come to like line ups or, you know, men of all ages, sizes, races whatever wanted their pick and choose it was normally me. – Shar

While they considered clients' preferences for underage girls disturbing, it also presented an opportunity for increased earning potential.

I even had clients ask me for young primary [school¹³] clients. [One client] was the nastiest client ever. We used to meet him in Onehunga and he just kept asking my mate 'Do you have any younger looking mates?' And so my mate told me to tell him I was younger than I was. So tell him I was 14 or 13 and he was like 'Yes, yes', and he used to make us suck his dick. Like he used to make us gag and choke and make us tell him it's our first time sucking dick... He always wants a younger, younger girl like 10 or nine. – Michelle

These descriptions of clients' requests or preferences for increasingly younger girls illustrates the acceptability in the informal sex economy of child sexual exploitation, and clients' apparent comfort in discussing these requests with victims who were visibly underage themselves – highlighting a fundamental difference in power relations to those exemplified by the formalised, adult sex industry.

5.4 Control and loss of autonomy

5.4.1 Restricting freedom

While some participants had comparatively more freedom, others could not leave the building, select meals, choose clothing, or exercise agency in any other non-work activities. Celeste, for example, spoke about being forced to work long hours irrespective of health status, not receive any of the money she earned, and then being expected to cook all of the abuser's meals, wash his clothes, clean the house, and get some (very limited) sleep, before beginning sex work again only hours later. Similarly, Shar stated "I remember doing, you know, 16, 18, 20 hour shifts without no sleep". Other abusers exercised control in more insidious ways, with the importance of clothing as a central method of dominance outlined here:

Yeah like little things like he'd say to me 'don't wear that, wear this', you know. In the beginning I thought it was because he cared about me, and then it became [that] he would take my clothes out every day. So that happened. – Kate

They [abusers] took my belongings took my clothes, got me changed, done my hair.– Kayla

In some cases, control was exercised through implicit or explicit threat, such as the prospect of loved one being harmed.

¹³ Primary school children's ages range from five to 11.

So he [abuser] knew that my family would get to me. So I think he just kept using my family. And he used photos against me - where someone followed my brother home from school and took photos, and then he showed me photos of whoever following my little brother. - Corith

Many were under continual surveillance and/or were forbidden to go anywhere other than work and home.

She [the friend's mother] got another lady on the street this other old school lady to watch me to make sure I don't, to watch how many rides [with clients] I do because then she will know. – Michelle.

Yes, if he [abuser] wasn't around he had someone else sitting there watching me... other times they would drop you on the corner and go down the road a bit and sit in their car. - Corith

This surveillance both deterred participants from potential avenues for social interacting, including those that might function as supportive or challenging of indoctrination, and to ensure that earning capacity was maximised.

5.4.2 Power over body decisions

Bodies, for female victims, were often considered the domain of male partners. While everyday decisions such as not eating to facilitate weight loss were not regarded as particularly noteworthy by participants, some expressed distress at abusers' power over their reproductive decisions and physical parenting – such as decisions to breastfeed, to have sex while menstruating, or to start or stop using contraceptives.

Well the first time I did say no he did [beat me] so I never tried to so never, when I had my period I had to, like you know those little square foam things [sponges]... Yeah man he used to make me get those and get on out there. I would never ever have thought doing something like that. I don't know where he got the idea from. - Tiffany

Participants' distress at speaking of such methods of control illustrated their felt invasiveness, indicating that abusers' encroachment into what were universally depicted by participants as feminine domains – and consequently considered as more intimate than comparatively neutral domains – was much more distressing than their exertion of power over decision-making regarding the external body, such as through choosing clothing.

5.4.3 Ensuring compliance through violence and psychological coercion

Violence was commonplace, and was only considered worthy of mention if it became more extreme than the casual violence that the majority of participants had been subjected to on a daily basis. Prior to this escalation, it was considered a natural consequence of being female and around males.

So me and her ended up being able to go but two other girls had to be taken by just choking, suffocation, um, punching up the face, the arm, the abdomen... that's just how it is with the men. - Sophia

Well they used to do all sorts of things really. They would tell me exactly what they were going to do to me if I don't do what they say. I saw it happen to other people that decided that they didn't want to abide by what these people were telling them.... I saw the beatings that they got. - Hope

This frequently life-threatening violence often played a key role in preventing participants from exercising agency or considering leaving.

I knew he would kill me if I left... Because he would put a gun in my mouth a couple of times. - Kate

[The higher-ranked girls] threatened violence [for not complying] and I knew of people that they knew and they were scarier than the girls that I was standing before... They [the youth gang] were going to beat me and if it wasn't them that was going to beat me if I managed to get away it was the Mongrel Mob who were going to have their way. – Kayla

Participants' depictions of violence at the hands of their principal abusers demonstrate that violence was perpetrated to fulfil numerous functions: to normalise the use of violence in the provision of sexual satisfaction, to ensure compliance and deter questioning the more dominant party, to prevent victims from leaving by instilling fear of lethal consequences, and to motivate them to continue to earn sufficient money by servicing enough clients.

5.4.4 Psychological coercion

The context in which participants were entrenched was one of intense psychological hold. In addition to the ever-present risk of physical violence, abusers' strategies to maintain victims' compliance often included psychological abuse – such as pressuring, withdrawing support, making them feel like a nuisance or disappointment, and causing humiliation.

He said to me 'you are going to have to do this, otherwise, you know, it is going to be pretty bad if you don't' and I said 'what do you mean really bad', and he said 'you've got no choice, you are going to have to [prostitute for me]. – Kate

I feared the shame that would bring to my family if I did survive. - Kayla

The threat of violence (even if given implicitly through oft-repeated stories of other punishments) and repeated messages that any disclosures would likely be disbelieved were also used as a means of psychological control.

I'd probably get my body dumped. I wouldn't be the first. - Stacey

The fear of not being allowed out of the house, the fear of being kept locked up not being able to go anywhere, not having anybody believe me - because that is what they would always say: 'no one would believe you', and for a number of years it was quite true. – Shannon

This psychological abuse in the form of threats and insinuations, particularly of murder, effectively served to facilitate victims' social withdrawal and continued silence about the abuse.

5.4.5 Cooperation and appeasement

Participants went to great lengths to cooperate with and appease abusers in the hope that compliance and alignment with abusers' wishes would prevent, reduce, or transform violence against them – Corith, for example, states “because my daughter’s life got threatened, I just had to do it”. Some were unable to articulate what drew their loyalty, seemingly irrevocably, to abusers, variously describing it as ‘a hold’ they have, ‘a pull’, and ‘a connection with him’. Others were more able to identify a link between the fear they experienced and the development of loyalty or compliance.

If you are really scared and don't know what is going to happen, just go and do what they say. It is the best way to get yourself out of danger, is to just do what they say. - Michelle

Shar explained her combination of reactivity and submission during the period of victimisation as being coping-oriented – she allowed herself to react instinctively unless it was to abusers, who she felt compelled to obey.

“I was very reactive and my personality very defensive. Really just did not give a shit about anybody else because I was hurting and I didn't care how I hurt and yet I still was that submissive young little girl. It is really hard to explain, but it was like, you know, [to] let the truth be known, I was probably very borderline personality. I would be very submissive to who I needed to be submissive to and on the other hand I was very destructive.” – Shar

Only one described the exhibiting of specific behaviours as intentional on her part as a way of consciously improving her situation and her prospects for being treated well in the future within the situation of violence. She was motivated to position herself as a comparatively trusted victim in order to avoid the apparently worse treatment she witnessed other victims receiving.

A whole two years of trust, two to three years I built trust... [I thought] I need to start complying and I need to actually just do as I'm told 'cause I know I'm so deep in this, you know, there's no way out. – Sophia

As evidenced by these quotes, appeasing the abuser was regarded as an unequivocal method of enhancing safety. However, it must also be noted that the assumption of safety or protection as a result of cooperation and compliance was, while grounded in adaptive and survival-oriented thinking, a fallacy – for each of these participants, violence continued to escalate despite increasing appeasement behaviour. This violence will be further discussed in later sections.

5.5 Active Survivorship

5.5.1 Substance use

Substance use was one of the most prevalent coping methods employed by participants to manage the context of trafficking. This served dual functions: it enabled them to briefly disconnect from the harsh realities of victimisation, and also engineered a desensitisation of the body during periods of physical or sexual violence. Substances included alcohol, heroin, methamphetamine, speed (street amphetamines), cocaine, morphine, methadone, party pills,

Duromine (prescription amphetamines), and Valium or Ativan (diazepam and lorazepam, respectively).

Crack yeah a lot of crack... She was feeding us [methamphetamine] yeah she would make us give all our money and she would go and score. – Michelle

I started using H [heroin] at a young age myself... Well I had my first blast when I was 10, but I had a full-blown habit by the time I was 13. – Jessica

Some, like Jessica and Shannon, continued to rely heavily on drugs to cope long after the situation of trafficking had ended, including methamphetamine, methadone, and cannabis.

5.5.2 Resistance

Resistance to the casualised environment of abuse was uncommon. However, this manifestation of resistance did occasionally occur in participants' narratives, and was generally exercised in periods of recklessness or reluctance to proceed with a specific aspect of the forced work. Typically, this involved a refusal to see a particular client or work on a particular day, but was quickly diminished by abusers' elevating levels of coercion.

I like bit [the first client], scratched him and yeah I ended up getting taken and I was sedated for it. – Sophia

I told him that I would go to work. But I got busted down at the mall or something by my boyfriend and when I got dragged back home from the mall from my boyfriend and got tied up and him and his mates all had turns at raping me. – Celeste

After a year after six months or so of doing it I did make an attempt to stick up for myself... [They] broke my cheek bone on the left side, snapped one of my teeth in half, four broken ribs and I had black eyes on both eyes. – Hope

However, resistance was commonly demonstrated in subtle, often unconscious ways, and was rarely framed as such by participants. Although participants themselves often focused more during the interviews on the violence perpetrated against them than on their acts to resist it, the following paragraph highlights the ways in which each action by the abuser designed to subdue, subjugate, and control their victim was countered by a survival-oriented action by the participant.

I refused and he started punching me and that and I got knocked out for a little while and when I woke up I was in this like dark place. I tried to move but didn't know where I was because it was so dark... I just managed to get out the car because I was reaching for the door to open it. He just said like what had happened was going to happen again and I just managed to pull my hand away and just started running yeah. - Des

As illustrated here, resistance to the context of trafficking could manifest through actions that were directly defiant, such as making an escape attempt, and also through actions such as instinctively disallowing of control to be assumed, such as crying, moving, and attempting to take stock of surroundings to consider possible courses of action.

5.5.3 Parenting

Managing care of children while in situations of forced prostitution was reportedly very difficult for participants. The threat of bringing the care of children to the attention of authorities was used to ensure compliance, and relationships between participants and their children's fathers increased the likelihood that the situation would be perceived as too difficult to be extricated from. A lack of options for childcare and the absence of social support meant that desperate measures were often resorted to in order to ensure the safety of children during working times, such as convincing an acquaintance to hide the child in the car until the end of her time with clients. She explains the prelude to this arrangement in the following conversation:

Yeah [the boss has] business arrangements, so [if I have the child with me] it will stop and they won't have any of it. So then, um, I was like 'okay then bring me my baby then I have no other fucking way to do it' [service clients]. So then I was texting this other person [employed by the boss] saying 'hey mate um do you remember that time that you like came on to me, and the next night we done it [had sex against the boss's orders]?' He was like 'oh yeah okay'. - Sophia

I hated it; I got to the point where I was asking people, even neighbours if they would take my daughter. – Corith

Once the period of imminent threats to survival had subsided, participants reflected on how these methods they had employed to try and ensure the safety of their children may have adversely affected them.

Yeah and I felt so sorry for my daughter like what the fuck was I thinking. How could I just toss her off here and there for other people to look after so I could do that and she is nine now. - Tiffany

5.6. Conclusion

This chapter set the scene of participants' narratives: the beginning of their stories, the dynamics of their involvement with trafficking, the places at which victimisation was experienced, the key events involved in their victimisation, how control was established and maintained, participants' resistance to that control, and the active survival of participants. These findings evidence the skilled engineering of relational dynamics by abusers that engender sufficient levels of fear to preclude (either wholly or partially) victims' autonomy. However, it is equally evident that despite abusers' subjugation of victims and subsequent relational bonding to (and fear of) abusers, participants engaged a range of conscious and unconscious strategies, often in direct defiance of abusers, to (re)act protectively on behalf of themselves and their children. As we will now explore, these strategies were frequently destructive to participants themselves, despite their utility for surviving immediate violence and trauma. In the following chapter, the 'self' and its temporality; that is, how it evolves and is situated through past, present, and future, is examined and considered in relation to these experiences.

6. Temporality: The 'Self' in Past, Present, and Future

6.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I identified the 'context' of participants' narratives – the nature of the violent victimisation inherent in their stories of being forced to sell sex, and the dynamics inherent in a sub-culture dominated by the abuser(s) and his/their allies. Through discussion of the context of victimisation, I have made apparent the severity of violence, abuse, degradation, and mistreatment, and identified the ensuing constraints victims faced in their everyday lives. Chapter six therefore seeks to identify the 'temporal' element of the narrative by focusing on the evolution of the 'self' character over time.

Temporality, or the transformation of story over time, is inextricably linked with the 'self' character in narrative. While the past, present, and future 'selves' invariably interlink and overlap, separating periods of character development from participants' narratives in relation to these changing contexts serves the purpose of identifying the 'being drawn in, 'survival while under threat', and 'wounded but moving on' aspects of character as they relate to participant' stories. First, my focus on participants' 'past selves' aims to invite consideration of how participants' early lives prepared them and positioned them for the events they lived through, up to and including victimisation through sex trafficking; how their perceptions of themselves created and dynamically influenced vulnerability, safety, and opportunity; and the roles that their actions and behaviour played in shaping their trajectories and interactions. Second, my representation of participants' 'present selves' is located at the time of participants' exit or escape from situations of sex trafficking. This invites reflection on how beliefs, expectations, individual actions, and social positioning impacts the process of exiting these abuses and the development of challenges involved in seeking and maintaining independence. Finally, my portrayal of participants' 'future selves' is embedded in the continuation of the 'self' character in participants' narratives after escaping these particular situations of victimisation, and aims to direct your attention to how the emotional, thoughtful, and social self survives in a context of post-traumatisation and relative freedom, while often maintaining links to physical, social, relational, and emotional events that occurred earlier in their stories.

6.2. Past Self: Identity and Vulnerability

6.2.1. Childhood

Only two participants of 16 described childhoods that were demonstrably and consistently safe and protective. The majority recounted childhoods characterised by rejection, uncertainty, violence, abuse, inconsistency, or absenteeism. In some cases, parental sanctioning of abuse directly influenced their vulnerability to violence and exploitation, such as in Des's case – her parents approved the relationship with an adult male despite her being just 13, and consented to him taking her 'on holiday'. However, she did not locate responsibility for the vulnerable position this put her in with her parents; only herself.

Yeah because he seemed like a nice fella and that and my parents were like oh he seems nice and you can go out with him and that but apparently it was wrong, I was wrong. - Des

Participants were particularly preoccupied with early separation from family of origin, or the inconsistent nature of their time with families during their childhoods.

I was a newborn, I was thrown away. – Corith

Yeah we were all given up, me and my brothers. My mother glue sniffed most of her fucking life... [My brothers] are all fucked up. I don't know where half of them are. – Jack

This abandonment shaped participants' development of both the worthiness of 'self' and the trustworthiness of 'other', as is further demonstrated in the following chapter. In addition, some reported either witnessing or being subjected to extreme violence and loss during childhood, which they acknowledged as having a profound impact on them as adolescents and adults. Jessica, for instance, described witnessing a violent attack on her mother when she was five, before her mother left her and her brother.

This guy had smashed the window and climbed through that window and waited for my mum to walk through the hallway, and he got a cord round her neck and dragged her back into the lounge, and raped her in front of me and my brother who was three months old, I was five. – Jessica

Sexual abuse in early childhood was a common experience amongst participants – all but three were subjected to contact sexual assault (almost universally penetrative) in childhood.

It sucked... fucking being tutued with [sexually abused] and shit like that... It was fucking [by] who we were given out to. It was, like, shit. – Jack

I've been sexually abused, I was abused when I was 7 and Mum wasn't able to protect me. – Kayla

As with other types and examples of abuse, participants' understanding of the abusive (and, indeed, the sexual) nature of these interactions were not static, but evolved over time. In some instances (such as Jessica's relationship with an adult at age 10, and Michelle's experience of being sexually abused by her stepfather) adult-child sexual relationships remained defined not as abuse but rather as intractable and unavoidable realities that must be tolerated.

As with Hope's acceptance of her family's inaction when she went missing, some participants were unable to discern what types of caregiver approaches constituted safety for children and young people. Michelle, for example, described her relationship with her parents by saying "good, I had a really good childhood." She later went on to describe an incident in the family home:

My mum's partner at the time I think I was third form college he tried to yeah he tried to make a move on me, one drunken night, and he hopped in my bed, yeah... When he jumped in my bed I froze. The next morning I told my mum what happened... and then a couple of months later, my mum married him. – Michelle

Similarly, other stories of child sexual abuse emerged spontaneously (often seemingly incidentally) during recounts of childhood, and were conspicuously unaccompanied by memories of subsequent protective actions following disclosure to family.

Well that guy [the abuser] raped me, but I was also molested by my uncle when I was nine. – Sarah

In addition, attempted disclosures of sexual violence (with varying degrees of specificity), when they did occur, were met with minimising or blaming responses.

I think so, because when I told my [grandma] when I was nine... she just said 'oh don't bring it up again, he must have thought it was his wife'. She just swept it under the carpet. – Sarah

They [my family] said I should have just shut my mouth. I remember my grandmother, which is his father - she says to me "why would you do such a thing to my son, why would you do this, you should have just shut your mouth." – Shar

In Laila's case, her sister had been the one to administer drugs to her while she was sleeping to enable people to whom she owed debt for drugs to rape her. In her late teens she disengaged completely from her sister and their mutual acquaintances, and as such, had very little contact with anyone from her family of origin.

As demonstrated here, involvement in trafficking, regardless of the level of compulsion, was grouped together with other 'risk' behaviours by some participants – thereby situating accountability as solely theirs, and not the abusers'. Paradoxically, however, other participants also located the direct precipitant into trafficking as arising from a discrete moment of sexualisation by their principal abuser. As children or young adolescents, a common theme of vulnerability was the eroding of innocence that accompanied the first time participants were pressured into participating in sexual activities – whether by friends or dating partners.

It wasn't familiar. I remember I stood there, looked at 'my friend' dumbfounded, like, what am I to do. She took me into the bathroom cos she knew I didn't wanna do it. And, um, my 'friend' reckoned "just follow my drift ok. You'll be ok". – Sophia.

After that he [adult male partner] just took advantage of me... Yeah I didn't want to do it and he was just forcing me to do it and all that kind of stuff - Des

This section evidences the extent to which families and abusers were instrumental in shaping vulnerability to, and precipitating the initial victimisation of, the majority of participants. However, it also demonstrates the frequent denial of these characters' influence by participants.

6.2.2. Identity

Toughness and independence seemed to be valued by participants above all other attributes; chiefly indicated by stories of situations of severe risk. Participants placed great emphasis on the absence of fear in the presence of extreme risk, especially as adolescents, and cultivated a 'seen everything' mentality. 'Not caring' also seemed to be instrumental to many participants' identities and was considered a source of pride.

I've seen them be wasted [injured/killed]. You know... gangster this, gangster that, like, you wanna see gangsters? Maybe I should show you the real gangsters. You wanna be a hoe? I'll take you to a place. Show you hoes. And how gangsters treat you. It's dangerous man. It's a dangerous society out there. - Sophia

People getting hurt was a drug, my life being fucked up was a drug. I didn't take nothing serious, didn't take the law serious they're a joke, everything in life wasn't serious. I couldn't give a fuck about life. Life was one big joke. – Jack

This appears to be self-protective in nature and closely associated with the safety attached to cognitive (re)appraisal that denied powerlessness in favour of the assumption of chosen identity; in other words, it appeared to be less threatening to the self to be a 'tough girl' accustomed to violence, than an innocent one exposed to violence that could become directed at 'self'.

6.2.3. Emotional responses

Participants discussed their emotional responses in the immediacy of their first victimisation when they were forced to sell sex by a partner, gang/peer group member, or family member. While they often employed strategies to facilitate mind-body separation, a range of impacts can be identified. For some, the experience could also induce a sense of cognitive dissonance.

You just got to do what you got to do. I mean there was no time to feel I guess, you just had to channel out emotions. – Hope

[Being forced to prostitute] messed with my head because to me, you know, I thought sex and that was supposed to be a special thing with somebody you commit to not just go sell yourself to anybody who wants to fucking buy it. – Jack

Strikingly, participants found it extremely difficult to articulate their emotional responses to the on-going and repetitious violence they were subjected to. It appeared to constitute a key domain of dialogic 'stuckness', potentially because the prospect of recalling emotional responses was considered subjectively more distressing than recalling actions and behaviours. I explore this in greater detail later, as it relates to themes of suppressed emotionality with the 'other' in order to avoid shame and shaming.

6.2.4. Coping methods

Participants used a range of cognitive, psychological, and emotional coping mechanisms to withstand day to day demands of being forced into selling of their sexual services. These spanned rationalising the day ahead and concentrating only on positive aspects of the day, shutting off emotionally, using drugs to artificially shut off emotionality, avoidance of thoughts of the victimisation, and acting as though the experience was normal or non-harmful.

I didn't know how to think, just drugs, just drugged up, and [thinking] fuck who cares, and it was all right while I'm wasted. - Jack

I just never ever think about it, because if I do think about it, I will just break down and I will cry. - Michelle

Going into my head just going somewhere I could feel safe which was generally in a ditch on the side of the road. That is how I managed to get through when I was a young child is by going to a ditch and hiding in there... Yeah, physically, but then I started to learn how to do that psychologically so every time I was hurt I would just go there. - Shannon

In addition to managing the cognitive-emotional demands of their situations, they developed a range of techniques to cope with or minimise the impacts of the physical and practical aspects of selling sex. Intuition, although variously described as a 'vibe' a 'feeling' or a 'sense', was heavily relied upon to guide safety-seeking behaviour. Being considered 'nice' or being seen to enjoy sexual acts was also regarded as a factor that would minimise the risk of violence in the moment, especially while with clients.

By then I was scared so I answered all his questions in a nice tone, being nice, so yeah. I didn't like the vibe of him and I knew he was a person who would do something bad... Yeah I was trying to close my legs, he was ripping my pants off and I was crying, trying to hide my tears. I didn't want to get a hiding or anything or even worse. I pretended to enjoy it, and then yeah after that [rape] he took me back to the streets, and I didn't get paid, yeah, that was one time. - Michelle

I can kind of spot it, I don't know how I do it, but I can spot people who are like they are in stress like they are distressed and the people around them, like who they are with. - Sarah

Disclosing the sex trafficking, especially if it was on-going, was universally regarded as too likely to evoke violence from the abuser(s), so participants became skilled at self-concealment as a means of self-protection.

I was pretty bad, I would lie about what happened, coz I was scared. There was a time when I had my eye socket broken and four of my ribs broken. And I just told them I fell down a flight of stairs. - Corith

Self-harming and/or the contemplation or attempting of suicide was common amongst participants, particularly when the emotional impacts became overwhelming. This was associated with a sense of hopelessness, but was prevented either by practical barriers or by a perception of inner strength and a desire to live differently.

It was just having the inner strength and the faith and my beliefs and Māoridom that got me through most of what I've been through and there was a light at the end of the tunnel, you know, once I had gotten over everything and through it because there was a better future for me.– Jack

These quotes evidence a range of physical and cognitive-emotional coping strategies. Fighting back physically was rare, while avoidance – cognitive or actual – was common and achieved through a range of strategies, many of which were simultaneously self-destructive and protective. More importantly, however, they provide insight into the ways in which mental health and addiction both influence and are influenced by this particular category of violence, and how they are differentially experienced as a result of violent contexts.

6.2.5. Criminal activity

For many participants, involvement in criminal behaviour pre-dated their victimisation through forced prostitution. For others, forced complicity in criminal acts ensured loyalty and precluded escape from abusive partners or groups, and refusing to be complicit prompted further violence or threats of violence. Drug convictions were common amongst participants, and led to difficulty

in identifying viable options for employment in the formal economy. Several had only been involved in criminal activity as minors, and so suffered no formal repercussions as adults.

I think [abuse] is what started the resorting to crime. I think it was kind of a way somebody help me before it's too late. – Kayla

As evidenced here, these participants described their involvement in criminal activity as a way of acting out internal pain and seeking help, as well as a somewhat involuntary set of behaviours that is directly triggered following reactivation of trauma.

6.3. Present Self: Change Process

6.3.1. Turning point

The points at which participants became able or willing to escape situations or attempt change in their lives were extremely varied. For some, the 'turning point' was the introduction of a new person to their life, such as a new partner or a baby.

The thing that got me out was getting pregnant – Michelle

Ok, I'm gonna be really honest with you. So even though I got away from the police and that right. I met this one guy, and he was sort of in that industry. – Sophia

For others, it was the stark realisation of on-going danger and the likely trajectory of staying in relationships that prompted them to take drastic, often life-threatening measures to create situations that might lead to change.

But as soon as I did get beaten up I had to run. I had to run I didn't really have a choice... So I basically went into hiding for about 6 weeks. – Hope

[It] was basically when I pretty much cut myself up and got taken to hospital. Had I not done that I probably could still be in the relationship and more than likely lost my daughter to Child Youth and Family¹⁴. – Celeste

Finally, for some it was the presentation of a rare opportunity to evade perpetrators, such as through a momentary lapse in surveillance, or through the perpetrator's death.

I ended up working for 7 years until one day the watcher/pimp decided he'd fall asleep in the watch van and so I just took off. I ran straight to my daughters. – Corith

6.3.2. Escape

The practical aspects of planning and executing an escape were, for some, exceedingly complex and associated with long-term risks. For example, one participant pre-planned a series of fraudulent activities, with the intention of being investigated and arrested as a way of compulsorily getting away from her abuser without her being seen as making that choice for herself. This involved an extensive period of preparation and precise timing, illustrating the demanding nature of active survival and the resourcefulness of victims even at the peak of their victimisation. Celeste, who was invariably locked up and denied all forms of communication,

¹⁴ Statutory child protection service.

used her pregnancy and corresponding point of vulnerability in her partner to engineer a medical crisis requiring hospitalisation, which required her to self-injure to a predetermined level of severity and acquiesce to medical treatment at a time when she could access outside support. Similarly, Kayla (whose abusers were a group of slightly older but still adolescent girls) gradually gathered enough money to find her way home, and waited until they had fallen asleep.

The girls took me to a house which I know now later on in life was a gang pad... I was to return to them after every job with all of the money and that is where I worked out how I was going to be able to get away - by keeping my mouth shut... and holding onto some money to be able to get out when I could. - Kayla

Abusers being imprisoned also presented an opportunity to escape.

Yeah he actually was put into prison for manufacturing home bake that is how I got away from him. - Shannon

Laila was the only participant whose escape from repeated patterns of victimisation was enforced by a protective figure; in this case, her sister's boyfriend, who refused to allow her sister to continue to drug her and offer her as payment for drug debt.

I had it within a week so after a week that 15 mls or whatever they were giving me and one of my sister's boyfriends had had enough and started locking my sleep out door before he went to bed. - Laila

What is eminently underscored here is the severity of danger that precipitates escape – whether danger from 'self' or from 'other', participants rarely managed to disclose the situation or effect an escape from the principal abuser unless they were pregnant, about to be harmed, or were harming themselves, illustrating how hidden the phenomenon continues to be – even during dire risk.

6.3.3. Living with trauma

All participants disclosed having had or currently having a combination of flashbacks, nightmares, panic attacks, debilitating fear regarding personal safety, extreme and sudden emotion, shame, anxiety, or depression.

I had been living with post-traumatic stress disorder. I couldn't sleep, that sort of thing. [I was] always keeping my back to the wall, always looking for a way out everywhere I go to. - Shannon

I used to have flashbacks at least a few times a week. I haven't had one for a few months now, but I do suffer from depression because of it all. – Celeste

Given that most had experienced trauma (often to a level where physical integrity or survival was perceived as being under threat) prior to being forced to sell sex or trafficked for sexual purposes, it is impossible to assert that these symptoms are solely resultant from these experiences of victimisation.

Today I may have nightmares and stuff and wake up sweating where I think I'm remembering something or I'm having flashbacks, but my way of dealing with it is [by asking myself] how can I ever know whether that was real or not. – Laila

Sometimes I get flashbacks about it quite often, and if I see anyone that looks kind of like [the abuser] I get panic attacks. – Sarah

6.3.4. Fear after leaving

Fear of the abuser(s) and often also of their associates was both debilitating and pervasive for most participants after leaving the situation. While some were cognisant that their fears may be irrational given the prolonged periods without contact with abusers, others recounted their experiences of oft-repeated coincidental sightings of (and, at times, opportunistic victimisation by) their abusers, suggesting that surveillance of victims does not invariably cease once victims have decided to leave the relationship or situation. Des, for example, decided to start a course when she was 14 solely because it was something her mother agreed to drive her to and from each day, meaning she would never be in a vulnerable social position or alone outside for her abuser to approach. Similarly, others limited their social movements because of subsequent violent or fear-provoking experiences with abusers

I don't just go out, I can't go out like a normal family I'm too scared... I'm scared I might see someone that knows him because they are nationwide. - Stacey

To this day I still look over my shoulder when I'm walking through the streets. I have had confrontations with them a couple of times. – Hope

Moreover, for those who had children to their abusers, continued exchanges are commonplace, yet continue to be a source of fear and distress.

I [saw him] another time at my daughter's third birthday party... I was scared that he was going to try and get me back that I was going to be under his control again, but it didn't work. – Corith

Evidently, the power of fearfulness on everyday living did not inherently lessen following escape from the situations of trafficking, and ceasing contact was not always possible.

6.3.5. Beliefs About statutory organisations and reporting implications

A belief central to participants' decision-making processes regarding leaving abusive situations was the apparent untrustworthiness of police officers, which dissuaded them from taking a seemingly obvious step to securing their safety – reporting the offences against them to the authorities. In particular, those victimised in a group or gang setting had two chief concerns: that the abusers had an informant or ally within the police that made reporting crime against particular groups or individuals inherently unsafe; and that someone would find out that they had been to the police and they would face severe consequences as a result.

They [the gang] got fucking pigs working in their pocket, yeah, in their back pocket.
- Jack

I was way too afraid [to tell police]. They would have killed me, or at least attempted, or what they'd done to me¹⁵ and made it worse. The only reason why they tied me to the lamppost [and left] was because they thought they were leaving me for dead. – Corith

Participants, when reflecting on their beliefs and assumptions about police and other statutory agencies, acknowledged that fostering this belief had been a powerful deterrent to reporting and was likely to lack substance.

And going to people like the police or law enforcement - that is the most stupidest mistake you could make... Because you were made to feel like they had somebody on the inside. - Hope

Michelle, who was coerced into working by her friend's mother, was hesitant to disclose it to the police because it would necessarily mean statutory involvement.

Oh we stayed away from the police, we were too young. Me and my mate got caught working in town by undercover [plainclothes police]... But we told them that no we weren't working we were just out there looking for a ride home. - Michelle.

Several also felt that police lacked motivation to help people in their situation, and stated that they believed the police knew what was going on but had no incentive to intervene.

They [Police and CYF] get their money [so] they don't give a fuck. They just wait for the child to get referred to them and [think] yeah, more money for us. Once they got the child that's it. - Jack

As displayed by each of these participants, the belief that agencies would be unsupportive effectively negated any potential for help-seeking from statutory organisations.

6.3.6. Barriers to formal help

Participants also spoke about the barriers they encountered – both intrinsic and extrinsic – in seeking help from agencies, particularly in regard to mental health. Practitioners not being responsive to trauma-related mental health problems prevented sustained and effective engagement with services.

I would've loved them to have sat there and pushed me and pushed me and to make me tell them. [Instead] I went in for one visit with this lady and the next visit she turned around and told the bigwigs that I didn't need it. I didn't even get to tell her my story so I don't know why she thinks I didn't need it. – Corith

They talked about their well-established tendencies to hide the extent of the violence and the sexual aspects, particularly in regard to forced prostitution, even to agencies specialising in intimate partner violence. This led to the cyclical nature of the abuse continuing to be perpetuated, and victims continuing to feel silenced.

¹⁵ Gang-rape

He would get arrested, get released, I'd spend time in women's refuge come out, he would come back promise and it is bizarre because even looking back I can't believe I was the same person I am now. – Kate

6.4. Future Self: Recovery and Personal Growth

6.4.1. Managing parenting afterward

Losing children as a result of victimisation appeared to be an experience shared by many participants. This predominantly happened in one of two ways – abusers using the children or parenting power to further manipulate the victim, resulting in the child being removed from the mother; or the mental health of the mother deteriorating as a result of victimisation, leading to perceived deficiencies in parenting abilities from the perspectives of statutory agencies. Celeste, who was repeatedly told by her (partner) abuser and his friends that they would notify statutory child protection services and have the child removed from her care if she tried to leave, eventually had both her children removed from her care anyway. Similarly, Corith's 'not coping' led to her having all four of her children removed from her care. In Sophia's case, she had two children while being 'owned' by one abuser or another and managed to keep them with her for several years before the father took over care of one. However, the residual effects of trauma contributed to her decision to have her youngest child temporarily cared for by her sister – correspondingly, Stacey's 'mental breakdown' resulted in her child going into statutory care. Losing care of children as a result of ongoing traumatic stress symptoms was therefore experienced by four participants.

Abusers taking the children away, whether through legal or illegal methods, was also acknowledged by participants as a way that control over them was maintained or regained.

So I left him and when I did he took my sons off me. He wouldn't let me take my sons or any of my possessions or anything and so I felt like I had no other option but to continue with being a prostitute. - Shannon

Having a child also presents additional challenges to ceasing contact with the abuser(s).

No he does try and contact my mum a couple of times a year type thing because my child is his child but that's about it. – Celeste

Some of their children have also faced challenges in recovering and moving on from the situations of violence they were exposed to.

She [daughter] was sexually violated quite a few times in her life starting when she was very young... one of them was one of the guys that done that stuff to me... Sometimes she says it was only one [abuser], but other times if I've gone to the mall and just had a glimpse at one of them she freaks out. - Corith

However, parenting differently to the way that they were parented, or in ways that are protective against the risks of victimisation, was a source of pride for participants. Correspondingly, the thought of their children being similarly victimised was a significant source of fear. Jessica, when thinking of the possibility of her child becoming similarly victimised, says "oh mate it would

shatter me, you know”, while Kayla reflects that she finds the memories more difficult now that she is herself a mother, because she “would never want it to ever happen to my daughter”.

While focus often returned to participants’ children and participants’ hopes to parent differently and ‘break the cycle’, and did occasionally refer to instances where their children had been adversely affected by the abuser directly, there was little consideration for the ways in which children might have been developmentally impacted by exposure to their parents’ victimisation (despite mothers’ protectiveness, which is comprehensively discussed elsewhere) and, correspondingly, by the changes to parenting induced by impacts to participants themselves.

6.4.2. Subsequent psychological well-being

Participants commonly found that the severity of trauma symptoms such as flashbacks, nightmares, and panic attacks increased once they had escaped or left the situation of on-going victimisation. Managing these effects over the following months and years proved difficult for many, with participants describing night sweats, emotional freezing, feeling unable to breathe, uncontrollable crying, anger, and extreme fear without an identifiable trigger in addition to the more commonly recounted symptoms such as flashbacks, nightmares, de-personalisation, hyper-vigilance, and depression.

Even to this day I still have times where I can smell something and it just triggers back to my step-father. When I first met my current husband he couldn’t lift his hand to scratch or do some normal movements without me flinching. - Shannon

Combinations of medication for PTSD and other disorders were common (including benzodiazepines, anti-depressants, quetiapine, lithium, and sedatives), and diagnoses by psychiatrists included PTSD, Bipolar Disorder type one, Dissociative Identity Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, and unspecified Substance Abuse Disorders. Some received treatment for long periods of time, specifically aimed at treating the effects of trauma.

I went through a psychologist for like the last 6 years, cos I didn’t know what normal was. I ended up doing hypnosis, it didn’t work for me, I tried shock treatment, it worked for so long but then I had side effects. – Sophia

I spent a month in a psychiatric hospital ward, because [of] just the violence and not being able to cope. I had ECT¹⁶ while I was in there. - Kate

Participants, on some occasions, also found it difficult to breach the long-held expectation of silence to disclose their reasons for presenting to services while speaking to practitioners.

The mental health nurse at the hospital - I can go down and see her, any time if I wake up and I’m having a bad day, I can go down and see her... She’s been awesome but at first she asked me if I’d talk to her about it. It took me a couple of visits but then I finally did. - Corith

Demonstrating warmth and positive regard, and specifically asking about such experiences, appeared to engender participants’ willingness and ability to traverse the deeply embedded

¹⁶Electro-convulsive therapy

tendency to conceal the abuse, indicating the paramountcy of practitioner preparedness with clients who have been subjected to this category of victimisation.

6.4.3. Specialist services

Participants acknowledged the utility of services such as Women's Refuge and the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective (NZPC) for practical assistance during the period of victimisation.

I'm very grateful to [NZPC] for a lot of things, like they got me into my counselling, my getting help, sexual health check-ups, food, to a roof over my head, to all sorts.

– Jessica

Despite this, several also recognised the perceived limitations of these services in responding appropriately to their situations and, in some cases, the limitations posed by their relationships with individual members of staff.

[Women's Refuge] weren't all that helpful yeah fill out some forms here's some here's a toothbrush and toothpaste. There were no counsellors or anything like that. – Kate

They [NZPC] are great and everything, but like you can't go there and sit down and have a cup of tea with them and say "I am concerned..." They honestly don't strike you as the people that you could approach in that way. They are more the people that say "hey how many jobs did you have today" or "I'm trying to put a condom on". - Laila

These experiences can be interpreted as testament to the ambiguity in services' scopes of practice from the perspectives of prospective service-users, and the absence of a sufficiently joined-up approach to meet the needs of clients in complex situations.

6.4.4. Accessing counselling

Despite participants' retrospective critiques of practical-based services, when they were invited to reflect on their experiences of 'moving on' (which was worded with intentional subjectivity in interviews), they predominantly focused on counselling. As with their interactions with mental health professionals, and despite the often intensive service contact, many participants found the telling of their stories about victimisation difficult for several reasons. First, they invariably associated shame with these stories and the corresponding fear that professionals would respond in a shaming manner or be unable to respond effectively (which was regarded as a comparatively greater barrier than the (re)telling of the stories themselves). Secondly, the inability to share a secret of such apparent enormity and one that had historically been surrounded by an imperative of silence unless there had been an explicit invitation by the practitioner to do so posed a significant barrier. Third, participants' belief that nothing would be gained by sharing the story, or inability to create an internal consistency of events, prevented participants from feeling able to coherently relate their stories.

I spoke to someone for counselling, but it seemed to help a little bit but not really... It was scary to be honest, because I am not that sort of person to air all of your emotions and talk about the past. - Celeste

I just went and referred myself [to an iwi¹⁷-based organisation] and they just talked to me about [my abuse] and everything I had been through in life. I just put it on the table for them and said can you help me get through some of this, and they were like whoa.... Yeah and they would focus on the one thing and I thought fuck no this is over, right... and I like to talk about it and think about it and work through it and get over it and then move on. Not keep going back to the same [trauma]. – Jack

Several participants were able to access funded counselling through ACC¹⁸, but only those who had been sexually abused as children (presumably because of the difficulties in self-identifying sexual violence in complex circumstances). Those who had accessed specialist sexual abuse counselling or therapy were unable to articulate any specific benefits from this engagement; however, it appeared to increase their willingness to access services in the future.

6.5. Conclusion

Participants' descriptions of their childhood experiences and early life environments clearly demonstrate how, for most participants, violence (particularly gendered violence) and mistreatment was normalised and incorporated into participants' internal working models of normative social behaviour from a very young age, leading to later vulnerability to victimisation. While for some, the formation of a relationship with a partner who would ultimately resort to violence and then force them to prostitute was an unexpected shock irreconcilable with the rest of their life experiences, the majority could link their experiences of being abused in their early lives to their later systematic exploitation. The identities they subsequently created for themselves, which acted as protective mechanisms in the demanding sub-culture they were immersed in, were premised on being jaded, cynical, and physically and emotionally tough. However, despite these assumed identities and the uptake of coping mechanisms designed to limit the psychological and other impacts of the trafficking, the majority experienced intensely negative emotional responses. Those who experienced this less attributed this to being mentally absent from the violence. The combination of childhood grooming and subsequent victimisation meant that most had well-practised strategies such as appearing 'nice', using substances, self-harming, and concealing their victimisation. Overall, participants' recounts of their feelings and actions during the 'past' stage, up to and including their initial victimisation, gave the impression of an overwhelming focus on survival, with little luxury to expand life experiences beyond immediate risk and needs.

Stories of the 'present' stage – of the relationship dynamics that led to an escape, and experiences immediately after it - were centred on the point at which participants either realised that escape was now paramount, or experienced an emotional shift or momentary advantage that prompted them to action. This was invariably associated with intense fear, which, far from abating after having escape, was experienced pervasively and frequently by most participants. Leaving also caused the psychological impacts of trauma to peak. Despite both the reality of physical risk and the severity of the emotional impacts, help-seeking was generally prevented

¹⁷ Māori tribe

¹⁸ Accident Compensation Corporation, a government-funded entity providing funding for treatment for victims of sexual violence

by negative perceptions of authorities and other agencies that participants had gradually developed over time (often reinforced by the abusers). Consequently, although several had some support from family or peers, most experienced acute isolation during this period of considerable transition.

Life after leaving the context of victimisation (the 'future' stage) appeared to be, for many, characterised by a focus on parenting or caregiving, managing the fluctuations in emotional well-being, adjusting to unfamiliar independence, and seeking support to facilitate recovery and growth. While the precise nature of each of these experiences varied by participant, every participant demonstrated the complex interplay of significant personal challenges as they adjusted to a new reality.

Reflecting on the self-character throughout the temporal stages of past, present, and future demonstrates the character development in participants' narratives and illustrates the depth of resiliency and adaptability, despite the intensity of the violent contexts described in the previous chapter. In the following chapter, the focus on interaction and the relationships between the self-character and other key characters helps to facilitate understanding regarding the victimisation sub-culture, the constraints on personal freedom and behaviour, and the implications of pre-existing and subsequent relationships on autonomy, safety, and help-seeking.

7. Interaction: The ‘Other’, The ‘Group’, and Relationship Norms and Expectations

7.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the ‘self’ character was explored in relation to its evolution over time, with particular attention to how participants constructed, interpreted, and described their past (before victimisation), present (during victimisation, and future (after victimisation) ‘selves’. This chapter now concentrates on influential other characters and their interaction with the self as depicted in participants’ narratives. Specifically, it looks at participants’ interaction with people whose involvement in participants’ lives pre-dated their victimisation through sex trafficking; their interaction with key actors who were instrumental in facilitating entry into and survival of victimisation; and the interactions that occurred both between participants and the sub-culture in which trafficking occurred. This examination of interaction with other people, proximal or otherwise, assists us in understanding the relationship between the pre-established socio-cultural norms internalised by participants and the evolving (re)construction of these as immersion in subgroups change, their expectations of future relationships, and the multitude of ways that other actors in their stories both influenced and were influenced by participants’ behaviours, emotions, and experiences.

7.2. Pre-Existing Relationships

7.2.1. Relationships with first partners

Violence by first intimate partners was almost universal amongst participants. Celeste exemplifies this early entry into a ‘love’ relationship that becomes progressively more violent: she outlined her relationship with her partner, explaining that the abuse had begun as minor, in that it could be justified to her as afterward as isolated instances of anger, but escalated insidiously and rapidly to become life-threatening.

Well they were all drunk at the time when it happened, they were drunk and of course my boyfriend would apologise the next morning and then say he would never do it again, you know, I kept giving in because I thought that was what love was like but I was wrong... [One time] because I didn’t want to go into his friend’s place, I wanted to stay in the car, he dragged me out of the car and tried to break my neck. So my neck was in a neck brace when I got to the hospital and I had bruises all over my stomach from being kicked in the stomach. – Celeste

Participants trapped in situations where their partners - whom they loved and trusted - began to exhibit abusive and exploitative behaviours had difficulty reconciling the reality of these events with the expectations they had initially developed of their partners. In speaking about these experiences, they frequently returned to the frightening behaviour of these partners. Kate, for instance, repeatedly returned to her abuser’s frightening behaviour saying “he threatened to kill me”. Similarly, Sarah recounted her experience of being raped as a form of punishment.

He got really angry and he said you’re just a fucking slut, you’ll never find another man, and then he actually forced himself upon me and raped me. – Sarah

As demonstrated above, rape, death threats, and unpredictably severe physical violence were all common experiences. According to participants, these abusers often attributed these violent acts to the inadequacies of their victims, and implied that the violence was a normal part of an adult relationship and should be accepted as such by victims.

He used to always tell me that it is all my fault and not his fault, that I was just to do what I was told to do then none of the stuff [that he did] would happen. – Celeste

Often, the descent into violence was interspersed with minor demonstrations of love and kindness, thereby cementing victims' loyalty. However, these kind acts gradually reduced until the violence was continuous, demonstrating that abusers' need to display 'caring' behaviour to offset the abuse and ensnare victims gradually became less necessary as this violence increasingly compelled victims' appeasement.

It started off pretty good, there were a lot of red flags in hindsight. He just became really controlling and I think he hit me I think it was seven months into our relationship when he first hit me. - Kate

It was violent, really violent sometimes. I ended up in hospital a few times, just from how abusive, physically and emotionally that he was. There were some days where he actually made me feel good but that didn't last long. - Corith

Some participants attributed their acceptance of violence within these intimate relationships to a lack of secure and safe attachment to proximal caregivers during their childhoods and the often corresponding lack of respectful, reciprocal relationships amongst those witnessed during childhood, leading them to create internal working models 'or blueprints' of relationships in which violence was acceptable and expected, and blame was attributed to the recipient.

I had no one. I got kicked out of home when I was 11 and I've never really had anyone so I think for me it was more just finding someone that would comfort me. - Corith

I think my choice of partners was probably affected by that. I didn't think that I deserved to be respected. - Kayla

This reinforces the influence of early proximal or influential relationships on subsequent expectations of how the 'other' treats the 'self', and what blame can be attributed to 'self'.

7.2.2. Expectations of family responses

Participants' expectations of their families' responses to disclosures of the forced prostitution they were subjected to varied significantly, and were informed by their experiences of shaming or compassionate reactions from these figures in the past, their perceptions of personal culpability, and the current quality of these relationships. Michelle never told her parents, and even at the age of 15, she saw this involvement in sex work as easy to conceal.

They had no idea... She [mother] just already thought I had been out getting wasted with my mates, so yeah. - Michelle

Sophia originally believed that her family supported the abuser's decision to remove her from her family and take her with him to Auckland because it would present greater opportunities for

her, and because they trusted that he loved her and would take care of her. Later, after questioning whether other parents would approve of a 12 year old being in a de facto relationship with an adult male and witnessing interactions between family members and abusers that were suggestive of an on-going connection, she developed the suspicion that her parents had financially profited, causing her retrospective perception of their parenting to be irrevocably altered.

I actually kinda wonder, did my family actually have something to do with it. Did they know I was actually going to be casted out and sold out? It seems so strange. - Sophia

Other participants expected to be shunned if their parents discovered that they had been forced to do sex work or been subjected to abuse alongside that sex work. These assumptions were not unjustified; some participants (such as Kayla) did disclose it, and experienced their parents' responses as being shaming and judgmental.

So my parents had thought I had become prostituting [by choice] and that really hurt that was never anything that I would have wanted to do... It was pretty hard, and I think it was around that time I opened up and I told my mum that actually I couldn't believe she would think so low of me. – Kayla

Disclosing the events of the victimisation to families was considered a source of immense distress by some, out of concern that they would be blamed, disbelieved, or publicly shamed – thereby reinforcing their own internalised shame.

It was like scary because it is my Mum. It's hard telling your parent, and so I told her and we had a big fall out too. She said 'you wanted to go out with that person, he's too old, he's an adult you are only a kid' and yeah. I was just crying. – Des

Yes so I believe that the shame was what strangled me. I believe it was the shame that followed me everywhere. The shame - I was afraid to show my face in public... I think the shame added to the dark place, because you knew that your family knew [about the abuse]. – Shar

It is evident from these descriptions of fear, shame, and expectations of blame that the internalised normalisation of abusive dynamics, often in conjunction with parents' previous (re)actions, fostered reluctance to share stories of intimate violation, constituting a significant barrier for exiting and recovery.

7.3. Key Actors

7.3.1. Relationships with abusers

Participants' reflections regarding their relationships with their abusers demonstrated the diversity in relationship characteristics – including romantic partnerships, friendships, and unequivocal perpetrator-victim relationships. For some, these relationships shifted dynamically between these three sets of relational identifiers, often in conjunction with changing levels of agency and social power.

He said things like I'm a genuine guy, I'm looking for a real relationship, and he was really nice. The first couple of meetings that we had – he was nice, he complimented

me, you know, 'you're really pretty', and just seemed really genuinely nice, and at the first few meetings he didn't mention anything about sex work or anything like that, or about his history. - Sarah

Ah at that time yes I did consider him as a boyfriend. Someone who I thought I could trust. – Sophia

I wasn't with him, that didn't last long but he was still kind of my watcher. - Corith

As underscored here, intense dependence at the time of victimisation often gave way to resentment and comprehension of abusers' exploitative motivations following social exposure to alternative relational models.

7.3.2. Subsequent intimate relationships

Several participants believed that as a result of their changed belief systems following victimisation, they would never be able to form sustainable and authentic relationships in any context. For instance, Celeste commented "it has kind of put me off relationships with males, to be honest". In addition, participants' subsequent relationships, which so commonly featured abuse (usually without replicating exploitation), were not considered unusual or harmful until the relationship ended – possibly, in part, due to the notion of violence within relationships as standard.

My last serious partner before who I am with now which was 5 years ago now he became quite abusive near the end. [One time] he told me that he would rape me to prove to me that he wasn't cheating on me and I will never forget that night. – Kayla

Some participants extolled the benefits of their current relationships, but alluded to their own or their partners' underlying issues that had not yet been resolved; in some cases, describing these relationships as wholly healthy and positive despite indicators of underlying coercive control.

He [the 'rescuer] was 17 and I was 15 I mean yeah he was a white supremacist type but more of a closet one... But he had a full-time job and lived with his brother in their own house. - Laila

I did see that he [new boyfriend] used to run some girls... One night we had just got back and he came in from the motel with this other chick... and he turned to her in front of everybody [saying] 'fuck up, fuck up bitch, fuck off' and hooked [punched] her... then later on he was like 'another fucking slut on the streets'. He never really told me much, not much details, because he was very known by the police and in and out of jail and did a lot of organised crime. - Michelle

Acts of abuse that were regarded as 'minor' were seen by three participants as comparatively positive and therefore acceptable.

Yeah since my babies, their father he was just a bit aggressive. He couldn't handle his alcohol which was nothing compared to what I'd been through. - Stacey

For three participants, these subsequent intimate relationships were the first relationships that they had experienced that were authentically supportive and encouraged trust.

He's [partner] gone through a lot of stuff in his life too, some things quite similar to what I've gone through, so we are supporting each other... He's very mature and he's supported me more than anyone has. – Corith

I probably wouldn't be in a good as position as I am now if it wasn't for him... He's been my rock, he's been really understanding and really forgiving and supportive, taken the place of being a father when my daughter's father is nowhere to be seen. - Kayla

Finally, staying with abusive partners or perpetrating abuse themselves was often theorised by participants to be a direct consequence of past trauma.

I think I felt like I didn't like if I didn't stick that relationship out I wasn't going to find better, just low self worth I guess. - Kayla

7.3.3. Interactions with other victims

Friendships and relationships with other girls who were being or had been victimised were complex. Some participants were guided by other victims regarding how best to do their jobs.

Yeah and one of my mates come and took me to the side and told me what to do told me like 'just go and do what he wants and then he'll give you some money'. - Michelle

Others regarded other victims who they were working with as their de facto family.

And that's all I held onto. I confided in my friends. And all we had was each other. – Sophia

Some participants attempted to encourage other girls' wellbeing once they felt able to, and exhibited pride in this capacity to assist and guide girls who had also been victimised.

Yeah, it was, to this day a couple of the girls that I pulled out, they call me Mum, even though one of them, she's just turned 21, I'm 7 years older than her but she calls me Mum 'cause she hasn't had anyone. I've always stuck by her and I've been the only one who was able to pull her out of [trafficking]. – Corith

However, at times the prospect of survival was all-consuming and they could not find the additional emotional capacity to protect others or be concerned about their welfare.

I knew that they had beaten up another girl and left her out at a farm. I'm not sure what has happened since [because] I try to stay away. I don't want to hear it because I don't want to be reminded of what I went through. It kinda sounds selfish. - Corith

7.4. Sub-Culture Norms

7.4.1. Gangs

Gangs, including Black Power, Mongrel Mob, Head Hunters, King Cobras, White Power, Killer Beez, and Mothers, featured heavily in many participants' stories. In addition, less organised 'youth gangs' (arguably not legitimised gangs but rather groups of socially minoritised youth)

played a role in several narratives. The roles that gangs played varied; for some, the abuser's involvement in gang life was a deterrent to escape or to expose the abuse, while for others, participation in gang life was a source of social satisfaction, pride, and personal identity.

You see when you are in this cruel world you've got nobody there to help you or to give you that family orientation, [so] you go looking for wherever it may be. - Jack

It was kind of like 'you do what I say and I will protect you'...there was always somebody out there that was stronger than you. - Hope

It was fun, I loved [living with the gang]... It ended up being fearless as well, you know.
– Jessica

It could also be a source of protection for those working on the street, especially with the added vulnerability of being underage.

My mate she was pretty tough and she was pretty out there, but her family are Black Power as well. So no one kind of messed with her and because I was with her, no one messed with me. But still I had to watch my back because if she wasn't there then I definitely knew something was happening to me. - Michelle

However, being part of a group (or only exposed to a particular group) that prided itself on unity was a compelling reason to unquestioningly participate in activities that in mainstream society may be considered anti-social. If participants did resist the expectations placed upon them, they were acutely aware of the potential consequences, including rape, physical assault, and, in some cases, the implicit or explicit threat of murder.

I had to do what was asked of me or required or else they would tie me up and throw me in the boot. – Jack

Abusers having gang connections made the process of extrication from the situation of victimisation much more complex, as they believed that the gangs would not allow them to leave without subjecting them to similar consequences delivered for acts of non-compliance – in part, because they knew 'too much' about the criminal activity within the gang.

Yeah of course they did they minded because I knew how everything had worked by then. I knew too much. - Jack

When participants' partners were gang-affiliated, participants were expected to abide by the beliefs and norms of the gang, irrespective of whether they themselves were considered (or considered themselves) affiliated.

My second husband yes he was affiliated with White Power...My first husband was part Māori and my second husband wouldn't allow me to see my children because of that fact. So he would sabotage a lot of my supervised visits that I was permitted to have, but because my son was part Māori he wouldn't let me see him. - Shannon

In addition, aside from the primary abusers who had forced participants to prostitute, participants also experienced physical and sexual violence from patched 'clients' or acquaintances of abusers.

This KC [King Cobras] guy a client jumped in was all good and then he was driving out of [the area] and one of the rules [set by the Mongrel Mob boss] was don't go out of [the area] and I was like 'hey, hey I told you we'll go this way we'll go this way' and by then he was like 'fuck up sit down and shut your mouth' and he kept driving... I was shit scared. I was actually scared I was going to die. He forced me to have sex... I was trying to close my legs, he was ripping my pants off and I was crying trying to hide my tears. I didn't want to get a hiding or anything or even worse. – Michelle

I was just raped [by Mongrel Mob], but I had a couple of friends in the Head Hunters and they came and got me, well one of them came and got me. – Jessica

Strikingly, 'just rape' appeared eminently preferable to physical violence, and was often depicted as a minor, almost inconsequential experience.

7.4.2. Bystanders

While reflecting on their experiences, participants identified a number of people who were proximal to their situations and presumably had some knowledge about what was happening, and reflected on their actions or inactions.

When I first went with him and then saw the bus driver... He was looking like 'you know what you getting yourself into?' You know, it was that look. – Sophia

I think now like looking back on it some of them [neighbours] were afraid of getting mixed up into something that they didn't really want to be, because my step-father did have gang connections. - Shannon

Family members and friends were often the bystanders, and, while their levels of understanding of the situations were typically incomplete, they were occasionally also instrumental in facilitating an exit – such as for Shannon.

Yeah my grandparents intervened because the last time my step-father had abused me I was taken out or he took me out to my grandparents place and he just dropped me at the side of the road. I went to see my grandparents and from there I went straight to a shower. - Shannon

Some bystanders gave their implicit or explicit support to the offending, reinforcing the acceptability of this abusive behaviour within the sub-culture to which many of participants' abusers appeared to belong. Kate, for example, commented "his friends thought it was great". Somewhat 'known' bystanders often offered limited support or guidance to participants in trapped situations, while themselves constrained by their own connection to the sub-culture.

Yeah one of his friend's wives she pulled me aside and then he cut off all contact with her and his friend because she was like, 'you know, you need to get out' and I just felt like I couldn't. – Kate

Less common were previously unknown bystanders, who went out of their way to support participants. The exceptions were Corith's experience of being severely beaten and left by abusers, which ended with a stranger discovering her, ensuring her immediate safety, and

supporting her to access medical treatment, subsequently staying in contact with her throughout her journey of recovery; and Jessica's experience of being assisted by strangers.

So they left me naked tied to a lamppost but the next morning I don't even know what time it was, a farmer come down the gravel road and found me. – Corith

I remember standing on the street with young women going past and they pulled over, you know, and I didn't know what the fuck to think but I said 'okay' and I broke down and they actually paid for a hotel for the night and came to me the next day with a gift basket, with new clothes, and shampoos and nice things, you know, these are church people but they showed me something. – Jessica

These experiences were deeply meaningful to participants and were instrumental in providing an alternative (positive) view of humanity. However, other experiences with bystanders were public, and represented the apathy of witnesses to violence against strangers.

I just got up [after she finished kicking me] and walked away and I was crying and I was looking at people to help me. There were loads of people staring at me but no one helped me. - Michelle

Evidently, bystanders often had some level of knowledge, whether assumed or confirmed, about participants' situations. Few, however, sought to intervene, despite often being the only people outside of (or traversing the boundaries of) the immediate sub-culture who were aware that the abuse was (or may have been) occurring.

7.5. Interactions with Clients

Participants' induction into forced sex work generally fit into one of two contiguous sequences: immediate threat and force that became more potentially lethal over time, and insidious coercion followed by elevating violence and degradation that made it difficult to isolate a single point of beginning. Those who were immediately and violently coerced into having 'clients' appeared to remember their first experiences much more clearly, and with exhibited shock and shame associated with these experiences.

His drug addiction became more serious that is when he said this is what you are going to have to do. So it started with his friends... Just like it started with a couple of his friends all week and it just escalated to all the time, all the time. - Kate

I felt dirty, I felt wrong, I felt all kinds of strange messed up emotions and I'll never forget one guy getting a phone call from his wife when I was with him and I was thinking to myself this guy is probably old enough to be my dad and he is getting a phone call from his wife, who is probably at home with the kids, who are the same age as me. And like that sticks in my head and I can't fathom the idea that these men could actually pick up a girl my age, and do what they had done. - Kayla

Those who were insidiously led to comply by abusers had comparatively blasé accounts of these interactions, focusing more on how the exploitation was organised than how the situation had evolved or the emotional impacts it had precipitated.

They organised people to come in and they would have a place for me to go to and I would just wait and the clientele would show up... Once or twice [it was] to a house but [more typically] motels and hotels. – Jack

Finally, four participants had relatively benign or even positive impressions of their clients, feeling that they were unaware of the context in which the sexual transaction was being delivered.

They [the clients] weren't overly nasty, I think they were just there to have some sort of service. – Shannon

Perceptions of client interactions, therefore, were heavily influenced by the methods employed to ensure participants engaged with them – more gradually coercive methods led to participants' regarding their interactions with clients as typically unpleasant, but these accounts did not seem to be permeated with the same horror that accompanied those suddenly forced, highlighting the effectiveness of insidious manipulation and progressive force in facilitating unquestioning compliance.

7.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, the interweaving nature of interpersonal relationships and the expectations, power dynamics, and responses to abuse enmeshed within participants' narratives evidence the integral role of early working models of normative relationships as instrumental in shaping participants' trajectories of future relationships, and their capacity to recognise abusive behaviours within these relationships. It is difficult to make generalisations regarding participants' past and current relationships with abusers, peers, partners, families, and clients, given the contradictions, nuances, and multiplicities inherent in participant narratives. However, it can be concluded that disruptions to proximal relationships early in life, and the later betrayal of trust featured in narratives of exploitation, presented challenges to participants' subsequent formation of secure and healthy relationships. In this way, the association between relationship difficulties and victimisation can be considered bidirectional; abusive offending distorted latent expectations of relational norms, and the normalisation of relationships that do not represent safety, trust, and reliability sets the scene for vulnerability to abusive offending. Accordingly, while there are some exceptions, most participants identified patterns of violent, controlling, and degrading behaviour that pervaded multiple relationships in their lives (such as with immediate family, extended family, and partners), signifying a key consideration both for prevention and for intervention.

8. Practitioner Knowledge and Responsiveness

8.1. Introduction

In the previous three chapters, the analysis of the data collected through interviewing survivors of sex trafficking was presented. These findings highlighted a number of themes identifiable within participants' narratives, organised into their lives leading up to victimisation through trafficking, the period of victimisation and their experiences that occurred during this period, and their post-victimisation journeys. This chapter diverges from the previously unitary focus on survivors' lived experiences, and explores perspectives of key informants – gathered both through surveys, and through individual interviews with people who had worked alongside victims in a professional capacity, including social workers, counsellors, legal advisors, and first responders. Thus, rather than seeking exploration of survivors' experiences of having been trafficked, the purpose of the data analysed here aims to ascertain whether and how survivors have contact with services, including health and social services, and how their interactions with services are understood by practitioners. This chapter therefore first examines the information gathered through surveys, before looking at the greater depth of experiences described by key informants.

8.2. Medical Practitioners

8.2.1. Overview

Seventy respondents from five district health boards across the country responded to a survey of medical practitioners. These were a combination of junior medical officers, senior medical officers, and nurses. Of these respondents, 34 worked in emergency medicine, six in sexual health, and 29 in mental health, as set out in Figure 4. It was specified in the recruitment email that these questions should only be answered as they applied to respondents' work in an Aotearoa context, irrespective of prior international experience. Given the emergent context in which medical practitioners operate and the many demands on their time, a low response rate was predictable. Moreover, the title 'forced prostitution and sex trafficking' given for the survey is likely to have led many practitioners to assume they have not encountered relevant situations, even though these may simply not be recognised as such. However, while limited, the findings are still useful in indicating experiences and knowledge gaps. Additionally, the inclusion of some U.K.-based participants attempts to mitigate this limitation, by transferring aspects of what is accepted as good practice in their context to what we know about the New Zealand context.

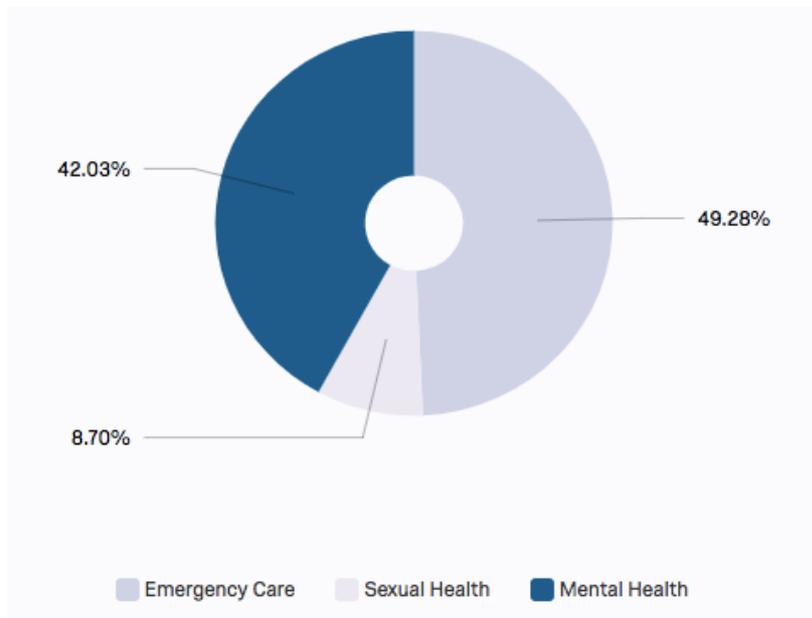


Figure 4: Survey respondents' fields of practice.

8.2.2. Recognising risk

As demonstrated by Figures 5 and 6, most of the medical professionals surveyed did not believe they had ever encountered any of the risk indicators for sex trafficking. However, their subsequent answers to open-ended questions indicate that they conceive sex trafficking as occurring within narrow parameters and always involving either foreign women or popular culture renditions of kidnapped victims. A minority of professionals had encountered these indicators. Mental health professionals appeared more likely than other medical professionals to identify these indicators in their patients/clients, although it is unclear whether this is because they are more likely to come into contact with victims, or because they are more likely to use approaches that engender greater self-disclosure than other medical professionals.

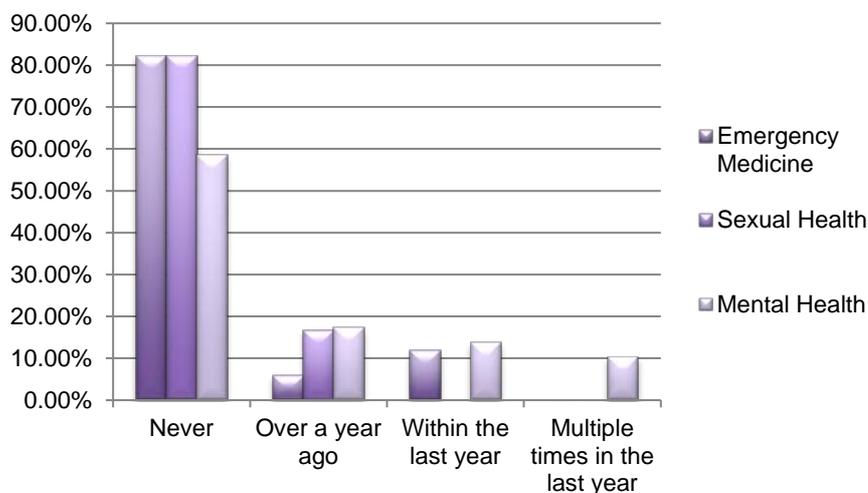


Figure 5: Recognising risk indicators regarding sex trafficking (percentage per profession).

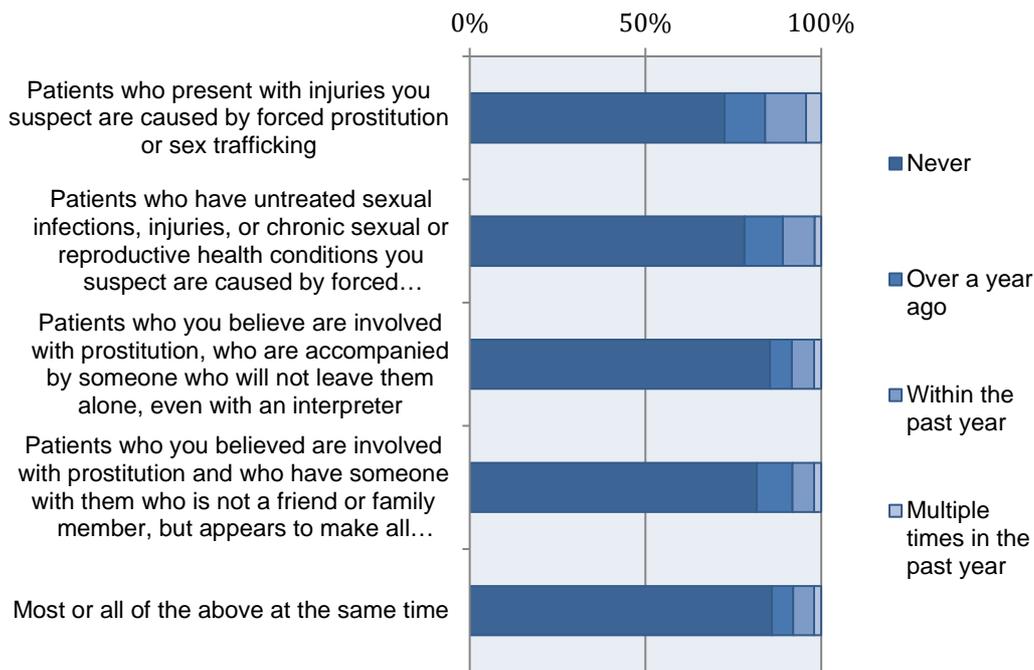


Figure 6: Professionals' reports of how often they have encountered risk indicators for trafficking.

As shown above, the vast majority of medical professionals reported never having encountered patients presenting with injuries suspected to be caused by trafficking, patients with medical conditions believed to result from trafficking, patients involved in sex work who have an overly attentive companion, patients involved in sex work with a non-family decision-maker present, or most or all of the above simultaneously. There were some exceptions, with injuries and sexual health conditions the most likely indicators to be regarded as concerning.

It is evident that many respondents do not recall components of the patients' presentation to their services that were asked about in the survey. However, the prevalence of 'yes' and 'sometimes' responses for each of the variables below when they are asked to reflect on the group of patients and their presentations to services suggests that these indicators may highlight victimisation. These indicators include conditions such as injuries often related to sex trafficking, patients involved in sex work who have an overly attentive companion, patients involved in sex work with a non-family decision-maker present, or most or all of the above simultaneously.

Various combinations of these questions or 'warning signs' are frequently used internationally to identify victims of trafficking; however, despite the extremely low rate of perceived trafficking cases, the discordantly high correlation between these few cases and each of the secondary indicators in the survey suggests they have some validity in an Aotearoa context. It is important to note that singularly, no one indicator suggests that a presenting patient is being forced to prostitute or trafficked for sexual purposes. Individually, each variable can be attributable to any number of reasons, including other types of abuse or marginality. However, in combination, they

may serve as a cautionary sign to practitioners. Figure 7 sets out respondents' self-reported levels of familiarity with cases that may represent situations of trafficking.

8.2.3. Risk and red flag correlations

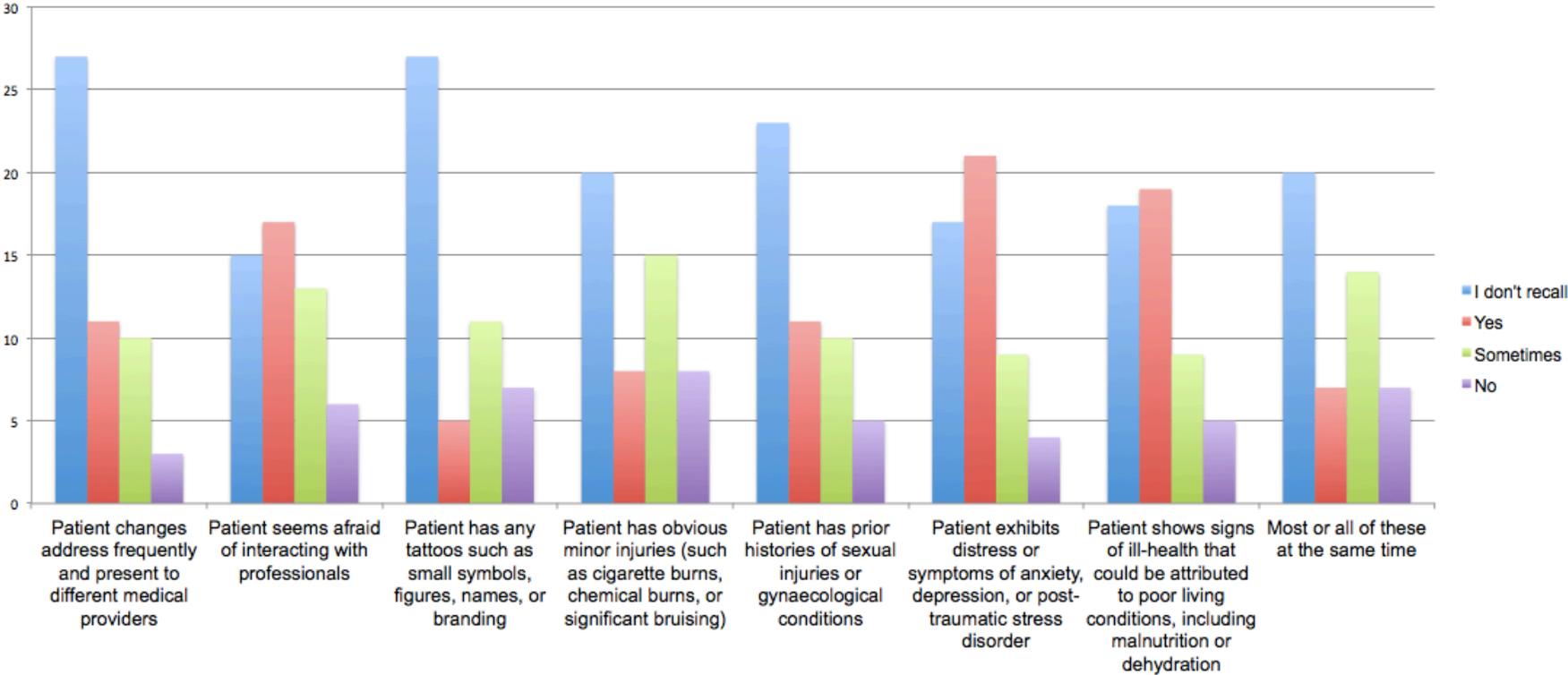


Figure 7: Respondents' identification of signs and symptoms occurring in patients who may have been victims of sex trafficking.

8.2.4. Practitioner awareness and definitions

In some of participants' responses, the boundary line between trafficking and consensual sex work appeared to be obscured. Being 'forced' appears to have been interpreted as having any compelling reason to undertake sex work, or the absence of alternatives with equally rapid rewards, such as due to addiction or social marginalisation.

We treat a number of women who earn money for drugs via prostitution, most are European or Māori. Some of them are likely forced into it but when we see them and provide treatment they don't need to earn money for drugs anymore and are able to exit this situation.

I work with a number of clients who are transgender, and many feel they have no choice but to prostitute.

Others appear unable to differentiate between forced prostitution and any other form of sexual or physical violence. When asked to expand on their experiences with victims of sex trafficking, respondents commented: "The people I often work with have histories of sexual abuse" and "I often suspect family violence." Others referred to any experiences they had had with sex worker clients, rather than restricting this to experiences with those who had been forced to participate in the sex industry.

I have come across a patient in the last year who volunteered that she is a sex worker and ran her own business. Her husband also in attendance was supportive and did not appear to be the dominant character in any way.

Many recognised that they received little training around signs of trafficking and consequently doubted their ability to accurately identify cases, stating "it is not something I have thought about", and "although I have some knowledge that this happens in New Zealand, I haven't thought much about it".

8.2.5. Suspected cases

Some appeared cognisant of the complexities surrounding identification of potential victims, particularly given the presence of possible abusers, language barriers, and mistrust of helping professionals.

There are a number of our clients who are associated with patched gangs who disclose violence and are probably being forced into sex work, although they won't acknowledge it. They generally avoid support agencies.

We see small numbers of women from Asia with little or no English, who come to drop-in clinics for sex worker checks (when translator availability is virtually nil) despite asking their (NZ) boss to let us know they are coming, he never does. I believe this is so we don't have an opportunity to book an interpreter.

Only one respondent defined one of their clients as definitely having been 'trafficked'.

8.3. Social Service Practitioners

8.3.1. Respondents

The social service practitioner survey attracted 61 respondents. As with the survey of medical practitioners, this is likely to be at least in part due to general lack of knowledge of sex trafficking in a domestic context and corresponding belief that it is not an issue encountered in professional practice. However, a good range of practitioner specialties was achieved, as illustrated by Figure 8.

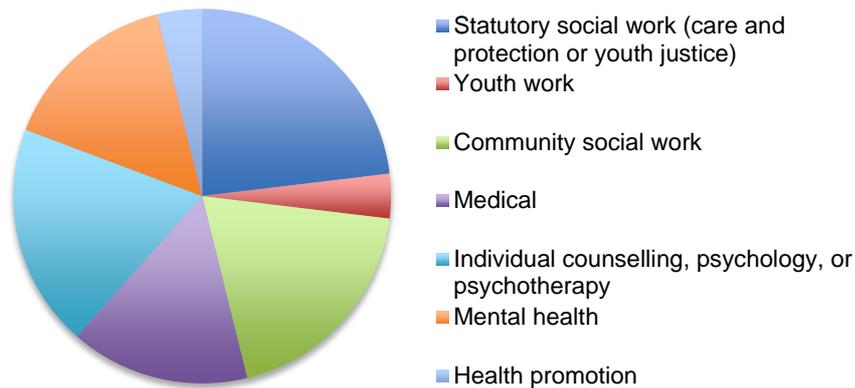


Figure 8: Proportion of respondents in each field of practice

8.3.2. Experiences with clients

Respondents had extremely varying responses. Some had had no experience with any of the 12 situations listed below in Figure 9. However, many had encountered multiple of these; often within the last 12 months. Most commonly encountered were being made by force or coercion to do sex work, being too afraid of managers to leave the sex industry, doing sex work whilst under 18 organised by themselves or peers, accumulating 'debt' to sex work managers, and being under 18 and doing sex work organised by gang members. As demonstrated in Figure 9, in all but one of these categories practitioners' work with clients in these situations had been equally frequent or more frequent within the last 12 months.

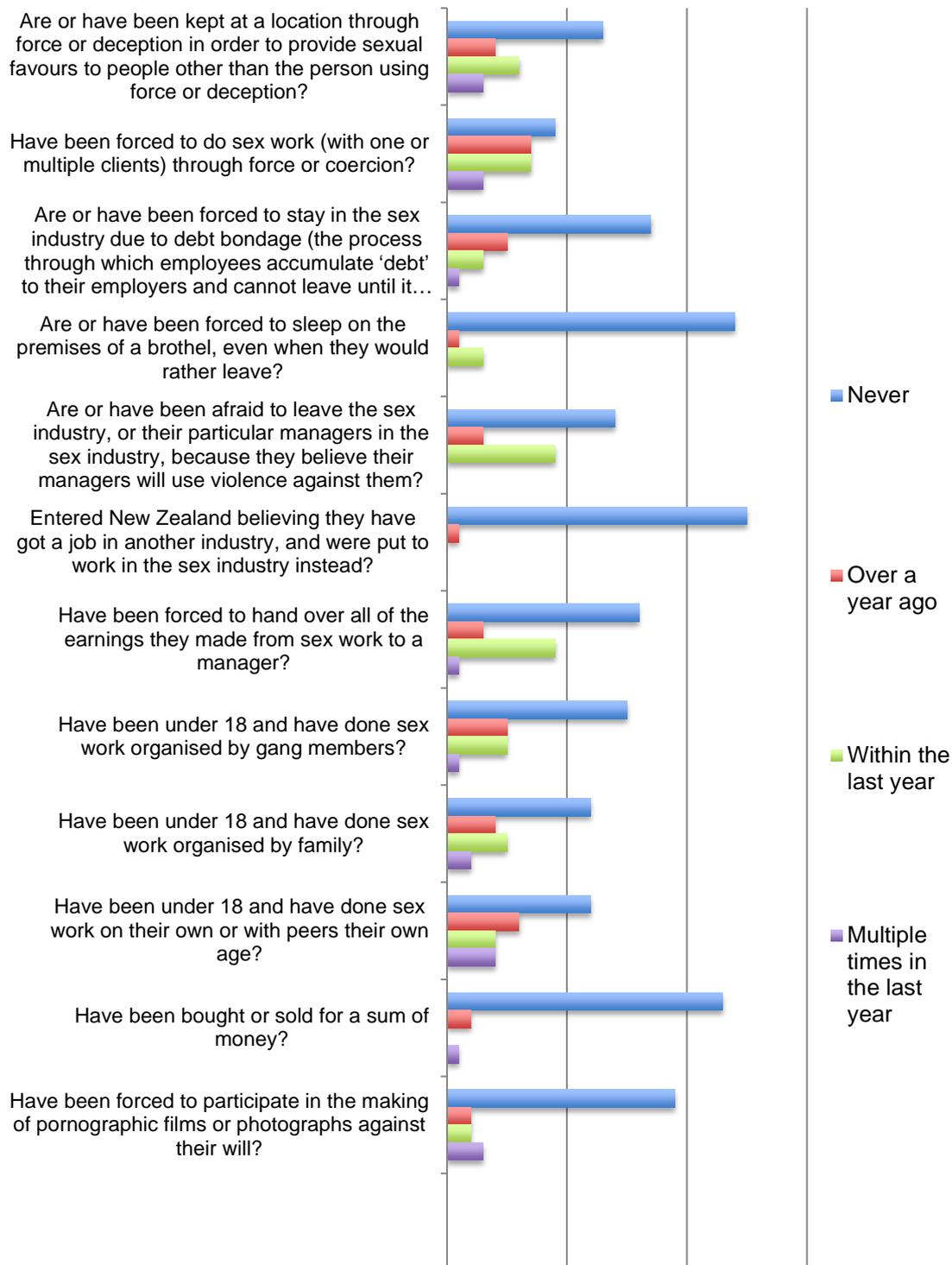


Figure 9: Respondents who had worked with clients in situations suggestive of sex trafficking.

8.3.3. Perceived indicators

Social service practitioners described a range of indicators they believed were associated with trafficking. Many of these responses concentrated on interpersonal, social and behavioural signs. When listed, these included being reluctant to trust people, being wary of others, drug and alcohol use, seeming unable to maintain a relationship, suspicion of authorities, seeming

'spaced out', having a limited understanding of cultural practices in Aotearoa, not being able to make or maintain eye contact, having power and control dynamics within the family or with others, not having access to documentation, and having too much or not enough money. Respondents also noted that victims are likely to have poor education, a poor skill base, suffer from social exclusion, and may be afraid of disclosing previous violence. They also suggested that victims might be hypo- or hyper-sexualised, be homeless, be accustomed to lying, and dress provocatively. Other commonly mentioned signs were those relating to emotional well-being and mental health. This included self-perception and responses to trauma; namely: fearlessness, anxiety, hypervigilance, self-blame, minimising, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, shame, self-harm, suicidal ideology, having low self-esteem, and freezing when they are presented with risk. Finally, physical health was often mentioned by respondents as giving clues as to the nature of victimisation, with respondents suggesting victims are typically underweight, suffering from exhaustion, often have eating disorders, and might have sexually transmitted infections.

8.3.4. Lack of clarity in definitions

As with medical practitioners, social service respondents showed a tendency to conflate the experiences of sex work, domestic violence, sexual abuse, and trafficking, as exhibited by the following:

I have experience working in family violence so I would consider the same issues regarding safety as you would for women trying to leave violent relationships.

It's made me think about the increase in addiction to meth and the resulting need for money as well as the number of women coming here from Asia explicitly intent on working in the sex industry.

8.3.5. Experiences with cases

Despite the somewhat disjointed responses from social service practitioners and evident ambiguity about what constitutes trafficking and distinguishes these from other types of abuse, respondents disclosed a range in levels of experiences with cases.

They are often strictly under control of the boyfriend or minder- who may allow them to come to the drop in for a shower or breakfast but calls them back outside via cell phone.

We work with many women who are somewhat coerced in to doing sex work due to their debts or boyfriends debts.

Young people we work with mostly sold by family members but continue to earn after they are removed.

These cases fall on a continuum of 'force', but give valuable insight into the actuality of Aotearoa-relevant dynamics, unlike the assumptions of transnational 'trapped' victims alluded to elsewhere.

8.3.6. Generic ‘helping’ responses as descriptions of actions

Many respondents appeared unable to articulate the specific actions they would take if they were presented with a situation that involved the sex trafficking of clients. Instead, they drew upon generic actions taught as guiding principles in the social work and counselling professions. For instance, when asked what steps they would take to assist clients, many responded with ambiguous comments such as the following:

Standardized processes for health social work in our environment.

I would have no hesitation responding and would access supports if I felt I needed to.”

[I would] state the law... [and] seek to not cause more harm with my actions.

As I discuss in the following chapter, such responses are likely to be indicative of overarching societal structures that collude to perpetuate the silencing of specific types of victimisation and, correspondingly, preclude practitioners’ capability to respond to unfamiliar categories of violence.

8.3.7. Practice responses

Respondents’ methods of responding to disclosures and situations of trafficking can be grouped into four categories. The first is emotional support – listening, reflecting feelings, and discussing avenues for on-going therapeutic support to recover emotionally from the experience(s). For instance, respondents gave answers such as “initially just going with her thoughts, feelings”, and “therapeutic support and sign posting to services.”

The second relates to practical support – ensuring basic needs like housing, access to financial resources, and dealing with health, Police and legal imperatives.

[I would] stabilise accommodation, provide financial support, provide practical support... make a plan of support if the person wants to move on from the practice.

The third category is centred on safety needs, and involves both individual safety planning and the engagement of other agencies. These suggestions, however, assume an appropriateness of service design and, discussed later in chapter eight, actual service availability may not reflect these needs.

[I] would respond with safety plan and not allow client to return to person who had trafficked them.

[I would] support with police - making a statement, depending on the legal intervention support or on half of the person take out some intervention orders to protect them from their abusers.

The final category involves referral to other agencies. Police featured regularly (11 times) in these comments, and other agencies include Women’s Refuge, the NZPC, Sexual Abuse

HELP services, Shakti¹⁹, and community social work agencies. However, there was significant variance in the extent to which respondents believed they could force Police involvement and their faith in these 'other agencies' to meet all victims' needs.

8.3.8. Assumptions of 'appropriate agencies'

Many practitioners identified an integral step in working with a victim of sex trafficking as referral to appropriate agencies. These responses were invariably vague and were often preceded by the disclaimer that they would need to consult supervisors regarding which agencies to access. While there are specialist services available for sex workers working in the organised sex industry voluntarily, victims of family violence, and victims of sexual violence, Aotearoa has no specialist agencies for people forced to work or trafficked for sexual purposes.

[It] depends on the situation, but firstly seek peer or supervisor supervision....

[and] with client's permission, referral to appropriate support agencies.

[I would] gain consent to do a referral to a specialised practitioner in this field.

[I would] refer to a specialist NGO to support legally and practically.

Other respondents either acknowledged their lack of knowledge about which specialist agencies to refer to, or assumed that existing agencies were equipped to manage these situations.

I'm unaware of appropriate services to support that someone who has been trafficked

[It] depends on [the] individual situation. If trafficked I would contact colleagues in the police, or Shakti ethnic women's refuge for advice.

Inherent in this comment is the assumption that a trafficking scenario must only involve migrant women.

8.4. Key Informant Interviewees

8.4.1. Role of gangs

The key informants placed far greater emphasis on the influence of greater gang culture (loyalty to the brotherhood, and a hierarchical masculine organising structure) than survivor participants did. Having worked regularly with clients who have been 'put on the block' (gang raped) and/or subjected to intimidation techniques before being sent to work on the streets, participants appeared highly cognisant of the dynamics, risks, and trajectories of victimisation common to adolescent girls forced to sell sex by family members or partners who are gang-affiliated.

If they refuse they just are as likely to get blocked by the gang and who needs that. So yeah there is the threat of physical violence, there is the threat of gang rape, there is the threat of I had one woman that talked about every time she

¹⁹ Ethnic women's refuge

refused she got bottled²⁰. So why would you refuse where is the incentive to do that? – Counsellor1

The Mongrel Mob is mostly is what I hear... Eventually when they misbehave they are chucked out but then on the streets they soon find out there are other mates and they join up – Social worker2

However, the extent of gang-organisation interpreted by key informants appeared highly variable, with some considering it as an ingrained gang function and witnessing demonstrations of ownership, and others assuming it was informed by the culture of violence against women but opportunistically perpetrated by individual members and for individual gain.

There are gangs out there recruiting young girls... They are also tattooed very early in life when they come in. They just look like symbols, various types of symbols. – Social worker2

I don't think gangs are doing it I think it is individuals within the gang. Like the gangs are much more interested these days in making money and they can do that when they can do that out of prostitution, but I think it is more the prospects it is the want to be, it's the individual arseholes within the gangs. – Social worker1

The extent to which the abuse is organised has significant implications for intervention: greater numbers of abusers inherently pose greater barriers to exercising safety, and a greater likelihood that abuse will be normalised within peer groups, as is further discussed in the following chapters.

8.4.2. Knowledge of the boyfriend-abuser

While participants had typically only encountered a handful of cases and were not confident in generalising their clients' early life trajectories that led to vulnerability to recruitment into trafficking, they did identify factors they perceived as relevant to the formation of clients' relationships with abusers. These factors included being in the foster care system, moving in with boyfriends during adolescence, learned helplessness secondary to conditioning to sexual abuse, and being in a relationship with someone who imposes isolation and coercive control.

When she left home she moved in with her boyfriend when she left the foster home she moved in with her boyfriend and he did exactly the same thing to her. And so he would take her out pimp her out but... that was not violent from her perspective. She is so institutionalised and she has had a humungous history of sexual abuse, horrific sexual abuse all through her life. – Counsellor1

And so in their relationship he had all of the power anyway... He would insist that she masturbate and he would film it and he sold it on the internet as pornography – Social worker3

Learned helplessness is a real big one. It is just like they are so compliant it drives you insane and the complete disbelief when you point out that forced

²⁰ Hit with a glass bottle

prostitution is actually sexual abuse and they can't actually see that. –
Counsellor1

One participant described how factors of vulnerability and prior histories of trauma intersected to drive survival-oriented behaviour, stating:

It's called resistance, it's survival. It's control. It was being able to survive without the control – in retrospect [having them at the safe house] was always going to fail. Because the resources that Women's Refuge has are never going to be enough to help someone who is that fragile, who has had that much trauma, and that level of control. – Social worker1

As she pointed out, this trajectory and consequent adoption of behaviours that enable survival within the context of abuse may supersede the breadth of available services.

8.4.3. Impacts on clients and therapy needs

Discussion of impacts spanned consideration of the effects of prior abuse and the effects of being trapped in exploitative situations. Participants emphasised the effects of normalised sexual abuse on their clients' acceptance of violence and exploitation, explaining that this was essential to abusers' abilities to continue to abuse them. Conversely, exposure to alternative peer groups and relationship norms facilitated their growing awareness of the exploitative nature of these relationships.

Back then I think it affected her back then I don't think she knew any different it was normal. So she realised abuse quite early on and then she normalised sexual abuse because that followed the physical abuse and then she normalised being prostituted out... But now looking back on it she has realised like she is socialising with people outside of the environment and realising that is actually not the norm and that what happened to her was not ok. – Counsellor1

Others focused on the mental health impacts of both prior abuse and the trafficking, and described their clients' presenting issues including dissociation, addiction, depression and anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, anger, self-harm, and suicide attempts.

They start cutting themselves, attempt suicide, they don't have any confidence in themselves... Basically they take it out on themselves on their body. – Social worker2

Depression, anxiety, drug addiction, huge issues with addictions they are probably the most common ones... – Counsellor1

This variety of symptoms corresponded to specific needs from the social work or counselling process, such as reducing immediate trauma-related symptoms, restoring autonomy over fertility and reproduction, improving immediate physical safety, and increasing parenting capacity.

Now well she has got PTSD so the symptomatology needs to be reduced, but what she needs more than anything else I think is to learn to actually think for herself, to not always be at everyone else's beck and call... She hasn't kind of got that

capacity to stand on her own two feet. It is kind of like there is this developmental delay that probably goes back to 12 or 13. – Counsellor1

Especially the ones under 24, I get them free access to the Jadelle [long-term contraceptive device], get it put in when [the abuser's] not around. If they don't know the rod is in their arm, they don't know... I can't keep them safe in any other way. Because if they get pregnant to these guys, he's the babydaddy, and that's it, you can't get rid of them. – Social worker1

However, systemic barriers presented substantial issues to ensuring physical safety and setting up long-term assistance. For instance, processes in place for investigation and prosecution of trafficking offences were perceived to be inadequate, posing prolonged risks for victims and precluding potential for recourse through the criminal justice system.

Most often the perpetrator is still there, and is not being punished! So they live in constant threat – even when they're happy, they're frightened, because something bad might happen to make the happy go away. – Social worker1

There needs to be way more than just a trial. It needs to be nationwide and it needs to be now and there needs to be an effective witness protection programme because there is not. – Counsellor1

The number of trafficking instances compared to prosecution there is no reliable data, but there are estimates based on what we see and that estimate is that the pervasiveness of trafficking is huge compared to the number of successful prosecution cases which are miniscule. Nobody sees that as a critical threat, nobody. – Solicitor1

One participant commented that Police intentionally disregarded the prevalence of trafficking because to address it would be too complex, stating “because if they admit that it's there, imagine what they'd have to do about it”. She described one such case and the reactions of Police to disclosure of the full extent of the abuse:

The police think she's a bad person. The police were very awful towards her. To them she's just some junkie prostitute. He's in prison right now for rape, but she's still terrified. No charges for pimping out a 13 year old. There's three women he's done that for, all girls. He's ruined these three girls, filled them full of drugs, raped them, and pimped them. And he's only being done for the rape. – Social worker1

Fifthly, the disempowerment of victims was viewed by some participants as disabling their future ability to construct and manage their lives without continued oversight.

The truth is that for her entire life previous to that she had never had to budget. There was money everywhere. I mean, she didn't have any of her own choices, she didn't have any choice around her own fertility, she had no choice about drugs, she had no choice about what she could and couldn't do, [she had] every movement tracked. – Social worker1

Finally, participants indicated that many other professionals either failed to respond adequately, or made assumptions or attributions of blame – such as about the reasons for substance use or lack of parenting ability or capacity - about victims that was arguably misplaced.

I think there's a clear difference between other mental illnesses and PTSD. A normal reaction to an abnormal situation, that manifests in a way that makes you out of step with normal society, that makes you vulnerable, that makes you unable to cope. Often interpreted as people abusing substances. Although they often do coexist, are they dosing themselves because of the mental illness, or are they mentally unwell because of the drugs? In this case are they dosing themselves because of PTSD. – Social worker1

You've been traumatised as a child, so you are not capable of being a mother... and I mean I think she would probably be a pretty good Mum, not perfect, but not bad. But yeah she will never get the chance, which is pretty horrifying. – Counsellor1

As demonstrated by these statements, there appeared to be consensus amongst participants that attempts to access assistance would be futile, either due to disinterest, disinclination, or an absence of robust organisational processes.

8.4.4. Precursors and recruitment pathways

In many instances, participants had worked intensively with clients who were victims of sex trafficking, and hypothesised about the precipitating factors to their recruitment. Both sexual abuse and the absence of secure and protective parenting commonly featured in these interpretations of vulnerability to exploitation.

Yeah it's the early neglect the early disorganised or chaotic attachment the early sexual abuse... and the lack of safe adult to actually protect them and then the development of Borderline [Personality Disorder]. – Counsellor1

Anything from 11 to 12 to 13, some of them have been chucked out of their homes by their parents and whanau so they have no option but to hit the streets. Some of it is very intergenerational. – Social worker2

In addition, one outlined her understanding of how this recruitment period relates to the subsequent conditioning period their clients (and other victims) were subjected to prior to being prostituted by their abusers.

When she was 12 there were 8 girls – around her age - who were sold to the black power for a drug debt. This apparently is not uncommon. This is how she met her partner – in fact, she was sold to him. He'd be 25 years her senior... So they end up there with gang members, being taught to be obedient. – Social worker1

These descriptions of abusers' targeting of discrete sites of vulnerability – such as early abuse, neglect, lack of protective figures, and early disconnection from family – and the subsequent

abuse to secure compliance illustrate the range of traumatic experiences victims may experience prior to and throughout their periods of victimisation.

8.4.5. Need for a multi-agency model

As New Zealand has yet to form a multi-agency response to domestic trafficking, information about inter-agency practice was solely sourced from international participants. A United Kingdom-based first responder described the mechanism currently used to ensure that victims are provided with the opportunity to disclose their experiences and access immediate practical and therapeutic support, advocating for this model to be replicated within the Aotearoa context.

So the process is that this person who may be identified by anybody, you would contact a first responder... I will fill out get their story, explain the process to them, get consent from them to go into this system. So say they are recognised on reasonable grounds as being potential victim then that person will go into accommodation and be housed and have those sort of needs met. – First responder1

Conversely, another United Kingdom-based participant researching the legal scope of trafficking internationally praised the recent progress of Aotearoa's law enforcement initiatives, while simultaneously commenting on the pitfalls of constrained discourses.

Well I think in New Zealand now it is a lot better because they have established a serious crimes unit or something and it successfully prosecuted the first traffic crime. But as far as I understand it that is a sort of a quasi-interagency unit led by INZ Immigration New Zealand. Now there is policy debate and it could be a legitimate policy debate as to whether it is correct that Immigration should lead that... But I think that policy basically says that Aotearoa's view of trafficking is that it is transnational. It has been made clear too that the legislation reform has very little impact on those who are most vulnerable... I think in a lot of these cases it is not law led it has to be intelligence led, law enforcement led. – Solicitor1

As stated by this participant, the conceptualisation of trafficking as solely a transnational crime rather than a domestic one precludes an effective and cohesive response to sex trafficking occurring on a small local scale and involving only New Zealanders, despite apparent progress toward combating trafficking more broadly. He goes on to highlight the problematic nature of small, disorganised offending, on the basis that it is both extremely difficult to prosecute and unlikely to attract sufficient impetus to launch an investigation.

I think if you were involved in that circle that you would consider yourself to have a virtually free rein and that is particularly true of small operators. Because trafficking is so difficult to prosecute, what tends to happen is when they do find someone they don't have enough evidence to charge them for trafficking and so they just charge them for a lesser offence... [so] you would struggle to get out of it even if you wanted to get out of it you are basically in the hands of the organised crime or the perpetrators of the crime. – Solicitor1

Ultimately, this indicates the limitations of the state apparatus as a mechanism for addressing victimisation through trafficking and, consequently, the paramountcy of well-equipped non-governmental organisations that can fulfil the needs of victims. This response, which relies on the cooperation of law enforcement authorities but operates independently, has been instituted in the United Kingdom and in the United States, with apparent success – as illustrated by this responder’s comment.

That network [needs] to have all the local authorities and sort of different agencies that can actually inform their response because the police have realised they can’t actually react to this on their own especially since they are the ones that a lot of the time won’t get information. – First responder1

8.5. Conclusion

Aotearoa does not have a comprehensive plan of action to address domestic trafficking. Unlike many other countries, sex trafficking are not actively screened for in medical settings in Aotearoa, and practitioners’ levels of preparedness to respond to situations that do not fit the conventional dynamics of family or sexual violence is therefore unknown. These surveys sought to identify whether practitioners had been recognising situations that may indicate that patients had been victimised through trafficking, and whether any of the indicators internationally believed to be associated with such cases had been present in these patients’ presentations to services. Findings showed that while stated experiences with such cases was rare, those who did suspect these situations believed that these indicators were present in their patients’ presentations to medical services.

The findings further showed that many practitioners are unable to identify the dynamics of sex trafficking that differentiate these situations from sexual violence, family violence, or sex work; that they are largely unaware of distinguishing features of victimisation; and that practitioners acknowledge substantive barriers to victim identification, usually in relation to international victims. Correspondingly, the constrained conceptualisations of trafficking exhibited in Aotearoa’s processes for targeting the issue effectively prevent small, disorganised, and local trafficking offences from being classified as such, and, consequently, from being investigated and addressed. However, key informant participants demonstrated insight into the vulnerability, dynamics, and experiences of trafficking, and identified numerous flaws in Aotearoa’s current service provision for this population group. The reasons underpinning this exclusion from services and invisibilisation in both dominant discourse and formal systems are discussed in the following chapter, followed by the implications for policy, practice, and service design.

9. Silenced Voices

9.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I set out social service (including U.K.-based) and medical practitioners' responses to surveys aimed at finding out how they considered sex trafficking, and what, if any, their experiences of working with clients subjected to this have been. In these findings, it became apparent that practitioners' conceptualisations of trafficking were, in the main, nebulous at best, and illustrative of widespread gaps in knowledge. This, together with the chapters highlighting survivor participants' experiences, showed that victims are prevented from disclosing their stories of victimisation, survival, and recovery to both proximal figures in their lives and to professionals through a combination of intentional and unintentional means (and by a range of sources).

Chapters nine and ten now attempt to tie together the findings arising from interviews with survivor participants, and the findings relating to practitioner perspectives elicited through both the surveys and key informant interviews. During the analysis, two overarching (and overlapping) domains arose from the findings: the domain of voice and silencing, and the domain of the trafficking context and how this was created, enacted, reproduced, and governed (using Bourdieusian theory to organise this discussion and link the structural and psychological components). Correspondingly, although there are points of intersection between the two discussion chapters, they are intended to target these domains separately. While chapter nine focuses principally on how survivors' experiences can be contextualised within practitioner and wider societal discourse, chapter 10 sets out the entirety of the survivor experience using theoretical frameworks to frame the journey through exploitation.

In this first discussion chapter, therefore, I consider the ways in which this occurred with reference to the theoretical concepts of 'voice' and 'silencing'. Here, I consider the processes through which victims of trafficking are silenced, the domains in which they are permitted to exercise voice and the discursive norms constraining what they are permitted to say, and how survivors themselves both operate within these norms and act to subvert them so that their stories may be told, albeit to a limited audience.

A sense of being 'unable to talk' pervaded survivors' accounts of their journeys through and beyond victimisation through trafficking, often due to the perceived likelihood of blame, the difficulty in accessing language that describes experiences in a way that would be accurately understood by listeners, and the fear that such disclosures would be unwelcome or negatively received. In addition, the tendency to suppress stories of victimisation (or the potential for such stories to be expanded on) was implicit throughout practitioners' accounts of working with clients and their conceptualisations of trafficking. This shared reluctance or inability to give voice to difficult experiences, I argue, is principally due to two (interrelated) issues. The first issue is problematic organisational discourse regarding trafficking, such as through the definitional terms encapsulated in organisational policy and training to recognise and respond to types of violence. The second is a lack of theoretical discourse regarding the constitution of trafficking, which is linked to macro-level policy development but then societally adopted and

transmitted. Both of these aspects of trafficking discourse preclude conceptual consensus and, accordingly, the ability to create opportunities to enable victims' voices.

9.2. Who May Speak, and Who May Not?

The inability to disclose trafficking experiences and the unwillingness of practitioners to invite this disclosure can be principally understood by examining how power structures and discursive practices determine who (and what) is silenced, and, correspondingly, who is (either implicitly or explicitly) given permission to speak. Correspondingly, the focus throughout this chapter is the construction of these power structures and discourses. As briefly introduced above, silence - and therefore silencing - is referred to by Ginio and Winter (2010) as "the socially constructed space in which and about which subjects and words used in everyday life are not spoken" (p. 4). This silencing chiefly occurs through the privileging and suppression of discourse: discourses authorise who may speak, how they may speak, and which speakers (and speeches) are disqualified, forbidden, or condemned (Ward & Winstanley, 2003). Voice cannot be separated from power, as social power structures facilitate the suppression of some voices and the privileging or elevation of others. In other words, the act of exercising voice is to display social power; conversely, the silencing of voice acts a suppression of social power (Spender, 1981). Many authors note that women, and particularly those who have been victims of violence, have a long history of being silenced through the selective and prevailing use of suppressive discourse (see Dobash & Dobash 1979; Jordan, 2008; Kelly 1988). This is directly relevant to understanding the constraints placed on participants' attempts to speak: even 'familiar' types of gendered abuse are often suppressed, and unwelcome narratives of violence even more so. I therefore explore here the multitude of ways in which victims' voices of articulating their experiences of (predominantly gender-based) violence are suppressed, minimised, minoritised, and silenced.

9.3. The Multiple Domains of Silencing Discourse

9.3.1. Discursive dominance and voice erasure

As referred to above, both organisational (characterised by policies and practice priorities) and societal (informed by socio-political characterisations and the shared understandings that follow) discourses of trafficking suppress the ability and invitation for people victimised through trafficking to share their stories. In her early work, Leah Van de Berge (1997) argued that we must consider scholarship (like all other mediums through which 'voice' is exercised) as governed by tensions, power disparities, and disjunctive opinions, and therefore invariably acting as a gatekeeper of voices. It is therefore essential that the governing of voice elevation is enacted in a way congruent with academic aims; for instance, to give a platform to silenced stories. Relatedly, Strine (1997) labels the invisibilisation of particular experiences, structural domains, and subpopulations that challenge hegemonic and unitary social identities as voices that are 'under erasure'. She was principally referring to the dominance at the time of positivist research that situated methodological 'rigour' as limited to quantitative, replicable approaches to research, and which correspondingly positioned the authentic voice of both researchers and participants as subjectifying - and therefore illegitimizing - the research. However, this conceptualisation of voice erasure can arguably also be applied to non-epistemological

influences equally grounded in hegemonic discursive practices that shape academic (and social) convention, authorise the centring of selected stories and the suppression of others, and determine the limitations of the public's framework for understanding of social phenomena.

We can see this unmistakably in the inhibitory discourse suppressing trafficking disclosure introduced in chapter one and evidenced in the dialogic and definitional difficulties observable in practitioners' conceptualisations of victimisation, as shown in chapters six and eight. Specifically, hegemonic discursive practices identifiable in the subjectively powerful domains of socio-political representations of victimisation, academia, mainstream media, and, by default, the helping services regarding trafficking mirror this negation of 'voice' in four primary ways. Firstly, practitioners attempted to corral storied experiences of victimisation into 'accepted' categories of abuse. Secondly, listeners often inhibited victims' willingness or opportunity to disclose by minimising, invalidating, blaming, or stigmatising responses to initial forays into disclosure. Thirdly, practitioners showed a tendency towards the dichotomous classification of 'criminal' and 'innocent' characters within narrated stories of victimhood. Fourthly, practitioners receiving disclosures implicitly refused to acknowledge narratives of abuse as constitutive of broader patterns of gender-based violence through trafficking. Each of these is explored in greater detail below.

9.3.2. 'Accepted' categories of abuse

As demonstrated by these research findings, participants' disclosures of their experiences to friends, families, law enforcement, and helping professionals were frequently met with responses that attempted to (re)constitute these experiences into subjectively more familiar categories of violence. I posit that this is likely due to two overlapping and interlinked phenomena of participants' storying. Firstly, participants' experiences were grounded in the meta-narratives saturating the subgroups to which they belonged. These meta-narratives were invariably informed by normalisation of violence against the female body and the shared sense of futility in speaking about such experiences (the basis for which is discussed in greater detail in chapter 10). Secondly, the meta-narratives informing professionals' unwillingness or incapacity to classify the use of the female body for profit while it is simultaneously subjected to violence resided outside the more 'comfortable' categorisations of 'domestic violence', 'sexual violence', or 'sex work'. I now explore the ways in which trafficking is denied as an 'known' category of abuse by professionals interacting with victims.

Exercising voice through disclosure of oppressive experiences necessitates ability, resources, and freedom from constraints to speak personal truths and express personal will; if this is precluded, whether structurally, relationally, or individually, the person becomes silenced (Ahrens, 2006). In this research, the principal barrier appeared structural: many victims (like those around them) did not have the language accessible to describe the phenomenon, to have the capacity to self-identify as victims, or to claim the legitimacy of emotional harm accompanying this confirmed victim status. Knowing something unpleasant or subjectively violating had occurred was often not tantamount to acknowledging victimisation, particularly if the context surrounding the victimisation did not adhere to prevailing stereotypes about the

assumed dynamics of a specific category of violence. Likewise, in chapter eight, professionals and other recipients of disclosures demonstrated either discomfort or incapacity to correctly classify these experiences, particularly in the absence of a perceived coherent narrative from disclosers.

In addition, participants were often precluded from making any disclosures due to a suitable 'space' to do so not being attentively constructed by the potential recipients of disclosure – as seen in chapter six, professionals interacted with participants almost exclusively in relation to their perceived core business, which did not include enquiring about potential exploitation and the chaotic, unfamiliar, and often hitherto unheard stories of trafficking. Comments such as 'I didn't even get to tell [the counsellor] my story', or about how only domestic violence dynamics could be disclosed to Women's Refuge, were testament to this. Giddens (1984) suggests that interactions with expert systems can be inherently problematic if specific stories do not fit into dominant narratives endorsed by those systems, which may unconsciously reflect oppressive ideologies and universalise the help-seeking story rather than appropriately contextualise the help-seeking of each individual. This appeared representative of participants' experiences here, as they attempted to explain their presentations to services and were largely met with reductionist attempts to (re)classify their experiences as either sexual or family violence and refer accordingly. This reduction failed to show due regard for the complexities and unique manifestations of traumatic responses that accompanied experiences of trauma that were organised, plural, and typically (and problematically) interpreted by both discloser and listener as featuring a degree of complicity. As demonstrated by the findings chapters, practitioners allowed some disclosure of physical and/or sexual violence to emerge within these presentations, but rarely explored the intersection between the two categories of violence or the potential for these to be linked with other types of coercive control – or for these manifestations of gendered violence to interlink with participants' sex work.

The absence of a shared narrative specific to trafficking also indicates the privileging of dominant meta-narratives. In some cases, this silencing was partially self-imposed as a protective decision and appeared enforced by dominant societal constructs of victimisation - participants rarely classified what happened to them as trafficking, and as such, demonstrated complex and changeable conceptualisations of the abuse to which they were subjected. This, combined with a minimisation of violence they were subjected to and, in some cases, an acceptance of this violence as normal led to an unpreparedness to situate blame solely with abusers, which precluded self-identification of victimhood. However, professionals were not similarly exposed to sub-culture norms (described in greater detail in chapter 10, using Bourdieu's constructs of 'doxa' and 'habitus') that positioned their experiences as a natural facet of belonging to a particular social field. Rather, they were (albeit likely unintentionally) arguably responding in a way antithetical to their professions' focus on combating oppressive practice (Pearce, 2011), by reacting only to experiences ratified by organisational priorities and practices and accordant training and screening regimes, rather than to individual victims' experiences of oppression through violence and control. Bergquist (2015) provides an explanation for this incongruence between practice values and actualised practice, theorising that prevailing patriarchal social structures reject the disruption of 'norms' as a hazard to

dominating ideology, and in doing so influence the entrenchment of meta-narratives and the refusal to deviate from these. I contend that the exploitation inherent in participants' narratives presents such hazards to dominant ideology, as it challenges social beliefs about Aotearoa being exempt from trafficking behaviour (MacFarlane, 2017; Stringer & Simmons, 2016). I therefore argue that there has not yet been sufficient dialogue in Aotearoa's socio-political sphere to enable the construction of a shared basis for professional understanding; accordingly, in the absence of a professionally-understood narrative of the story of sex trafficking, the fragments of such stories as they are presented by clients or patients remain unable to be accurately identified as such and structured into a defined framework of understanding.

9.3.3. Discouraging disclosures

The lack of a shared narrative about trafficking obstructs practitioners' abilities to recognise congruence and intersections between types of violence and the concomitant imperative to purposefully invite disclosure. To fully comprehend the social and emotional barriers to disclosing trafficking to a professional or other support person, we must identify the parallels with those involved in disclosing other types of victimisation. The perpetration of sexual violence has long been acknowledged as having the potential to induce powerlessness through feelings of shame, secrecy, and self-blame (Koss, 1985; MacKinnon, 1987; McAuslen, 1998). Despite this felt powerlessness, and the incontrovertible effects of self-conscious emotions such as shame and corresponding suppression of story-telling for prolonged lengths of time, two thirds of rape victims do eventually disclose, usually to a trusted friend (Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003; Ullman & Filipas, 2001). However, negative or socially stigmatising responses to these disclosures, which reinforce the apparent need for secrecy or which implicitly blame the victim can further entrench feelings of shame and self-blame even if well-intentioned (Campbell, Wasco, Ahrens, Sefl, & Barnes, 2001; Filipas & Ullman, 2001; Golding, Siegel, Sorenson, Burman, 1989; Ullman, 1996).

Equally, responses from formal agencies can be immensely damaging, and many survivors report receiving judging, shaming, or blaming responses from community or health service personnel (Ahrens, 2006; Littleton, 2008; Ullman, 2001). In some cases, professionals' doubts about the veracity of victims' stories engender disbelieving responses (Ullman, 2001). These responses, both formal and informal, further silence victims' voices. Accordingly, participants referred to a fear that their disclosures would be incorrectly categorised by those they disclosed to – that they would be accused of being voluntarily involved with sex work (an apparent source of shame to some) rather than having the forceful aspect of these transactions explicitly recognised and their consequent victimhood validated. Indeed, some did receive blaming responses after disclosing (such as 13 year old Des, blamed by her mother for 'going out' with the wrong man despite parental approval at the time), and were implicitly deemed responsible for their own experiences of being forced to sell sex for someone else's profit – irrespective of their underage status and the force impelling this compliance. The combination of these factors – the denial of legitimacy of victimhood in an experience not popularly perceived as being the result of coercion, the blame attributed to victims upon disclosure, and the disregard shown to the powerlessness of victims in contexts of violence or

coercion – collectively act to further silence victims.

This silencing is further influenced by pre-existing subjection to apparent marginalisation. The multiplicity of categories of marginalisation (as discrete from marginality, as marginalisation more appropriately infers as act of oppression by a more socially powerful group) can have far-reaching implications on how interpersonal violence is understood, how blame is attributed, and how assistance is apportioned. In the first instance, factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, and class are influential in determining who is victimised by which category of crime (Kawachi, Kennedy, & Wilkinson, 1999; Kouta et al., 2015). Of greater note, however, is how these factors shape others' perceptions of victims' legitimacy. Helpers' levels of doubt about victims' veracity and attributions of blame to victims have been variously associated with minoritised ethnicities (i.e. non-white populations) as discovered in a study into helpers' responses to vignettes with randomly assigned ethnicities (Lewis, 2013). In addition, Kouta et al (2015) found that women with low socio-economic power received inconsistent or minimising responses, while Walker, Kershaw, and Nichols (2006) found that sexual violence disclosures were met with differential responses depending on their age, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation.

This highlights the pervasive influence of what has been termed the 'class-race-age-gender' matrix of multiple inequalities (Daly, 1993), later described by Daly (1997) as the relationship between factors of inequality that become 'intersecting, interlocking, and contingent' as victims attempt to navigate help-seeking processes. That more participants were Māori compared to Pākehā and most were from low-income families, that they typically lacked secure sources of family-based capital, that almost all were excluded from mainstream education or employment, and that the majority were young and female are, I argue, all likely influential factors in their experiences of being silenced. Similar biases are apparent in studies exploring perceptions of 'recidivist victims', where sexual activity and/or remaining in socially condemned partnerships partially dictate impressions of legitimate victimhood (Taylor & Sorenson, 2005; Uthman, Lawoko, & Moradi, 2009; Valor-Segura, Expósito, & Moya, 2011). Participants demonstrated a range of ways through which they were minoritised, marginalised, and invisibilised by subjectively more powerful groups and the individuals representing them - both informally in their communities, and formally through their interactions with helping services, law enforcement agencies, and health organisations. Some, for instance, were prevented from discussing their experiences. Others were subject to child protection investigations that failed to explore personal pathways toward the precipitant to statutory investigation, or were in contact with police but did not feel police showed any concern for their own exploitation or the criminal behaviour underpinning it. Finally, many described unresponsive mental health or counselling contact that was arguably dehumanising and dismissive of their individual needs and prevented them from feeling able to tell their stories, in part because of the chaotic contexts within which they were embedded – often as a result of interlinked forms of marginalisation including, but not limited to, their stories of victimisation. Victims' outcome expectations of helping agencies, correspondingly, were overwhelmingly negative: previous negative disclosure experiences led them to expect similar responses from future disclosures,

a phenomenon well documented by previous authors as influencing attrition in social services (Gulliver, Griffiths, & Christensen, 2010; Watsford, Rockwood, & Vanags, 2012).

Further disclosure, or further help-seeking, was therefore forestalled by a pervasive fear of being treated insensitively, shamed, doubted, or regarded as overly emotional. This appeared compounded by underlying organisational priorities of helping services. The organisational frameworks guiding institutional responses to disclosures are largely responsible for the inadequate provision of affirming practitioner behaviour; such organisations are oriented toward the needs of the majority and the 'easily fixed', rather than the needs of individual survivors, especially those whose 'problems' are not easily integrated into the frameworks espoused by the institution (Ahrens, 2006; Karver et al., 2008; Rickwood, Deane, & Wilson, 2007). Accordingly, participants found there was little investment by most helping services into understanding their needs, especially those related to trauma.

Given the physiological and behavioural changes that have been found to result from abuse and neglect in childhood (Dalla et al., 2003; Thoits, 2010; van der Kolk, 2015), the orientation of behaviour toward short-term survival is unsurprising. In addition, the activation of physiological stress functions following experiences of psychological trauma may manifest emotionally, physically, and relationally (Bucalo et al., 2015; Wingenfeld & Wolf, 2014; Yehuda et al., 2015), as set out in chapter two. Participants' experiences of a range of traumatic symptoms (such as flashbacks, nightmares, hyperarousal, depression, and anxiety) are consistent with explanations of the impacts of trauma, and pervaded their experiences of surviving and recovering trafficking-related abuse. However, given attempts to relay such experiences to professionals in their own language, this appeared disregarded by listeners in favour of more tangible and focused needs. Instead, they demonstrated a narrowed focus based solely on risk, negating potential for more subtle or sensitive needs to be explored. Practitioners' narrowing of foci onto less 'problematic' understandings of participants' needs (that can then be considered to require a less intensive, referral-based response) is further discussed later in this chapter, but presents a sizeable barrier for clients with complex needs or 'messy' stories to access support that invites either meaningful long-term or repeat engagement.

In addition to discouraging future individual contact, the outcome expectations resulting from suppressive initial responses extended beyond the individual survivor and the generalisation of their own initial contact experiences to their own future contact expectations. Many participants gave narratives saturated with indicators of social deprivation, such as transience, multiple abuse experiences, early involvement in criminal activity, homelessness, and reliance on a male provider for economic survival – in short, a matrix of factors often precipitating social marginality. Having been subject to continual or repetitive marginalisation can then texture shared outcome expectations regarding disclosure: if disclosures by some women in marginalised communities are met with blaming or judging responses, the shared perception of likely responses to disclosures then precludes other individual members' faith that their own or others' future disclosures will be heard and supported (Daly, 1997; Kouta et al., 2015; Lewis, 2013), regardless of who the primary recipient of a negative outcome was. Accordingly,

while the transfer of messages regarding trustworthiness of services was not explicitly discussed by participants, the transmission of shared beliefs (such as those pertaining to statutory agencies) about helping services and consequent discouraging of disclosing such stories to such professionals was perceptible and merits further research.

9.3.4. (De)legitimising of victimhood

Paradoxically, these shared outcome expectations discussed above, which were held by participants and informed by practitioner incapacity, were equalled by the victim-expectations held by practitioners and informed by problematic societal constructions of victimhood. Feeling able to voice an experience of victimisation without facing attributions of personal culpability is central to decisions to disclose (Campbell et al., 2001; Ullman & Filipas, 2001). McAlinden (2014) argues that we as social actors (re)constitute hierarchical understandings of 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' victims, and 'blameworthy' and 'non-blameworthy' abusers, and, further, that these (artificial) distinctions permeate legal, social, and political discourse. This enables us to understand the use of moral judgment to differentiate between imagined and genuine victims, typically on the basis of subjectively virtuous behaviour (Valor-Segura, Expósito, & Moya, 2011; Walklate, 2007). Such distinction then (re)produces an institutional response in accordance with this perceived morality or immorality, and accordant legitimisation of blame allocation (Dubber, 2006; O'Malley, 2004). As many participants admitted being involved (voluntarily or otherwise) in criminal activity, we can hypothesise that this criminality and consequent perceptions of immorality legitimated the allocation of blame to victims. In some instances, this may then be reinforced by the nature of victims' presentation to law enforcement services, where full disclosure was impeded by fear.

Participants' stated shared-belief barriers to disclosure indicate the authority conferred by dominant constructions of victimhood. Brewer (2010) posits that certain constructions of victimhood are selectively utilised for political purposes in conjunction with a neoliberal agenda of representing the interests of the most privileged. This typically manifests in the construction of a binary opposite, with victims represented as innocent, unsuspecting, and otherwise virtuous (and therefore able to be universally regarded as undeserving of violence) as the antithesis of the consummate predator instrumentalised to advance the politicisation of 'deviant' abusers (McEvoy & McConnachie, 2012). This construction of legitimate victimhood then inhibits the acceptance of any variance in narratives of sexual violence from the consummate 'innocent' victim (as represented in chapter eight by respondents) as valid (McAlinden, 2014), highlighting the fallacies of such a false dichotomy.

Age, for instance, can be argued to be integral to such constructions of vulnerability and innocence – children represent purity and absolute blamelessness, and as such fit neatly into the 'victim-offender'/'good-bad' binary, as indicated by legal and societal judgments of abusers who offend against children (see Furedi, 2013; Hunt, 2011; Tilly, 2008). While more simplistically embodied by attitudes toward abuse against children, aspects of such reductionist narratives can be similarly applied to adolescent and adult victims – typically, dominant discursive practices amongst law enforcement and community responses consider 'real' abuse solely as violence that occurs against wholesome, uncorrupted, and demonstrably

'pure' (particularly in relation to sexuality and criminality) victims (Bouris, 2007; Jacobsson & Lofmark, 2008), thereby replicating moral politics that invalidate and subjugate voices of victims whose experiences do not reflect these implicit beliefs (Hunt, 2011). This was seen in respondents' comments throughout this research, where only abuse against children was typically viewed as abuse rather than consensual sex work; for instance, one statutory social worker commented: "young people we work with who are sold by family members" are represented very differently to women forced to work because they "probably have drug debts". Accordingly, McAlinden (2014) states that:

"There are a number of factors which dilute the moral positioning and vulnerability of such victims as 'sexual innocents', placing them at the bottom of the victim hierarchy. These include in particular the fact that many victims of internet offending or 'street grooming' are typically older children or adolescents... who may have become involved in some sort of 'relationship' with their abusers, and who are perceived as having been in some way instrumental in their own abuse and that of others." (p. 186-187).

Accordingly, willingness to disclose (and the actuality of reactions to disclosure) appeared to be influenced by participants' own interpretations of 'blameworthiness': being sexually active, having been involved with youth justice, and engaging in substance use all textured participants' own reflections on their narratives and the self-attributions of blame, as well as the responses of proximal others to disclosures of this victimisation. The powerful influence of the artificial binary regarding 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' victims, and blind adherence to these ideals by practitioners, silence the voices of victims who do not adhere to the archetypal representations of purity and blamelessness constructed through social, political, and institutional discourse (Cohen, 2001; Hunt, 2011). Instead, popular discourse (and its concurrent representation in popular culture) perpetuates myths about the dynamics of such abuse: the conventional narrative of the 'ideal victim' (Nielson, 2009) in trafficking, for instance, is one who is teenaged, captured, held in substandard conditions, and subject to forced administration of substances – usually designed to elicit emotional responses from the public and accordant sympathy for humanitarian efforts (Rossoll, 2013).

This representation is despite the undisputed realities that, as with other manifestations of sexual and physical violence against women, primary perpetrators of trafficking are previously known to the victim (Albanese, 2007; Anderson et al., 2014; Hanna, 2002; Parker & Skrmetti, 2013; Reid, 2011; Stringer, 2013; Vieth & Ragland, 2005), and that vulnerability is not conferred solely by age. These authors' findings are consistent with this study – participants' abusers rarely fulfilled the 'stranger/monster' stereotype in entirety or even consistently throughout participant narratives, and the physical environments of victimisation rarely reflected the sensationalised conditions conveyed through popular discourse. More importantly, the defiance of these stereotypes prohibited recognition by helping practitioners, as victims' descriptions of their lives did not conform to the movie-style beliefs about dynamics constituting trafficking. This was particularly evidenced in survey respondents' answers about what would trigger suspicion that someone had been trafficked: typically, these responses

were limited to cross-border situations (language barriers, visa issues), themes of ownership (constant accompaniment), and imagined substandard living conditions (untreated health conditions and unkemptness).

9.3.5. (De)Contextualising Victimisation Within Gender-Based Violence

As previously referred to, the conflation of trafficking dynamics with other types of violence proved strikingly problematic – both in terms of victim identification, and in terms of constructing an adequate service response. Both sets of survey respondents demonstrated a tendency to confuse experiences of trafficking with experiences of sexual abuse/sexual violence and family violence. In the main, respondents' answers about how they would support victims immediately presupposed that their needs fit into only one category, and that the solution was therefore to identify the suitable agency responsible for that category of need (i.e. Women's Refuge for family violence experiences, rape crisis services for sexual violence experiences, or NZPC²¹ for sex work-related issues). This was echoed by participants' accounts of their interactions with practitioners – they described not being accorded sufficient space, time, and interpersonal warmth required to foster a sense of safety that might engender honesty about the 'messiness' inherent in the breadth of these experiences, which typically traversed the barriers of single-category abuse and spanned multiple categories of need. This, of course, is presumably determined at least partially by societal-level silence about trafficking, in comparison to the relatively well-known and comparatively 'neat' categories of crime of family or sexual violence (Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence, 2016). However, participants indicated that the overarching coercive control exercised by their abusers manifested through intimate partner violence, through sexual abuse, and through being forced to endure violence and violation from additional parties (irrespective of whether these 'clients' were cognisant of the force inherent in these transactions). This meant that participants' attempts at disclosure were reduced into one of two principal narratives: that of the sex worker harmed through their (chosen) work, or that of the victim who has a solitary abusive partner (who would cease the violence if she could escape the relationship).

Despite the numerous parallels between the exercising of control or force through intimate partner violence or child abuse and through trafficking (Bullard, 2011; Farley, 2003; Kennedy et al., 2007), the abusers of participants employed additional tactics, created additional domains of enmeshment, and precluded escape in ways atypical of other categories of victimisation. Examples of this included inducing fear from peer groups, using the sexual component of the 'work' as a source of shame and threatened disclosure, and using fellow abusers to demonstrate the power to inflict harm on children. Abusers' methods of establishing and maintaining control are further explored in the following chapter, however are relevant here given the similarities between the nature of these methods and those employed by abusers in similar categories of violence.

I therefore argue that although the heavily gendered nature of the crime parallels other categories of violence against women and girls, sex trafficking should not be subsumed by

²¹ New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective

discourse that locates it as a 'home-based' problem or a crime perpetrated solely by one individual against another, which is integral to the design of domestic and sexual violence services in Aotearoa. Rather, abusers' actions pervade every domain that could otherwise constitute a source of safety, and require purposeful interventions not currently catered for by existing agencies. This is further reflected in survey respondents' vagueness regarding specific helping actions – the ubiquitous hypothetical referral to an unspecified 'specialist agency' to help victims of trafficking (which does not appear to exist in any form in Aotearoa), in conjunction with the belief that victims must be immigrants or international visitors, is testament to practitioners' inability to recognise, understand, categorise, and respond to types of victimisation that supersede the narrow intimate partner violence/sexual violence boundaries.

Threats to the victims themselves and to their supporters, demonstrations of force designed to intimidate, and compelled participation in activities are not unusual in intimate partner violence, but the source of abuse is (almost always) limited to a single individual and, in its most severe forms, is not typically (explicitly) endorsed by the family unit or immediate peer group (Kennedy et al., 2007). Conversely, participants' experiences highlighted an omnipresent sense of hopelessness, and attempts to leave appeared as commonly driven by a despairing fatalism and apparent acceptance of potentially fatal consequences as they were by a considered and carefully executed escape plan. As supported both by survey respondents' descriptions of their cognitive responses to identifying abuse and by participants' accounts of attempting to access support, these nuances are often not being identified within formal services. This then invisibilises the compounded risk faced by victims ensnared in subjectively unfamiliar manifestations of gender-based violence, and constrains conversations to exclude exploration of the additional barriers this compounded risk poses – or of the reasons why existing support agencies might be insufficiently structured to respond to such risk.

9.5. Extending Practitioners' Discursive Norms: Hearing All Voices

Earlier in this chapter, I discussed 'voice' and the corresponding constraints to voice. However, as crucial as it is to consider societal-level and agency-driven constraints to victims' capacity to share their experiences, we must too consider the constraints presented by self-concealment and subjective perceptions of safety. In addition to practitioners' active silencing, victims' own silencing due to fear and the failure to notice and respond to silence also operated collectively to invisibilise these stories within statutory and other helping services. Many victims fear violent repercussions from offenders if it becomes known that they are cooperating with law enforcement and are therefore reluctant to give information or to appear as witnesses (Gajic-Veljanoski & Stewart, 2007). Conversely, some trafficked young people do not identify as victims of trafficking – or, in fact, of any type of abuse - and attempt to return to their abusers as soon as they can evade the attention of helping services, and these on-going relationships and inability to recognise instances of victimisation then preclude the successful identification of victims (and the dynamics represented within categories of victimisation) (Geist, 2012; Reid, 2010).

This self-concealment is then mirrored by the concealment often unwittingly provided by bystanders and other proximal others who do not, or cannot, conceptualise these experiences as a category of violence. As noted by Geist (2012) and Reid (2010), it can be difficult for the communities in which victims live to comprehend their lack of agency, especially in situations where they are not being physically restrained. The barriers that chain victims to their traffickers or managers are often unseen, and may result from a combination of limited education, traumatic bonding, prior conditioning to abusive situations, perceived isolation, or a sense of mistrust in formal systems stemming from negative experiences with police or with child protection, justice, and foster care services (Crane & Moreno, 2011). Participants described most of these deterrents to accessing help from services and law enforcement. Additionally, for some, the principal barrier was considered to be the supposed corruption of statutory agencies. The only perceived route to safety, therefore, was considered to be staying silent – a decision informed by the previous experiences of themselves and others when interacting with formal services.

However, these experiences of concealing violence and disengaging from services paled as explanations for the lack of practitioner acknowledgement of the problem in comparison to definitional issues clearly observable within respondents' comments about trafficking. This indicates the paramountcy of extending discursive norms within helping services to invite the voices of this perpetually silenced group of victims to be heard and validated, which would require a paradigm shift regarding legitimacy of victimhood (Dabby, 2013). Further, given that respondents of both surveys appeared to lack the ability to accurately differentiate between consensual and forced involvement in commercial sexual transactions themselves, it is likely that victims' own perceptions are not being challenged upon their presentation to services, despite practitioners' suspicions of violence – meaning internalisation of silencing messages, and consequent self-silencing, cannot be easily reversed by practitioners and instead reinforces perceptions of mandatory silence.

Throughout this section, I have explored the numerous and often intertwined barriers to hearing all victims' voices. However, while the suppression of voice inherent in (the absence of) discourse encompassing understandings of trafficking bears significant adverse implications for a population group already subject to multiple and intersecting domains of minoritisation, it is also important to heed Dow's (1997) caution against taking a one-dimensional approach to the presumed allocation of voice. Dow, as a white, middle class, educated feminist researching experiences of populations presumed to only marginally possess the social power to use voice, reflected that the social capital typical of academics led them to marginalise subpopulations with alternative social positioning. This effectively served to impute an expectation of voice erasure onto them that oversimplified (and replicated) the restrictions to their agency. Accordingly, it would be remiss to locate survivors' attempts at using voice as wholly censored. On the contrary, survivors demonstrated the means to traverse these structurally imposed limitations to voice in order to forge new communicative channels. This is consistent with previous authors' findings that despite significant constraints such as fear and isolation, victims frequently (and resourcefully) develop methods of communicating their situations in ways that will be understood by listeners, although these

descriptions rarely adhere to professional definitions (Baldwin, Eisenman, Sayles, Ryan, & Chuang, 2011; Roe-Sepowitz, 2013). While these participants' methods often occurred outside formal structures and were not accorded consequent privilege in mainstream discourse on victimisation, even within organisations designated to attend to the sequelae of their experiences, they did constitute a breaking of silence and attract (some) social support. This is evidenced in participants' attempts to (re)form relationships with family premised on new and shared understanding of experiences of victimisation, in their engagement with professionals where some or all of their narratives about the abuse were permitted to enter the therapeutic space, and in the (re)development of new 'self' and 'other' relationships with subsequent partners.

9.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have considered how the four findings chapters have collectively demonstrated the silencing of participants' stories, and have portrayed the setting, rules, and expectations of the trafficking victimisation situation. A range of interlinked factors and dynamics collectively constituted voice erasure and silenced participants' stories of victimisation. Arguably, this functioned to preserve the comfort and justify the priorities of the more powerful majority in the form of providing agencies and their practitioners, and was reflected both through participants' narratives and practitioners' responses to surveys. Discursive practices were instrumental in the suppression of participants' voices, with definition ambiguity contributing greatly to attempts to (re)classify experiences into more 'known' categories. Other instrumental factors including the invalidation of attempts to disclose or unresponsive spaces of disclosure, the construction of a false and problematic binary that attempted to position stories as representative either of complicity or legitimate victimhood, and the de-contextualisation of trafficking narratives within gender-based violence generally.

This chapter principally underscores the paramountcy of proactively constructing a shared definitional and conceptual framework of trafficking to engender the use of a common language, both to ensure congruence of response and to facilitate (and indeed elicit) disclosure of victimisation. Challenging a socially constrained discourse to combat blame allocation and tendencies toward concealment is then imperative to prevent further voice erasure. Additionally, although structural and interpersonal silencing through discursive practices such as definition ambiguity, dichotomising of perceived victim legitimacy, and conceptual obscurity; decontextualisation of abuse experiences; and inadequate responses from formal systems and consequent development of negative outcome expectations effectively deter victims from feeling able or inclined to speak their narratives of victimisation, the ways in which participants transcend these barriers to exercise voice in unconventional ways should be acknowledged and privileged.

In the following chapter, we turn our attention to the 'norms' of the experience: the field, the habitus, and the forms of capital that are accessed prior to and during victimisation. To make sense of this, I use Bourdieu's theories to both organise victims' experiences into an explanatory framework encompassing both patterns of victimisation and victims' responses to

this, and to illustrate the various ways in which actions are predetermined and constrained by the overarching or collective structures within which victims are situated.

10. Recruitment, Entrapment, and Exploitation: Using Bourdieusian Theory to Understand Abuser Tactics and Environmental Influence

10.1. Overview

Chapter 10 is the second of the two interlinked but separately focused discussion chapters. While chapter nine outlined the societal constructions of trafficking manifesting through practitioner attitudes and (a lack of) knowledge and the corresponding limitations to exercising voice, this chapter discusses the specifics of survivors' experiences in depth using Bourdieusian constructs. To achieve this, it looks at the three overlapping but generally sequential stages of abuse through trafficking; namely, recruitment, entrapment, and exploitation. Attachment style and consequent expectations of relationships and interpersonal behaviour appeared instrumental in facilitating acceptance of violence and preventing integration of intense emotional experiences and corresponding emotional development. In addition, these attachment patterns positioned peers as constituting an influential regulatory and surrogate caregiver role. This then feeds into susceptibility to the 'love-illusion' (the term I chose to denote the false promise of protective love by abusers) of intimate partners and other desired caregiving figures, which is, for many, then joined by escalating fear evoked by increasingly frequent acts of violence and degradation. During entrapment, victims often did not initially recognise such acts as abusive – an impression reinforced by cognitive distortions crafted by abusers and the collective constitution of these as normative within the context of the victim-abuser relationship. As is seen throughout this chapter, entrapment methods also preyed on conceptualisations of consent. Sexual consent and the enactment of sexuality during adolescence appeared solely dictated by male abusers; a phenomenon I posit is largely induced by participants' parents' normalisation of their adolescent sexual relationships with adult male dating partners, and by clients' expressed preferences for younger (including pre-adolescent) girls (and, in one case, boys). This embedded norm of constrained consent was then strengthened by sub-culture practices demonstrating the power of gender-schemas (and privileging of masculinity) as determinative of power and consent.

I draw here on four of Bourdieu's seminal constructs – capital, field, habitus, and to a lesser degree symbolic violence – to conceptualise the complex interplay between sites of vulnerability, constrained agentive actions within the specific social field of abuse through trafficking, and the (re)constitution and (re)negotiation of relational interaction, identity, and resistance. Using these concepts as an organising framework for the discussion of the findings of this thesis enables simultaneous attention to multiple levels – to the normative expectations of those involved with trafficking, to individuals' embodied beliefs and behaviours, and to pathways to survival and the means with which to negotiate the constrained spaces of victimhood. While using this as a framework, I also draw in theories regarding the psychological and sociological explanations for relational behaviour, in order to effectively conceptualise the multi-factorial microcosm of sex trafficking dynamics. However, I order this section temporally, by using the victimisation stages of recruitment (and vulnerability to recruitment), entrapment,

and exploitation, rather than by concept. The constructs of field, habitus, symbolic violence, and capital are therefore interwoven throughout of these sections.

10.2. Using Capital Theory and the Field-Habitus Nexus

According to Pierre Bourdieu (1990), social power is independent on social capital (the collective mass of resources gained through relationships), which is legitimised by symbolic capital (such as, in this case, feminised and vicarious capital, which I discuss shortly) – both literally and metaphorically. He identified inter-subjective dimensions of capital accrual, predicated on ‘different conditions of existence’ (Bourdieu, 1984) experienced by different individuals across different social spheres. Accordingly, we can look specifically at trafficking as a distinct space (or social ‘field’, as such social systems are conceptualised by Bourdieu, 1984). This field is governed by a specific set of regulations and context-relevant accrual of capital. Moreover, we can identify the ways in which the rules of this space (the ‘doxa’) can be adhered to, influenced, or resisted in accordance with sets of personal resources and established structures that comprise the ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu, 1985). According to Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of social capital, the ‘field’ orients what actions and beliefs are possible within the ‘habitus’; in other words, the association between the two concepts manifests through the actualisation of value in accordance with interpersonal and person-object relationships and consequent construction of subjectivities (Skeggs, 2004). The constructs of ‘capital’, ‘field’, and ‘habitus’ as theorised by Bourdieu (1993) are by nature interlinked: while a social field is the structure (or structuring) of social positioning based on power relations within a group or establishment(s), the habitus is the acquired and socially-shaped schemata that influence worldview and interpretation of social phenomena, and consequently shape personal practices and behaviour according to these interpreted meanings (Bourdieu, 1992). Habitus therefore comprises the totality of all experiences that inform personal perception, including class, ethnicity, race, attitudes toward sexuality, sexual and gender orientation, gender, and age/generation (Watkins & Noble, 2013).

Through the experiencing of occupying these positions, individuals subjectively attribute meaning and ascribe significance to events, and thus embody this habitus; that is, replicate and reproduce the construction of identity and social order through external manifestation of ascribed meaning, also termed ‘hexis’ (Bourdieu, 1992; Jenkins, 2002). In this study, the habitus (or, put simply, the ‘feel for the game’) was infused with vulnerability of the body to gendered violence, and discursive norms about personal responsibility for (and normalisation of) this violence. Here, then, ‘habitus’ can be viewed as the sum total of behaviours designed to avoid escalation of violence by abusers, choices in partners, adherence to internally scripted patterns of engagement with clients, demonstrations of ‘toughness’ within peer groups that regularly enacted or normalised violence against female bodies, and concealment of victimisation from formal services. Collectively, these actions are indicative of ascribed meaning and consequent (re)production of social order predicated on “practically oriented dispositions that have already been inscribed in the body and subsequently take place without overtly direct conscious awareness of the principles that guide them” (Ford & Brown, 2006, p. 126).

Examining this habitus enables us to expose the various ways in which social inequalities, and

in particular gendered norms and expectations, manifest within this social field and are embodied by its participants (Bourdieu, 1971). The concept of habitus and field has been criticised for lacking utility (McRobbie, 2009; Reay, 1995) due to the multilayered nature of various sites of micrological analyses that could individually or collectively constitute social fields and, correspondingly, habituses (McRobbie, 2009). This complexity can be clearly identified in the context of this research – social field could denote the victim-abuser relationship, the gang/group/family environment, or the wider community environment underpinning recruitment and subsequent victimisation. In a study such as this, however, broad applicability does not inexorably detract from utility, but rather lends itself well to multiple conceptualisations of ‘field’, suitable for the purpose of establishing an expansive but shallow understanding. Similarly, habitus can be dynamically theorised in relation to field, such as by being extended to capture decisions regarding family relationships and subsequent partnerships, or being limited to choices about appeasement or resistance during the constraints of victimisation. Nonetheless, Bourdieu’s argument, later echoed by Jenkins (1992), advocates for the use of habitus and field as concepts that inform the organisation of empirical sources for analysis, rather than as a definitive and immutable explanatory structure. As with the concept of field, this provides some leeway in conceptualising the spatial boundaries of habitus that can arguably be expanded and collapsed as necessary to capture the multiple layers of societal groupings, each with their own structural norms and accordant disposition-informed action patterns.

Using Bourdieu’s constructs to theorise the social field of trafficking and the components that are integral to its perpetuation allows us to recognise structural, relational, and individual/personal dynamics that play out within the sets of experiences represented in this thesis. This has several benefits: it prompts us to analyse each contributing and perpetuating factor discretely and in combination with systems, it allows for the identification of intervention points, and it provides opportunities for barriers to prevention, investigation, and intervention to be theorised. Finally, it commands consideration of the embodiment of situationally-derived norms that may otherwise be invisibilised. The interaction of field and habitus, together with the types of capital evidenced in participants’ narratives (categorised as *traditional capital*, *vicarious capital*, and *feminised capital*), is illustrated below in figure 10.

FIELD: TRAFFICKING VICTIMISATION

HABITUS: SURVIVOR NORMS

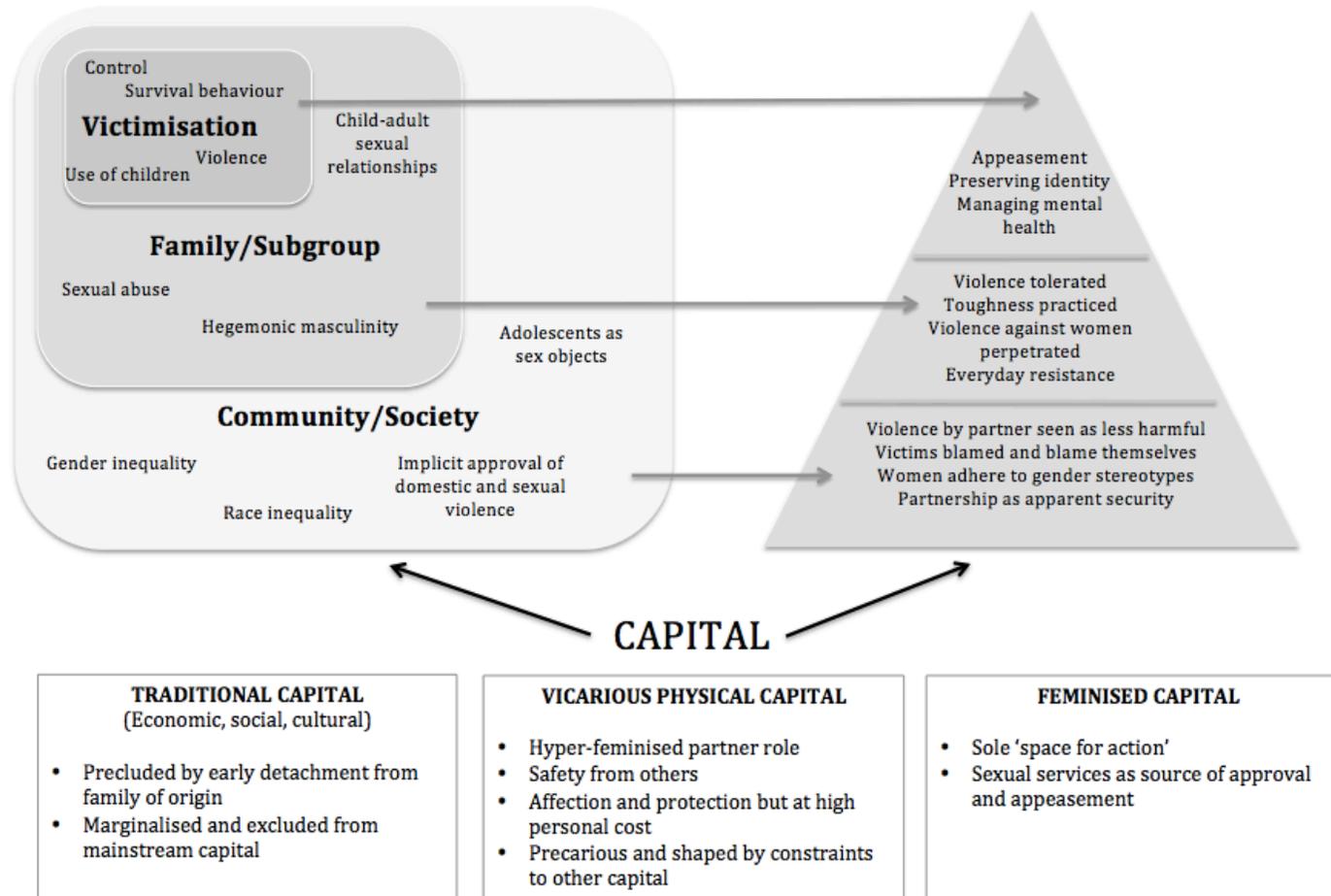


Figure 10: Participants' habitus and access to capital in the field of trafficking victimisation

10.3. Vulnerability to Recruitment

10.3.1. Evolving expectations of ‘other’

If we expand our definition of ‘field’ to look at the two larger systems that build the foundations for trafficking to flourish; namely, the family/subgroup and the community/society, as represented in Figure 10 above, we recognise the paramountcy of early relationships as influencing subsequent attainment of capital. Skeggs (1997) notes that for many groups and individuals, structural disadvantage precludes attainment of traditional forms of capital (as represented in the ‘traditional capital’ category in Figure 10). We can see this actualised for participants across multiple domains, the most prominent of which involves the breakdown of a family unit. Capital constraints arising from this breakdown may include disconnection from families of origin and corresponding disendowment of typical financial assistance during adolescent and emerging adulthood. They may also include the absence of a protective structure of a cohesive family unit that provides a secure base to which to return following relationship breakdown or conflict, and the uptake of proxy parent-figures that, often, laid the groundwork for the development of controlling relationships that precluded access to actualising pathways toward personal achievement, or to accessing peer support. In this context, attachment theory enables us to identify the processes that align with participants’ descriptions of their relational trajectories and consequent exclusion from traditional forms of capital; accordingly, we look first at how these evolved before considering the effects on subsequent trajectories.

To understand the trajectory between the wider social field and the attainment (or preclusion) of types of capital, we first look to attachment patterns and their influence on relationship seeking. As set out in the literature review, attachment style works in tandem with other influencers to shape styles of relating, coping, and decision-making. This occurs through internal working models chiefly formed in childhood about ‘self’, ‘other’ and the intersection between the two based on the internalisation of implicit messaging from proximal caregivers (Bowlby, 1982a; 1982b). Researchers examining the place of attachment in association with social phenomena such as underage sex work have found that attachment style is a key determinant of individuals’ abilities to negotiate challenging events or situations without significant disruption to self-concept or social functioning (see Dodsworth, 2012). Blueprints for attachment patterns are predominantly created in the first few months and years of life; however, these are mutable rather than fixed and are open to adaptation in response to compelling events such as abuse, inconsistent or disrupted relationships, loss, or trauma throughout later childhood, adolescence, and adulthood (Bowlby, 1982a; 1982b).

We can employ attachment theory to theorise some of the experiences of participants and anticipate their associated interventions needs or considerations. The acute or persistent situations associated with reformulation of attachment style are ubiquitous in participants’ narratives: almost all were subjected to child sexual abuse and/or physical or emotional abuse by caregivers, most witnessed violence by family members toward others as children, and most identified absent, chaotic, or disrupted (such as through substance use or transience) caregiving by their parents, impeding early perceptions of ‘other’ as reliable, consistent, and

capable of providing safety. For some, their primary caregiver was an abuser, necessitating suppression of the abuse and simultaneous acceptance of the relationship with the abuser to maintain a sense of security and familiar connection. These factors have all – separately, but more importantly through synergistic interaction – been shown to contribute to the formation of insecure (Allen & Manning, 2007; Shaw & Dallos, 2005) or disorganised (Letcher & Slesnick, 2014) attachment styles. Correspondingly, participants' interpretations of caregiving figures as unable to demonstrate consistently protective behaviour (e.g. "I was thrown away") appeared to contribute to later perceptions of relationships as invariably unpredictable and inherently unsafe, although the influence of abusive relationships in adolescence will also be explored shortly.

While core aspects of attachment style are typically formed in early childhood, experiences during later childhood and adolescence further contribute to the evolution of attachment patterns (Collins & Steinberg, 2006). The unavailability of consistent emotional safety and capacity of the proximal 'other' to accept and moderate challenging emotional experiences, as detailed above, affects adolescents' abilities to integrate powerful emotional experiences meaningfully (Collins & Steinberg, 2006; Syed & Seifge-Kenke, 2013). In addition, it precipitates disproportionate scope for peers to become the principal influencers of adolescents' relationship-building patterns and social behaviour (Bruce & Mendes; Potard, Courtois, Revelliere, Brechon, & Courtois, 2014; Scharf and Maysleless, 2007). Correspondingly, the 'secure base' typically afforded to adolescents to use a site of safety while attempting to forge independent pathways can be precluded by the absence of 'safe' figures of attachment, positioning peer (and presumably partner) influence as instrumental in individuals' assessment of risk and decisions to engage in risky behaviour (Gardner & Steinberg, 2005; Potard et al., 2014).

As reflected in chapter seven, participants' primary sources of peer contact were generally their abusers, and, for some, other victims, resulting in a uniformity of compromised attachment patterns and consequent normalisation of unhealthy relationship configurations. This was evidenced by participants' explanations of the ways in which they constructed and interpreted 'risk' in conjunction with the opinions or modelling of proximal others, including abusers and other victims. Habitus is thus highly relevant here; the shared belief structures collectively embodied and replicated (Bourdieu, 1984) within the social universe participants were embedded in oriented their interpretations of risk. For instance, participants' initial periods of victimisation were occasionally supported and guided by other victims or peer abusers, whose shared tendencies of substance use, violence, and transience were all depicted as expected behaviour (e.g. "I thought that [violence] was just what love was like"). These shared tendencies contribute to the wider habitus of trafficking victimhood, or the entrenchment of these tendencies as normative and systemic. This highlights the surrogate regulatory role assumed by peers in place of caregivers and the concomitant intensification of reliance on sole sources of (group-led) regulatory feedback – potentially limiting potential for emotional responses indicating unacceptable 'risk' to be suppressed in favour of adherence to the dominant perspective. This presents two primary challenges for possible interveners: to construct and maintain a safe and consistent environment for emotions to be welcomed and discharged, and to assist victims to

develop discernment between safe and unsafe attachment figures and patterns of relating, which may involve significant deconstruction of the familiar habitus.

This habitus is further shaped and reinforced by the home environment in adolescence. Studies have found that equally important to the development of secure and consistent attachment patterns in adolescence is a family environment that promotes both cognitive challenging and a supportive and emotionally validating family climate (Syed & Seifge-Kenke, 2013). This secure home climate was conspicuously absent in participants' narratives – with only two exceptions, by mid-adolescence participants were ensconced within environments with ever-present risk, such as with gang members, or with family members who were both their principal figure of attachment and their primary abuser, or in changeable, transient street-based environments. This precluded consistency and emotional reliability of the proximal 'other'. Rather, it appeared to instil a sense of 'other' as rarely able to provide positive regard, physical safety, and the capacity to provide emotional safety that might facilitate the disclosure, exploitation, and excavation of challenging emotional experiences such as childhood experiences of rape, violence, abandonment, rejection, and betrayal. If, then, adolescents' non-familial peers become influential mediators of internal working models of self, other, and the expected dynamics between self and other during adolescence as argued by Scharf and Maysleless (2007), the continuous feedback from the 'other' being used as data to update these working models sets profoundly negative expectations: that the self is inadequate and undeserving of (particularly protective) love, and that the other is unable or unwilling to provide it. This is seen throughout the findings in participants' comments such as "I didn't think I deserved any better". In this way, the family environment imputes distrust and emotional risk onto the trafficking habitus – it orients those encompassed within it to be accepting of mistreatment, to expect physical risk, and to suppress personal trauma. Participants' accounts of their subsequent relationships then prove consistent with this, as they routinely featured either acceptance of intimate partner violence or avoidance of intimate relationships altogether, interpersonal conflict, and the suppression of personal needs (such as authentic emotional connection) in favour of peacekeeping.

10.3.2. Susceptibility to the love-illusion

As demonstrated by participants' relational trajectories, early attachment relationships are closely associated with subsequent relationship expectations and self-beliefs – which then orient the pathways toward capital accrual. The development of these attachment and relationship patterns denote a particular constraint of traditional development of social capital. Moreover, they arguably compelled participants to seek alternative forms of capital, despite the often negative implications of accessing these. Watson (2016) departs from Bourdieu's more limited (and less gendered) analysis of capital, outlining what she terms 'vicarious physical capital'; in other words, the privilege afforded naturally to men that can then be accessed vicariously by women in intimate partnerships with men. This concept, while to some degree divergent to how it was utilised in her study (that is, as a means for provision and protection in homeless shelters), is directly applicable to participants who exercise both appeasement and resistant behaviour through the mobilisation of vicarious physical capital. For example, some participants, in addition to offering use of their bodies as the often sole mode of ensuring

approval and consequent safety from further physical violence, also attached themselves to men who could provide safety from intuitively more dangerous abusers, irrespective of the level of (both anticipated and unanticipated) abuse from these partners. Access to these forms of capital, however, is double-edged - these relationships, while providing some semblance of vicarious physical capital in terms of access to necessities and avoidance of potentially more severe violence, often also undermined attempts to exercise autonomy, such as in subsequent relational dynamics. To illustrate the potency of this vicarious capital here, I set out the power of the 'love-illusion' as a perceived avenue to security in the absence of personal resources to develop this security.

As concluded in previous studies, young people who may be lacking secure attachment relationships with other proximal figures (Hanna, 2002, Reid, 2011), or who are either living on the street or suffering intra-familial abuse at home (Anderson et al., 2014; Reid & Piquero, 2014), or who have histories of neglect or abandonment (Estes & Weiner, 2005; Parker & Skrmetti, 2013; Reid, 2010), often perceive the combination of apparent love and protection by protective partners as irresistible. As every participant fits into one or more of these categories, it is unsurprising that protective love was regarded as paramount in dating relationships, irrespective of the levels of abuse that accompanied it. This desire for protective love has been associated with girls being recruited into earning money through sex work for gangs (Smith et al., 2009) and for individual abusers (Birckhead, 2011; Cobbins and Oselin (2011)). Here, it can be seen in victims of trafficking and thus conceptualised as part of the field – the setting of the dating relationship was one of the principal sites of perpetration.

Accordingly, the ranges of tactics reported by almost all participants began with the intentionally projected impression of the potential for a romantic relationship (what I term here the love-illusion). Abusers who force young people into sex work have been found to present themselves initially as compassionate, caring, and simultaneously in need of love and prepared to provide love (Dalla, 2006; Farley, 2003; Parker & Skrmetti, 2013). Given the almost universal lack of safe, consistently positive relationships and corresponding stability in participants' lives prior to their victimisation, it appeared that many participants desired the security of a loving partner (or similarly protective figure) above all else. This desire to love and be loved, and to feel safe with a partner perceived as permanent, then proved overwhelmingly powerful – which is consistent with the findings of Dorais and Corriveau's (2009) study into 'love-bombing' of adolescent girls, which demonstrated the enmeshment of victims' daily lives with those of abusers after periods of systematic manipulation. In addition, given participants' accounts of early abuse and consequent conditioning into equating expressions of love with sexual gratification of the abuser (also found by Stebbins, 2010; Thorburn, 2015), it is possible that sexual abuse acts as a precursor to the later development of the love-illusion by making abuse appear an acceptable component of a 'loving' relationship.

The love-illusion, however, extends well beyond the initial period of promissory romance depicted in previous studies, and instead acts as de-facto family and the fulfilment of yearning for intimate connection so noticeably lacking in other facets of victims' lives, constituting a proxy role much more powerful than simply a helpful method for abusers who are initially approaching

victims. This love-illusion is therefore intrinsically connected to symbolic domination, in that it is premised on concealment of the violence occurring “beneath the veil of an enchanted relationship, lest it destroy itself by revealing its true nature... forcing them to flee” (Thompson, 1984, p. 56). While most commonly associated with a partner figure, the same illusion of love was central to victimisation by family members or groups – the perceptible yearning for acceptance within a protective and loving family unit facilitated acceptance of extreme mistreatment.

Such a desire for protective love at almost any cost, I argue, sets the scene for intense vulnerability to the seeking of vicarious physical capital (chiefly obtained through attachment to a ‘protective’ male figure and the perception of a then-proxy family) represented by the masculinised ‘boyfriend’ role adopted by many abusers. This ‘boyfriend’, as a perceived source of love, connection, permanency, and protection, was often initially accessed as an apparent form of capital – the subjective impression of the ‘setting up’ of a good future life via the offerings of the male partner. However, this seeking of vicarious capital through the attainment of perceived secondary privilege associated with the apparently powerful and protective ‘other’ was accessed at significant personal cost. Other studies into the phenomenon of building love-illusions found that this initial period of love, generosity, and protection that facilitates the positive emotional connection victims feel for abusers is rapidly followed by a period of ‘seasoning’ or grooming, whereby the abuser enacts gradually-increasing acts of violence, degradation, and humiliation to tighten the bonds of attachment through fear (Dalla, 2006; Parker & Skrmetti, 2013). Accordingly, participants as young as 11 had been lured by the false promises of love and security offered by adult men.

This grooming process, however, did not occur uniformly within participants’ stories – while some experienced this progression into the social field of trafficking as a linear attachment relationship, others did not continue to ‘love’ the abuser after sustained periods of abuse, and reported instead that their compliant behaviour was motivated almost exclusively by fear, rather than the desire to maintain abusers’ positive perceptions of them and accordant positive treatment. Both love and fear have been shown to be instrumental in preventing victims from objectively considering their relationships with abusers (Gajic-Veljanoski & Stewart, 2007; Geist, 2012), typically in conjunction with a habitus that regularises violence or coercion – as is regular in trauma bonding situations. As a consequence, victims may be more responsive to strategies of engagement aimed at fostering a sense of belief in safe alternatives to partner appeasement, rather than attempts to facilitate the acknowledgement of abusive dynamics – especially given some participants’ apparent cognisance of the unacceptability of partners’ abusive behaviour. This awareness of the risk inherent in daily lives with abusers, together with a suspicion that any attempts to exit or to obtain help would ultimately prove both futile and potentially fatal, fostered a sense of temporal hopelessness that, I argue, could potentially be interrupted by the timely presentation of viable alternatives.

Abusers themselves also heavily, consciously, and intentionally influenced the trafficking habitus, in that the organising structure orienting individuals’ actions and beliefs regarding feasibility of help-seeking was informed directly by abusers’ tactics. Abusers’ attempts at

intentionally engineering cognitive distortion also appeared to preclude disclosure through the escalation of fear - the awareness of multiple abusers and potentially unknown extent of the abuser's reach instilled intense fear in several participants, and also contributed to the silencing discussed in chapter nine. This attempt to engineer cognitive distortion was principally manifest in tactics aimed at convincing victims that law enforcement agencies had 'someone on the inside', i.e. someone within the police who was informing abusers of whistle-blowers. In her dissertation entitled *Know Your Victim*, Warpinski (2013) explained that trafficking victims often develop a deep mistrust of the authorities purporting to protect them, but in actuality repeatedly acting toward them with hostility borne out of misunderstanding of the coercive nature of their experiences. She further argues that abusers then constantly allude to police corruption in order to prevent victims from feeling able to report crime against them - an experience that Clawson et al. (2009) theorise creates a sense of betrayal that is then generalised to all authorities. Similarly, some participants appeared certain that people 'disappearing' from the scene had been killed as a result of noncompliance, and that police were corrupt(able) and incentivised to ignore the abuse and relay back information about whistle-blowers. The lack of (even anecdotal) evidence supporting these beliefs suggests that abusers capitalised on the disillusionment participants experienced after negative experiences with authorities to create a habitus within which victims were convinced of inherent corruption within statutory agencies and therefore too afraid to attempt to report abuse. This has immediate implications for intervening with this population group – the disclosure of information even within statutory agencies themselves is likely to be regarded as an inherent risk, and, accordingly, victims similarly experiencing this authority alienation are unlikely to be willing to disclose unless this is explicitly addressed with them. This then makes participants' reliance on vicarious capital – via the protection offered by and approval from the abuser, and personal alignment with and acceptance of their belief structures – even more critical to survival.

In addition to this abuser-engendered fear and mistrust of authorities, other factors such as trauma bonding and powerlessness act as further deterrents to exit and disclosure. Shapers of vulnerability into exploitative relationships, such as vulnerability precipitated by emotional wounding and the desire for a protector, have been previously acknowledged as interacting to create both pliability and a hastened emotional commitment in victims, often reflecting a set of complex interpersonal dynamics commonly associated with trauma bonding, or the unconscious protective mechanism through which victims of abuse begin to identify with and develop positive emotions for their abusers (Carver, 2011; Jordan et al., 2013; Reid, 2011). However, while positive feelings for abusers did not appear to persist after the abuse started, it was evident that despite the exploitation by abusers, the identities of some participants were so enmeshed with the abusers' behaviours at the time of victimisation that it was almost impossible for them to identify the abuse elements in their own experiences. This is chiefly evidenced in participants' descriptions of having to fulfil unwanted duties or perform undesirable acts such as doing sex work for a gang, giving sex to intimate partners and partners' friends on demand, and selling virginity for the profit of an intimate partner. While describing these experiences, they frequently employed language that implied equal transactional power or agreeableness to the acts, even when they were patently coercive – illustrating the perception of a 'capital exchange', rather

than an abusive transaction. Vicarious capital in this setting, therefore, is established as tentative and precarious, and cannot be converted into personal symbolic capital because of the temporal nature of the capital; i.e., victims' dependence on the maintenance of a particular relationship with the abuser (Skeggs, 2004).

10.3.3. Familial sanctioning of adult-child relationships

Above, we have focused particularly on the role of the family and the potential for a masculine figure posing as a boyfriend to exploit the attachment needs arising from this, and have associated these settings with non-traditional access to constrained forms of capital and with the construction of a trafficking habitus. However, specific facets of early family life may be more influential than others in the establishment of a trafficking field – most notably, the positioning of young girls as victims in the field who are vulnerable to exploitative abusers who then have the freedom to enter the field. Growing familiarity with participants' narratives and the socially-determined contexts of their victimisation elicited my keen interest in how the normalisation by parents of adolescents' sexually abusive relationships with adult men shaped their subsequent vulnerability to sexually exploitative experiences, including through coercion into prostitution. This proved difficult to theorise, despite the ample literature regarding the associations between family structure or parental relationships and sexual debut in adolescence. For example, many studies investigate attachment style and adolescent sexual risk taking or age of first sexual contact (e.g. Feeney et al., 2000; Potard et al., 2014; Tracy, Shaver, Albino, & Cooper, 2003), and the relationships between parents and adolescents as predictors of condom use and adolescent sexual decision-making (Davies, Crosby, & Diclemente, 2009; Markham, Lorman, & Gloppen, 2010; Parkes, Henderson, Wight, & Nixon, 2011). Conversely, literature exploring parents' attitudes toward children's or young people's victimisation through sexual relationships with adults appears to be extremely minimal, and studies focusing on the role of 'parent' in adolescents' development and expectations of sexuality and sexual activity appear to largely exclude the influence of parents on the normalisation or rejection of adult-child/young person sexual relationships. There is some discussion about psychological defensive mechanisms such as 'denial' and 'cognitive splitting', both of which preclude mothers' conscious knowing of child sexual abuse perpetrated by their partners despite being confronted with disclosures or other compelling evidence (see Adams, 1994; Sirles & Franke, 1989). However, the argument for denial is premised on the fact that this knowledge is precognitive and suppressed, and therefore cannot be transferred to situations where the mother is cognisant of the sexual relationship occurring between a child/adolescent and adult where that adult does not have any pre-existing or beneficial relationship with the mother. A knowledge gap can therefore be identified regarding the love-illusion phenomenon and parental acceptance or rejection of this relationship.

Studies specifically examining vulnerability to sexual exploitation such as through trafficking and identifying sexual abuse as a common antecedent are plentiful (see Ahrens et al, 2012; Holger-Ambrose et al, 2013; Stebbins, 2010), but these do not clarify whether the sexual relationships children and young people had formed with adult males who then sexually exploited them were endorsed by family members – irrespective of the oft-stated role of older 'boyfriends' in recruiting victims (see, for example, Anderson et al., 2014; Brayley et al., 2011; Dorais &

Corriveau, 2011; Reid, 2012). However, participants' narratives demonstrated that those recruited into trafficking as adolescents through a love-illusion were typically lacking in protective parents or caregivers who acknowledged (and intervened in) the inappropriateness and lack of true consent inherent in adult-child sexual relationships. As acknowledged above, this implicit endorsement of such relationships by parental figures in otherwise 'safe' families who have not had statutory child protection involvement has not been comprehensively discussed in prior studies undertaken in comparable socio-political contexts, other than to recognise the inescapable vulnerability arising from an absence of protective proximal caregivers (see Jordan et al., 2013). The vulnerability of pre- or barely-pubescent girls from families unknown to the State that enable or endorse apparent romantic relationships with adult males has significant implications for State intervention – especially when also considering the subjective experience of shame associated with the disclosure of sexual violence (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2012) and consequent barriers to truth-telling for girls who are young, ashamed, and fearful of further violence. Arguably, this presents both a significant constraint to the development of personal social capital, instead positioning the balance of power from childhood onward with surrounding males – thus setting the scene for vicarious physical capital to be seen as the only viable option. In addition, it opens up the field to clearly position both victims and abusers, as it provides a setting in which such abuse is not questioned nor regarded as abnormal. As stated by Bourdieu (1977), such dominance can only be exercised when precursors exist that condition victims (generally unknowingly) to its perpetration. This is likely to constitute a principal precursor to the development of a heavily gender-disadvantaged habitus, as concepts such as bodily autonomy and consent are disregarded by subjective protective figures such as those represented in participants' narratives. Finally, this also represents the power of the doxa (Bourdieu, 1977) of the field: the belief that a victim's 'place' in the field positions them as not being worthy of any alternative future; a belief reproduced through the generational conditioning for a victimised future.

10.4. Methods of Entrapment: Compelling Compliance

10.4.1. Actual and symbolic violence

Following the vulnerability conferred by early or repeated sexual violation and corresponding expectations of (non)consent, participants almost universally experienced the perpetration of violence perpetrated across multiple domains, which functioned to maintain and retain full control over decision-making. Bourdieu (2002) identifies mechanisms of domination that are not necessarily physical, but rather manifest through interactions between individuals or institutions as 'symbolic violence', thereby extending the instrument of violence beyond the physical domain. This violence then has the capacity to (re)produce relations of relative power and powerlessness (Kelly, 1988; Kraus, 1993; Topper, 2001), such as the power of the biological father to institute regular visits to his silent victim on the pretext of seeing his child. These mechanisms of power (re)production are often invisibilised, unspoken, and occur outside the purview of structural remedies (Topper, 2011). As such, consideration of symbolic violence can be useful to reconstitute hierarchies of gender-based violence and extend these to acknowledge patterns of domination rather than simply discrete actions (Radford, Frieburg, & Harne, 2000), particularly as they necessitate some degree of victim complicity (typically due to the constraints

to alternatives already discussed, and the belief that that there is nothing better available). Accordingly, we can identify such modes of domination in multiple and overlapping spaces of participants' narrated experiences, including subjection to degradation, surveillance, implicit peripheral involvement in children's lives, and enforced isolation – all of which serve to institute and reproduce domination and embed the power differential between victim and abuser.

These subtle modes of domination through acts of symbolic violence often occurred in conjunction with direct physical violence. We now look at three specific manifestations of this symbolic violence – firstly, through breaches of the trust engendered by familial relationships; secondly, through suggestion and reinforcement of the gendered power differential that compels acceptance of gender-based violence, which is fortified by greater societal attitudes and is frequently met with (constrained) enactments of symbolic resistance; and finally, through displays of ownership or possession, legitimised by pervasive conceptualisations of gendered 'worth' and modelled behaviour. As we can see here, symbolic violence often intersects with concepts of 'field' and 'habitus', as it influences and is influenced by enactments of considered normative behaviour.

10.4.2. Proximal and powerful positioning

The ways in which abusers assumed proximal positions to victims and then exercised power over them could be both explicit and symbolic. Many of the insidious tactics used by abusers to gain and maintain control over participants have not been stated explicitly in previous studies. In particular, the overarching categories of extreme violence, pregnancy/childrearing, and surveillance featured heavily in participants' narratives, but were not represented within Reid's table of entrapment strategies or comprehensively discussed in other studies of victimisation, although they were frequently touched upon partially or tangentially (see Brayley et al., 2011; Dalla, 2006; Dorais and Coriveau, 2009; Geist, 2012; Johnson & Denner, 2014; Parker & Skrmetti, 2013). Attempts to leave were commonly met with threats of violence or actual violence, and at times this extended beyond the primary victim to their immediate family, such as the victim's child or sibling – acting as an effective deterrent to seeking escape. This is somewhat consistent with previous findings – threats toward children of victims has occasionally been noted as an occasional method of deterring attempts to leave (Hom & Woods, 2013; Reid, 2011), but regular reminders of proximity to other family members as a way of encouraging compliance has been largely absent from other studies into domestic trafficking. These threats were never used as the sole method for maintaining compliance, but rather as one of a multitude of intersecting methods that, in combination, precluded victims' capacity to act independently of abusers. Equally, however, continued contact via children – acting as a continual reminder of proximity and potential for harm – was socially accepted and expected, but also functioned as a method of symbolic violence against participants, as it occurred as part of regular social rituals.

10.4.3. Entrapment through intersecting abuse categories

Field and habitus have been theorised in relation to trafficking in several sections in this chapter, principally relating to the influence of other individuals and the collective manifestation of this. However, the field and the habitus are further influenced by organised groups. The

reflexive interplay between field (the social setting of the phenomenon, in this instance trafficking) and habitus (the embodiment of the collective understanding of the field) proposed by Bourdieu (1990) means that understandings of concepts such as consent and respect for physical autonomy are largely dictated by individuals' interpretations of hierarchised statuses and interactions with these hierarchies. As evidenced by participants' descriptions, 'consent' was rarely discussed; rather, the physical force compelling compliance appeared to substitute for considered consent – because the field is one of masculinised force dictating sexual activity, and the habitus represents an orientation toward acceptance of violation and male violence. While it is difficult to extrapolate individual interpretations of bodily autonomy from descriptions of single events, the totality of coercive violence across the lifespan presents a pattern of dominance over the body that illustrates the futility of consent demands. Expectations of sex on demand, for instance, functions as a form of symbolic dominance because although accepted as normative by both parties, it also serves to reinforce a power differential and corresponding powerlessness of the female party. The range of experiences – and the overlap between them - described by participants reinforces the need to break down practitioners' unhelpful tendencies to only accept specific categories of violence as worthy of attention, as set out in chapter nine's discussion of the need to decontextualise victimisation from simply 'sex work', 'family violence', or 'sexual violence'.

As argued by Liz Kelly (1988), the value of the concept of a 'violence continuum' that spans all types of violence enables victims to construct understanding of their own experiences based on the integration of various abuse methods, by identifying unifying patterns of motivation and effects as they relate to power and control. As witnessed in the findings chapters, rape and violence are typically downplayed. It seems here, then, that the gender stereotyping, acceptance of violence, and privileging of toughness within the trafficking habitus limit this violence continuum so that only extreme forms of violence, or sexual violence aggravated by physical force, are considered to constitute a violation of normative physical integrity. This was particularly indicated by description of rapes as "he had his way with me", "they had their own way with us", and having "asleep sex". Despite this minimisation, the utility of such a continuum is twofold. It provides an instrument with which to conceptualise shifting boundaries between categories of violence rather than classifying individual experiences based solely on severity. In addition, it enables insidious modes of violence, including symbolic violence, to be appropriately incorporated into frameworks of understanding in order to comprehend abusers' actions as collectively creating an entirety of gender-based violence experiences. Accordingly, we look here at the intersection between abuse experiences both as precursors to and embedded mechanisms of dominance during trafficking experiences, and how these interact synergistically to shape participants' total experiences of victimhood.

Trafficking dynamics bear significant similarities to other types of violence, which, in turn, are often also utilised to further embed the impression of 'power over'. Both child sexual abuse and intimate partner violence are associated with trafficking in two principal ways: firstly, through creating vulnerability through childhood and adolescence victimisation; and secondly, through the perpetration of these categories of abuse during the period of victimisation as a way of gaining and sustaining control. As with previous studies (see Ahrens et al., 2012; Holger-

Ambrose et al., 2013), the participants in this study were often subjected to both physical and sexual abuse in childhood, and related this to their subsequent victimisation through sex trafficking. Additionally, for many adolescent victims, the primary abusers were their intimate partners who first followed a trajectory into abuse consistent with dating violence - such as by establishing and asserting dominance, cementing loyalty and compliance through shaming, humiliating, and degrading activities, and subjecting victims to extreme violence.

Despite the parallels and the applicability of terminology commonly employed across abuse domains, none of these terms fully capture the insidious extent of harm. Unlike domestic violence or sexual abuse, trafficking abuser/victim relationships are perpetuated through dynamics that span private and public spheres, and pervade both formal and informal institutions. We can identify the former in linkages between the primary abuser and the secondary abusers such as peers, fellow gang members, or client groups as well as in the home; the latter, in the fostering of authority alienation. Despite these caveats, the conceptual framing of violence within trafficking relationships parallels those used to understand other categories of abuse (Bullard, 2011; Farley, 2003; Kennedy et al., 2007), such as intimate partner or sexual violence. Numerous constructs can help us to theorise participants' adherence to abusers' wishes, however, several appear directly applicable to participants' experiences of complying with and reacting to embedded undercurrents of violence; namely, coercive control, trauma bonding, appeasement, and resistance.

As illustrated by the findings, the habitus-field nexus as it occurs in participants' narratives is heavily gendered. Concepts such as coercive control and corresponding appeasement and resistance behaviour are therefore instrumental to understanding the gendered (female-disadvantaged) habitus across multiple and intersecting social fields. Typically, humans are accustomed to accessing multiple affiliative relationships (see Cantor, 2005) at any time – a behavioural norm inhibited by the controlling, isolating nature of many situations of interpersonal violence characterised by coercive control. (Re)constructing a relationship to yield the greatest opportunity for survival despite the inherent risks to violence it represents therefore constitutes an adaptive, and often conscious, relational choice (Van der Kolk & McFarlane, 1996), compelling a set of actions designed to demonstrate non-threatening compliance and submission to an abuser when other options such as avoidance, withdrawal, and reactive aggression are considered too dangerous (Cantor, 2005; Price et al., 1994; Stark, 1995). These actions then function to appease abusers and borne out of participants' attempts to stop or limit the violence against them; in short, setting the scene for trauma bonding (including the set of affiliative/appeasement behaviours popularly conceptualised as 'Stockholm Syndrome') to flourish.

Coercive control is therefore closely related to appeasement behaviour (Stark, 1995), and can texture every facet of victims' lives, to the extent that they have no perceived capacity to exercise self-determination in the minutiae of everyday living (Kelly & Johnson, 2006; Ludsin & Vetten, 2005). We can witness the manifestation of coercive control over participants in myriad forms; for example, abusers' creation of parenting relationships that inhibit autonomy, their controlling of victims' clothing choices, victims' forced participation in degrading acts such as

rape by peers, abusers' use of unpredictable violence against participants to instil obedience, and abusers' controlling of participants' money. The processes through which this coercive control is gained can also be conceptualised as 'grooming' processes identical to those implicit in other categories of interpersonal abuse, as demonstrated in numerous other studies (Brayley et al., 2011; Chase & Statham, 2005; Dorais & Corriveau, 2011; Pearce, 2009).

Despite the pervasiveness of arguably more common types of gender-based violence such as physical violence, dynamics specific to the trafficking, and in particular those that induced shame or self-concealment responses, posed arguably greater barriers to disclosure. This was principally due to the manifold (and typically structural) silencing tactics (such as stories being misinterpreted and disclosures discouraged) referred to in the previous chapter. However, these dynamics specific to the trafficking category of violence can also preclude disclosure through the escalation of fear: the awareness of multiple abusers and potentially unknown extent of the abuser's reach instilled intense fear in several participants. Appeasement, therefore, becomes even more paramount: creating favour and pre-empting escalations of violence are prioritised. Participants discussed deferring to abusers, fulfilling their wishes (such as pretending to enjoy rape), and increasingly doing 'better' (such as working an increasing number of hours per day, or servicing more clients) to attract favour. These behaviours are consistent with appeasement behaviour documented in both human relationships and by other primates in situations of assumed dominance (Cantor, 2005; Keltner et al., 1997; Price et al., 2004).

Despite this appeasement behaviour motivated by the desire to reduce or limit further abuse, participants also demonstrated a range of resistance behaviours consistent with those utilised by victims of intimate partner violence. This resistance, too, forms part of the trafficking habitus and orients participants towards a reclaiming of self through subverting abusers' efforts, but is rarely made explicit by participants, suggesting it is often not conscious or understood. Correspondingly, resistance amongst this sample can be best conceptualised using Vinthagen and Johansson's (2013) construct of 'hidden subversion', although it is typically not utilised to theorise behaviour within the 'family' space. However, identifying behaviours as constitutive of hidden subversion enables us to recognise the resistant actions manifesting unspectacularly (and often unconsciously) in victims' everyday lives. Correspondingly, abusers' actions of repressive domination and the consequent preclusion of victims' fully agentic actions oriented at maximising wellbeing and repossessing self-determination necessitate resistant actions that can masquerade as compliance, but which sustain a precarious balance of wellbeing or defended identity (Scott, 1985; 1990). For participants, such actions generally centred on maintaining a sense of ethical conduct in subjectively dire situations as set out in the findings chapters; for example, by assisting others, or by protecting those perceived as more vulnerable. These responses to risk and fear appear to be driven by the desire to enact symbolic barriers against the erosion of the 'self' and thus individually and collectively form resistance.

While there were multiple other domains in which resistance behaviours could be identified, such as attempts to escape, attempts to stop or mitigate the harms associated with rape, and attempts to manage the emotional impacts without inviting further harm to the self, participants' resistance as protective parents highlighted the extent of defiance participants regularly

exercised to construct a reality divergent to abusers' motivations – both symbolically and in actuality. Similar studies have found such resistant behaviours in studies in related categories of violence – Buchanan, Wendt, and Moulding (2015) and Pitre et al. (2015), for example, refer to the 'double-bind of protectiveness' accompanying the secret-keeping of abuse narratives, with the family home (and multiple other 'spaces') functioning both as a context for abuse and a feminised space where mothering could take place. This bears significant equivalences to research into mothering in the context of domestic violence. Participants' children were both protected by mother participants' use of personal sacrifice to ensure their children were safe and attempts to avoid the reproduction of abusive tactics against their children, and simultaneously put at risk by continued concealment of the abuse and consequent potential targeting by abusers or witnessing (and thus normalisation) of violence. Authors exploring similar spheres of parenting have found that despite common conceptualisations of mothers who remain in relationships with abusers as non-protective (Douglas & Walsh, 2010), emerging research increasingly identifies a range of protective tactics used by mothers to ensure that children are shielded from abuse and its impacts, such as placing themselves between the abuser and child, being emotionally responsive to the child, and working towards violence-free realities, and the continuous and reflexive protective strategies employed in everyday life (Buchanan et al., 2013; Haight et al., 2007; Lapierre, 2010; Wendt, Buchanan, & Moulding, 2015). Accordingly, participants in this study (re)acted protectively (i.e., resisted) using a range of strategies, such as concealing the extent of abuse, appeasing abusers to minimise the chance of harm to the unborn child, and making (often unconventional) childcare arrangements to balance the competing demands of motherhood and abuser-dictated prostitution.

Given the often minimally subversive manifestations of resistance, such as the protective caregiver behaviour illustrated here, these actions may easily go unnoticed by helping services investigating the broader context of reduced parenting capacity and risk saturation, as is suggested by the commonly experienced loss of participants' children to statutory care. However, the willingness of mother participants to continue to imperceptibly act protectively (as found by Lapierre, 2010; and Pitre et al. 2015) is arguably testament to their commitment to defend children's wellbeing despite considerable external constraint, which presents implications for child protection intervention regarding perceived mothering capacity in the face of severely inhibited parenting contexts. These acts of resistance arguably reinforce the field-habitus nexus as it relates to trafficking – inter-subjective norms modelled by sub-groups and the internalisation of these regarding what constitutes accepted or risky behaviour then determines the extent to which resistance can be overt, and, similarly, what which behaviours defy the rules, invite risk, and must therefore be exercised symbolically.

10.5. Exploitation: Structural Gendered Expectations

Social capital and the utility of feminised capital are inherently linked with social field. While Bourdieu has been criticised for his lack of acknowledgement of gender (see Adkins, 2004), the concept of capital cannot be separated from the wider social environment and the values that are converted into social power. In this context, this inherently involves the construction of gender within the social field, and, in particular, the transactional use of the female body. To this end, Moi (1991) speaks of the 'socially produced body' as an 'embodied politics', as gender

performativity is reproduced and intrinsically embodied within the field. Bourdieu's work on embodiment must consequently be extended to incorporate the multitude of ways that material, physical, and social capital influence the (re)construction of bodies in time and space, and how these are given meaning through the exercising of power, coercion, and relational exchange (Shilling, 2012). Accordingly, Watson (2016) states that "the political economy within which bodies exist is central to contextualising practices and meanings attributed to young women" (p. 260), which, for many participants, was chiefly manifest through hegemonic masculinity within gang-dominated social fields, as discussed below. Similarly, Butler (1993) argues that to access the protective mechanisms of the field's normative legitimation of forms of social capital, participants must subscribe to these norms. In this case, therefore, using symbolic (feminised) capital requires victims to act in accordance with these regulations, such as tolerating violence, earning the expected amount of money, adhering to clients' wishes for (often degrading) acts of service, and in some instances being silently complicit in the exploitation of others. However, I use the term 'feminised' rather than the 'female' or 'feminine' terms employed by Huppatz (2009) to denote the socially conferred gendered expectations and concurrent gendered behaviour demonstrated here.

As asserted by Skeggs (2004), particular aspects of power ascribed to masculinity are symbolically dominant in ways that are not transferable to feminised capital or traditional notions of femininity. In particular, physical violence, sexual violence, and the positioning of men's own wants as above the well-being of victims was normalised, and assertions of dominance considered customary; conversely, women were disallowed to exercise autonomy or power. Abusers' dominance commanding women's submission was demonstrated predominantly through categories of abuse. Child sexual abuse was perpetrated against a majority of participants; a phenomenon documented in numerous prior studies into the sexual exploitation of young women (Ahrens et al, 2013; Holger-Ambrose et al, 2013; Jordan et al., 2013; Stebbins, 2010). Not all of this abuse was labelled as such by participants – rather, 'lower-level' abuse was typically normalised and/or minimised. This was especially discernible in participants' descriptions of the exploitation: going to 'work', 'earning money', and 'seeing clients' were all commonly employed to narrate stories of being forced to provide sexual services, despite almost simultaneous descriptions of force, coercion, and reluctance to perform the expected services. Further, individual or gang rape was referred to as men 'having their way', and physical violence that occurred during interactions with primary abusers or men buying sex were considered a natural part of being sexually intimate with men.

The minimising or legitimising language evidenced here demonstrates the dichotomising of physical and sexual violence in relation to perceived context legitimacy. Instances of sexual violence that participants classified as abusive were characterised by physical violence, abduction, explicit threats, and sometimes (though not consistently) men's rape of children. Conversely, sexual violence that was inflicted using coercion or implicit threat was often framed as an unfortunate but unavoidable aspect of either sex work or heterosexual partnership, arguably indicative of a latent distortion to perceptions of normative sexual behaviour. This distortion of sexuality-related beliefs was also identified by Ahrens et al (2012) and Jordan et al. (2013), who suggest that initial sexual abuse leads to a consequent acceptance of having

sexual power exercised over the body without expecting to negotiate this using principles of consent. Correspondingly, sexual (and social) autonomy is heavily influenced by the gendered power differential modelled through parental figures and the immediate sub-culture that compelled saturation within gender-typing narratives and internalisation of rigid internal working models of gendered behaviour. Their narratives are consequently laced with allusions to such (accepted) gendered norms, such as that it was permissible and natural for adult men to prefer adolescent girls, but not prepubescent ones; that violence within heterosexual partnerships was normal in and in some cases inevitable, and required appeasement but not escape; that male attention was indicative of intrinsic worth; and that decision-making power for sexual activity lay exclusively with men. Even accessing and using feminised capital constituted a significant risk, then – this capital proved limited to sexual desirability and availability and thus the potential for sex and for income-generation, but even this use of sexuality was overridden by abusers' disproportionate power over bodily choices and sexual decision-making.

A sub-culture that positioned women as subordinate was particularly evident throughout the narratives of participants abused by members of male-dominant 'gangs'. Clubs commonly conceptualised as 'gangs' typically exhibit hyper-masculine behaviour and, as a consequence, set expectations of violence against women and girls who become involved with male members as apparent romantic partners (Beckett, 2014; Firmin, Warrington, & Pearce, 2016). Constructions of masculinity within such a group (or community) then become compulsorily aggressive, and precipitate a gendered hierarchy that privileges primary masculinities and 'over-emphasised' femininities (Connell & Messerschmitt, 2005; Messerschmitt, 2012). This highlights both immediate relational inequalities, and community- or society-level inequities. For instance, in many situations, participants' own beliefs were reflected in their descriptions of their parents, peers, and communities – in other words, implicit acceptance of the (unequal) gendered status quo. This was particularly evident through the endorsement of coercive sexual relationships or normalisation of male-dominant coercive partnerships, which are then individually reproduced. This is consistent with Odone's (2010) assertion that beliefs about gender and the constitution of 'acceptable' behaviour are foregrounded by dominant discursive practices identifiable within immediate or proximal environments – typically, families and communities of choice such as gang-affiliates or youth sub-cultures. Abusers' violence and corresponding control and coercion within artificially created sub-groups such as abuser and victim networks is documented within numerous other studies (for example, Chase & Statham, 2005; Cobbina & Oselin, 2011; Dorais & Corriveau, 2009; Jordan et al., 2013; Kennedy et al., 2007; Pearce, 2009).

While client interactions such as those outlined above have been largely absent from academic discussion of the formation of gendered internal working models, interactions described by participants suggest that subjection to gender-based abuse by clients reinforce stereotyped beliefs about gendered actions and expectations, which then inform future expectations of male to female (specifically, adult male to adolescent female) interactions. Examples of such reinforcement of abusive gendered behaviour includes clients' explicit preference for young girls and the accompanying violence perpetrated against young girls that illustrates definitive 'power over' behaviour (such as choking underage girls through aggressive oral rape); disregard for participants' ages when buying sexual services through an intermediary; the female body as

tantamount to an object for rape, as perpetrated by random clients or gang members to girls working on the street; and unequivocal displays of ownership or possession such as buying sexual services from a girl who is being physically restrained or delivered by a more powerful 'partner'. In other words, the wider community proves instrumental in limiting alternative constructions of violence and agency (Vagi, Rothman, & Latzman et al, 2013; Skybo & Polivka, 2006). As a consequence, many aspects of risk were largely compelled by these inter-subjective negotiations and the need to accrue symbolic capital (Watson, 2016) through the limited means available – most commonly, here, by being seen to both do a good job (in sexually servicing clients) and be unaffected by the work regardless of how violent it becomes, thereby fulfilling the ideal of a 'tough' worker and, in many instances, a compliant partner.

Ultimately, therefore, the witnessing of gendered violence in childhood and personal childhood and adolescent experiences of physical and sexual abuse, together with the discursive norms presented by the wider sub-culture presumably shaped initial stereotypic expectations of gendered behaviour. Nevertheless, subsequent interactions with clients confirmed and further embedded the homogeneity of participants' gender schemas and accordant expectations that equate maleness with power-holding and femaleness with passivity and powerlessness. Intervening with individual victims then seems futile without considering the power imbalances that characterise their victimisation, and addressing the power hierarchies embedded within the social fields their social relationships take place within (Beckett, 2013). In this way, the phenomenon reflects other social fields' designation of women as objects of violence and sexual objectification, and of masculinity as synonymous with violent sexualisation; for instance, 'the phenomena of sexting' (Ringrose, Harvey, Gill, & Livingstone, 2011) and pornography (Flood, 2009).

Participants' (and abusers') gender-role schemata then (re)produce individual expectations of mistreatment, and the perpetration and acceptance of symbolic violence. The hegemonic masculinity saturating the social field is illustrated in the attitudinal, discursive, and structural aspects of participants' narratives. Similarly, Beckett (2013; 2014) states that this, in conjunction with gendered violence and childhood sexualisation, is indicative of the harm posed by social fields within which girls' capacity to be socially agentive is constrained to sexual 'spaces for action'. Construction of femininities thus compels incorporation of cross-equalities perspectives – constrained space for individual agency within a gendered power hierarchy also intersects with age and ethnicity in the social field of gang-related trafficking. Within this constrained space, both overt and symbolic domination are permitted to occur. Bourdieu's work *The Logic of Practice* (1990) supposes that societal discouragement of overt domination increases the likelihood of disguised methods of domination being exercised. Morgan and Thapar-Björkert (2006) then build upon this, suggesting that promoting rejection of direct violence necessarily results in abusers utilising symbolic violence in its place (Morgan & Thapar-Björkert, 2006), and, further, that discrete mechanisms of power or domination are often reinforced or nurtured by secondary mechanisms. Both the explicit and the symbolic are arguably governed by the gendered power differential inherent in the social field of abuser-victim trafficking contexts, particularly those embedded within the wider context of gang behaviour – a type of social field labeled by Kleinman (2000) as an example of 'micro-contexts of local power'.

10.6. Conclusion

Bourdieu's theory of 'field' was employed to theorise the social settings that facilitated and constituted the process of victimisation through trafficking. Correspondingly, his theory of 'habitus' brackets social and psychological explanations for behavioural patterns occurring within this dynamic. This 'habitus' spans the individual relational patterns that orient the embodiment of belief structures and tendencies, the enactment of gendered norms, and the shared attitudes of peer or family groups and consequent normalisation of harmful behaviour. For example, the absence of protective caregiving figures or early detachment from protective such figures emerged as a weighty determinant of subsequent vulnerability. For participants who detached early from their families of origin, the influence of this early lack of security on participants' attachment patterns and the accordant regulatory and surrogate caregiver roles undertaken by peers and/or abusers (whose collective behaviours informed the habitus) then arguably set the scene (the field) for subsequent exploitative dynamics to be implemented without this precipitating immediate concern about the potential harm inherent in these. Habitually modelled normative behaviours regarding gender, and in particular gender-based violence, further promoted the acceptance of these dynamics, and appeared instrumental to participants' notably blasé narration of normalised violence against the (young) female body in the context of trafficking.

These gender schemas are evident throughout accounts of recruitment, entrapment, and exploitation, and also tie in to conceptualisations of 'capital' and proposed by Bourdieu and later instrumentalised by other authors. We can thus recognise three interlinked methods of capital accrual: traditional capital (largely precluded by marginality), vicarious physical capital, and feminised capital (capital represented by fulfilling the compulsorily sexualised and subordinate female role). The latter forms of capital are identifiable in the recruitment and exploitation of victims, which are premised on targeting marginality-related vulnerability and the exploitation of ingrained gendered schemas that create a feminised role as subordinate to the partner masculine role – thus depending on the 'habitus' as it relates to gender to regulate access to capital. Correspondingly, abusers who recruit and entrap adolescent girls and young women into sex trafficking use a wide range of tactics to foster control and dominance (including symbolic violence, or the use of socially sanctioned structures to exercise acts of power) over victims. Simultaneously, however, several participants also exercised both overt and subtle forms of resistance that preserved personal values and subverted abusers' attempts to wholly suppress their agentic capacity. This resistance, in the form of protective caregiving behaviour despite significantly constrained social contexts, is testament to parenting capacity even in high-risk environments, and should be interpreted as indicative of protective motivations, demonstrating that both habitus and capital can be dynamic. Theorisation of these concepts has provided a novel way of understanding the dynamics represented by participants' narratives, and highlighted components that can be practically attended to in a manner not afforded by simply thematic consideration. Rather, the use of these concepts necessitates the conceptualising of what can be seen as essential ingredients in the trafficking story, what behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs are embodied as normative and compulsory, and the mechanisms that participants use to survive, to reduce the potential for harm, and to accrue

social value in their lives at a fundamental level. The components of participants' experiences encapsulated within these concepts that correspond to practice requirements are set out in the following chapter.

In chapter 11, I conclude the thesis by setting out the key recommendations generated by this research and highlight temporal points of intervention; suggest further research needs; and comment on the inherent difficulties of attempting to situate, theorise, and make transferable the conclusions of such a difficult research project. Finally, I finish by outlining the needs for further research in this area, and the specific contribution of this project to the academic literature and to the social work field.

11. Conclusions and Implications for Practice

11.1. Introduction

This research has aimed to explore the experiences of people within Aotearoa who have been forced into prostitution or trafficked for sexual purposes. Specifically, I explored the contexts in which sex trafficking occurred, the narrated experiences of individual victims, and what they felt would best constitute effective intervention. As set out in chapter one, Aotearoa's legislative framework appears robust, but is undermined by conflicting and often ambiguous portrayals or understandings of trafficking. The literature review highlights salient concepts in trafficking, by setting out the ways in which both policy and societal contexts set the scene for victimisation, how this is subsequently exploited by traffickers, and the range of impacts and (often unevaluated) methods of intervention used in other jurisdictions, particularly the U.S. The incomplete scopes of knowledge illustrated in chapters one and two, together with the assumed sensitive nature of questioning victims about abusive experiences, informed the epistemology of this study. Thus, the thesis is informed by a feminist and social constructionist paradigm and uses the overarching frame of narrative inquiry to guide the application of methodology and method. This is particularly evidenced in chapter four, which is dedicated to theorising and exposing the personal and reflexive involvement with the research topic and associated ethical challenges. However, although less obvious, the guiding principles of feminist and social constructionist ways of applying narrative inquiry are infused throughout the findings and discussion chapters, which set out the 'context', 'temporality', and 'interaction' aspects of participants' stories, followed by the perspectives of survey respondents and key informant participants. The dual structures of analysis then privilege feminist and social constructionist priorities as they organise the findings and associated literature into ways of understanding victims' experiences that underline imperatives for change.

Many issues that can be addressed to reduce, prevent, and mitigate the harm of sex trafficking are located at multiple levels simultaneously. The practice recommendations that emerged from this were multi-faceted, multi-layered, and traverse multiple sites of intervention, service design, or policy considerations, and this chapter is oriented toward the development of applicable practice knowledge and the improvements to infrastructure required to make these feasible. These are consequently structured according to systems, with overarching systems set out first, followed by organisational considerations, and finally practitioner-client interactions. I conclude this chapter by outlining my research contributions, the limitations for the study, and the needs for further research.

11.3. Adherence to Human Rights Instruments

The stories of survivor participants featured in this chapter all meet the criteria of Section 98D of the Crimes Act 1961. Despite this, there was little commitment by others to combating this crime evidenced in their accounts of attempts to seek help. Consequently, although Aotearoa's legislative context has been amended to incorporate such experiences of violence, this does not appear paralleled by proactive steps to recognise and intervene in situations where they are manifest. Such inaction can be argued to be in breach of the human rights instruments outlined in chapter one, including the Palermo Protocol, Convention 182 of the International Labour

Organisation, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. To fulfil the obligations under these protocols, Aotearoa must proactively address situations of trafficking and provide support for victims by attending to the inter-related issues set out below.

11.4. Gender as a Central Issue

In earlier chapters and particularly in chapter 10, I have repeatedly illustrated unequal gendered power dynamics and the ways in which these were embedded and reproduced within many of the sub-groups and larger communities, ultimately influencing victims' expectations of gendered behaviour. As pointed out by myriad other authors (see Ashenden, 2004; Burnes et al., 2012; Dorais & Corriveau, 2009), the sexual exploitation of women and girls through coerced prostitution is underpinned by deeply entrenched patriarchal paradigms involving harmful beliefs about gendered behaviour, such as that men are fulfilling a biological imperative in their acts of sexual violence (Burnes et al., 2012), that women and girls should fulfil the traditional role of 'carer' and 'nurturer' in distinct contrast to men's and boys' expected demonstrations of aggression or assertion (Ennew, 1986; MWA, 2009), and the continued promotion of the still developing (adolescent) female body as the archetypal depiction of sexual desirability (Dorais & Corriveau, 2009). Correspondingly, the gendered expectations referred to throughout the second section of this chapter, which texture many of the sub-cultures to which participants and their abusers belonged, are accepted as normative. Consequently, promotion of gender inequality – and, by extension, a release from harmful enactments and implicit endorsement of patriarchal dictation of gender-acceptable behaviour – should constitute a key component of addressing the societal-level contributors (gender inequality and gender-based violence) to trafficking. The forced prostitution and accompanying physical and sexual violence can thus be seen as symptomatic of an acute gendered power differential, the perpetuating beliefs of which must be also challenged at the individual level if victims' own constructions of normative gendered behaviour are to positively evolve. Challenging such beliefs, however, is problematic if they are continually reinforced by exposure to other manifestations of this power differential, such as that which occurs in sub-groups such as gangs, families, or communities that endorse violence against women. Identifying appropriate alternative (and proximal) sources of belief-checking is therefore paramount in order to shift these internalised paradigms, such as through the introduction of specialist referral mechanisms. Lastly, this thesis underlines the importance of considering gender at the conceptual level as well as at a practical one – understanding the extent to which trafficking experiences, and the exercise and constraint of agency, are influenced by gender and other determinants of power has been central to the conclusions of this research.

11.5. Service Design and Service Approach

Service and inter-service systems must be considered with the goal to maximise reach and accessibility for all victims of sex trafficking. Both survey respondents' and key informants' comments indicated two central and overlapping issues regarding service design and delivery. The first of these is the the unpreparedness of many practitioners across various services to name, comprehend, and respond to disclosures of abuse that amounts to trafficking. The second, relatedly, is the dissatisfaction of practitioners who have encountered trafficking with the current (lack of) infrastructure in place to prevent victimisation and support recovery. While

gaps between populations in a state of high need and the services supposedly supporting them are frequently documented in relation to young people and mental health, addiction, and counselling (Christie & Merry, 2010; French, Reardon, & Smith, 2003; Vanags, 2012; Watsford, Rickwood, & Walsh et al., 2010), few authors identify the centrality of discursive clarity and political recognition as precursors to the establishment of such infrastructure, representing a clear imperative for service and inter-service development regarding shared definitions and pathways to support.

As demonstrated earlier in this chapter, such early negative appraisals of services are subsequently generalised to outcome expectations regarding future contact with services, and these generalisations can be transmissible within groups, resulting in high rates of attrition. Lukman et al. (2011) similarly found that these negative outcome expectations prevent willingness to disclose; however, the structural precipitants to such negative appraisals can arguably be found in the overarching policy context within which intervention occurs (or does not occur). If practitioners are not made aware that patterns of intimate partner violence can and do extend to the perpetration of sex trafficking and, as such, can involve multiple abusers and methods of abuse including those that may intersect with organised sex work, invitations to disclose such victimisation are unlikely to be forthcoming. Correspondingly, key informants frequently returned to the absence of consistent infrastructure, such as the lack of specialist agencies cognisant of the related categories of crime but distinctly designated to investigate and/or support victims of organised or profit-oriented sexual exploitation, which they believed was impeded by a lack of political will. As I outline next, building this infrastructure so that Government-led and agency-led policy is inclusive of types of victimisation that span categories of violence such as intimate partner and sexual violence, but which also constitute trafficking, must therefore be addressed before individual practitioners can develop confidence and competence in their individual responses.

11.6. Shared Definitions and Motivations across Systems

The absence of a shared definition or conceptualisation of trafficking is particularly troubling, as motivation to intervene in and support the recovery from categories of crime such as family violence and sexual violence in Aotearoa is clearly manifest in its resourced and regulated multi-agency models, such as those outlined in chapter two. Such motivation for intervening in trafficking is clearly lacking, and this is explained by key informants as arising from both the lack of understanding about the nature and prevalence of trafficking scenarios, and the low probability of successful prosecution in the event of an investigation. The implementation of successful models of intervention is therefore predicated on the development of dual commitments – first, the uptake of a shared knowledge base from which to comprehend the issue and inform practice design; and second, the construction of a multi-agency response system that uses this shared definition (such as a popularised version of the legal definition) and consists of medical, police, and social service arms. Such a system would likely only be effective, however, if it integrated discrete trafficking protocol into existing memoranda of understanding in order to respond to the unique and often acute needs of victims (USDHHS, 2010), again denoting the need for increased multi-agency collaboration.

11.7. Laying the Groundwork for a Therapeutic Relationship

Given the linkages between system readiness and individual client experience outlined above, considerations regarding the factors influencing effective intervention by individual practitioners are likely to emerge from organisationally defined priorities. However, some aspects of intervention can be inferred as helpful from participants' accounts of their experiences, needs, and desires for support. For instance, given the experiences of prolonged trauma symptomatology described by participants, their ability to gauge life experience of helpers, and the practical challenges that long exceeded the period of victimisation, I argue that helpers (and investigators) working within such systems should, at a minimum, be equipped with the skills to comprehend all manifestations of sex trafficking without adherence to preconceived notions regarding discursively constructed traditional trafficking dynamics, communicate with demonstrated empathy and non-judgement, and be robustly trauma-informed in their practice. This last attribute is particularly important given that being trauma-informed has, in other jurisdictions, has been found to be instrumental in reducing attrition and further emotional harm (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2009; Schmidt, 2014). Such practice begins with the construction of a supportive therapeutic climate that facilitates psychological safety (Appleby & Phillips, 2013; French et al., 2003; Gulliver et al., 2010). In addition, as with other population groups that have substantiated reasons to distrust the motives of apparently well-meaning interveners, the establishment of a robust and genuine therapeutic alliance needs to be premised on consistency, genuineness, and a rights-based approach that invites the client to set their own dynamic boundaries of disclosure and relationship at a pace comfortable to them (French et al., 2003; Watsford, Rickwood, & Vanags, 2012).

Intense attunement to both verbal and non-verbal cues has been documented in numerous other studies into client engagement following similar phenomena (Collins & Steinberg, 2006; Glass et al, 2001; Jordan et al.; Kaltman, Krupnick, Stockton, Hooper, & Green, 2005; Rickwood et al, 2007). However, participants' conveyed impressions of services represent a departure from these findings: in previous authors' findings, attention to 'non-verbal' cues has predominantly focused on the physical non-verbal cues proffered by individual practitioners. Conversely, as set out in chapters nine and ten, the non-verbal cues internalised as evidencing subjective safety of practitioners by participants in this thesis was focused on aspects of observed service design, embodied by individuals. Further, as presented in chapter nine, the perceptions of service providers' stances on recovery and intervention (interpreted from actions such as offering specific types of help, acting in perceived (un)ethical ways that indicated service aims, or privileging specific issues) each informed participants' judgements about practitioners' capacity to fully hear and intervene. This was further underscored by survey respondents' vagueness about recommended practice, and attempts to consign both experiences and needs to narrowly defined categories guided by their organisational priorities. The concept of non-verbal cues as communicating safety and space for victims to voice complex stories of abuse and trauma therefore constitutes a service imperative situated in individually embodied practice – manifesting, ideally, by communicating that the service and practitioner are both able and willing to work with complex stories of victimisation.

Finally, we have witnessed here the reluctance of individual victims to share or expose their vulnerability to practitioners, in part due to the preclusions of sharing that they experienced through practitioners' initial responses. Jones and Cook (2008) remarked upon the potential for intervention with victims of family violence or sexual violence to reinforce the experienced loss of control over physical and/or sexual integrity through inappropriate attempts at intervention. While not expressly stated by participants, this potential for replicated feelings of powerlessness can be seen as texturing their attempts at help-seeking as they fear the disruption to their locus of control in their precariously balanced lives in the aftermath of prolonged abuse, and corresponds to a need to repeatedly attend to matters of choice and agency when engaging with victims.

11.8. Working with Attachment and Trauma

As evidenced in participants' recounts of their relationship, and earlier in this chapter in relation to susceptibility to acceptance of abusers' behaviours within (particularly first) intimate partnerships, working with attachment needs and the reformulation of these through the processes of trauma and trauma recovery is paramount. The intervention of trusted practitioners has the potential to promote the reconstruction of attachment patterns and consequent resilience in the face of future risks (Allen & Manning, 2007), which, given the secondary abuse experienced by participants in subsequent relationships, is essential for continued opportunities for wellness. In addition, positive attachment relationships as they manifest in therapeutic relationships may, to some degree, mitigate the earlier preclusion of the development of secure self-concept and consequent negative appraisals of self and 'future self', or individual predictions of future potential (Bruce & Mendes, 2007), which were ubiquitous throughout both the narratives of participants themselves and the reflections of key informant practitioners. Participants and key informants also indicated the extensive cognitive reappraisal employed by victims at the time of victimisation to justify, minimise, or (re)contextualise experiences of abusive sexual experiences. Other authors have variously understand this as developmentally-driven progressive understanding of abusive dynamics (Amstotter & Vernon, 2008), and survival-oriented reappraisal that acts to suppress the threatening nature of the behaviour in order to preserve illusions of safety, autonomy, and control (McMillan, 2013). That these impressions often persisted to some degree despite exiting the situation and substantial periods of time after ceasing contact with abusers is arguably indicative of the powerful hold these reappraisals continue to have over victims' cognitive structuring of abuse events, and, correspondingly, their on-going vulnerability. Such reappraisals must be actively addressed in counselling or therapy to be understood and, eventually, excavated.

Adolescents in particular are vulnerable both to inimical outcomes following abuse, and to internalising societal or abusers' messages of culpability and consequently developing self-blame (Baugher, Elhai, Monroe, & Gray, 2010; Kaltman et al., 2005). Moreover, they are especially likely to accept and internalise adults' messages of blame without challenging flawed assumptions or attributions of accountability (Baugher et al., 2010; Whitman, 2007), illustrating the paramountcy of prioritising these dynamics as therapeutic goals from the outset of the intervention process. However, as clearly demonstrated by participants' accounts of trying to access help, trauma as a presenting feature of referral to services is routinely overlooked,

communicating to participants that they were regarded as unworthy of assistance or that their stories of trauma were unwelcome. This clearly signals both the imperative for mental health systems to be cognisant and responsive to all presentations of trauma, including those that are complex, previously unheard, and outside subjectively more comfortable arenas; and the need to introduce a value base that is cognisant of traumatic or distress-driven influence over clients' behavioural decisions.

11.9. Research Contributions

This study broadly explores the experiences of 16 survivor participants, and supplements the findings arising from their contribution with the knowledge of six key informants and impressions gleaned from the 131 survey respondents. While I have attempted to explore the facets of victims' experiences that they consider essential for us to know, this is nevertheless a shallow dive. I have set out the experiences in their totality as much as possible, and discussed the findings from a wide lens in an attempt to further our current understanding of the situations in which this occurs, how victims experience these situations, and what their intervention needs comprise of. Had there been a greater knowledge base specific to Aotearoa from which to draw prior to beginning this research, my focus may have narrowed considerably. However, the uniqueness of this study within Aotearoa's current policy and practice context, where any comprehension of sex trafficking domestically is markedly absent, has utility in its broadness of scope – practice knowledge must be basic before the intricacies can be explored in greater depth.

Amongst the more specific, practice-oriented contributions are the conceptualisation of a 'love-illusion', the focus on the sanctioning of adult-child sexual contact by parents as a risk factor separate from victimisation itself, and the analysis of gender as an organising power structure within all narrated stories of trafficking and the corresponding implications for client work.

The first, theorising the 'love-illusion', arose from recognition of this phenomenon as a method of exercising coercive control throughout the recruitment, entrapment, and exploitation of young people, and in particular, young women and girls. This extends beyond the more traditional 'love-bombing' referred to in other literature, which is limited to the grooming process. The love-illusion refers not just to the allure of romance, but to the exploitation of deeply entrenched desires for protective love traditionally provided by robust family structures, and textures all aspects of participants' experiences and their relationships with their abusers.

The second, parental endorsement of adult-child sexual relationships, is underrepresented in other studies into trafficking but proved pivotal in several girls' entry into trafficking; accordingly, I have conceptualised this as a precipitating factor that should always merit intervention and be considered in the context of risk and vulnerability.

The third, an analysis of gender-typing within the social field of trafficking, was theorised through the broad application of Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus, and capital, where I found that the inferior position occupied by women and girls set the scene for abuse and exploitation in numerous ways, which required multi-level intervention to explore, address, and reconstitute. These gendered norms and the internalisation of them present notable barriers to victims self-defining as such, as to their pursuit of help or readiness to identify gendered harm;

correspondingly, efforts should be more proactive and cognisant of these cognitive distortions regarding (gendered) normative social behaviour.

At a more macro-level, this thesis has first confirmed the presence of trafficking situations, and then provided an overview of immediate, basic practice recommendations. In doing so it has shed light on the notable gaps in knowledge (and consequent silencing of trafficking narratives) amongst the social service and medical professions, and the political discourse that must accompany solutions to these gaps. In addition, it has contributed to the body of knowledge – and the academic literature – in more subtle ways; such as by applying Bourdieusian theories to the trafficking field and with a feminist analysis, and by including an analysis of ‘voice’ and ‘silence’ to propose that we collectively forbid victims’ disclosures in a multitude of unintentional ways, each of which require our dedicated attention to correct.

Finally, I argue that there is a methodological contribution to scholarship on ‘sensitive’ methodologies and methods. This has chiefly been through the explication of my concepts such as ‘vulnerability’, ‘reflexivity’, and ‘risk’ in this study, ways intended to be transferable to future (particularly feminist) research and researchers. The rarity of transparent accounts of previous researchers doing similarly ‘sensitive’ research motivated the addition of a non-traditional additional chapter (chapter four) to explore the ethical and safety-related issues in greater depth, despite the personal exposure and corresponding vulnerability that this necessitated. This chapter also included the further contribution of ways of using the self to increase clarity and depth within the analysis of data, by attempting to scrutinise and traverse the many intersections between researcher ‘self’ and participant ‘data’ using both professionally-informed social worker reflexivity and a depth psychological approach.

11.10. Directions for Future Research

Every aspect of the trafficking process appeared profoundly textured by the presence of a significant gendered power differential, evidenced at each level of participants’ ecologies. This power dynamic was manifest in sites of vulnerability to sexual coercion and immersion into abusers’ hyper-masculine social fields or the occupation of the hyper-feminised ‘partner’ role, the sexually degrading and dominating methods of entrapment and coercion, and the positioning as inferior and powerless within forced sexual transactions. There is a notable dearth of other Aotearoa-specific research on this topic, and it is unrealistic to assume that findings from this limited sample of self-selected participants are representative or even wholly transferable to other young women trapped in trafficking situations. Given these factors, it is evident that further research needs to be conducted into adolescent girls’ experiences of being forcibly prostituted or trafficked and the gendered roles of proximal others, with a view to establishing key sources of influence that collectively facilitate the (largely unchallenged within the social field) position of subjugation through sexual exploitation. In addition, establishing how constructions of gender within dating relationships lead to this manifestation of abuse should help with the development of prevention initiatives.

As can be seen throughout all of the findings chapters, and as discussed in chapter 10, abusers who recruit and entrap adolescent girls and young women into sex trafficking use a wide range of tactics to foster control and dominance over victims. This multiplicity of abuse tactics

highlights the need to consider the dynamic and complex nature of victim-abuser relationships when identifying sex trafficking, and when working with victims. The compelling vision of 'love' as a deterrent to escape and disclosure appeared equalled by overwhelming fear for both self and others. Simultaneously, however, several participants also exercised both overt and subtle forms of resistance that preserved personal values and subverted abusers' attempts to wholly suppress their agentic capacity. In Aotearoa, very little is known about how these dual experiences – the constraints of fear, and the enactment of resistance – occur within trafficking relationships. Further research into victims' experiences, and in particular the variance amongst these situations, is therefore essential to develop a greater knowledge base from which to draw as practitioners.

11.11. Conclusion

I have attempted to tie together the implications emerging from both discussion chapters in this chapter, which is organised using a top-down approach beginning with overarching systems and concluding with individual practitioner-client implications. This final chapter sets out the needs for future research, including the role of gender and manifestation of gender-based violence specific to this category of abuse and the variance within these experiences, before setting out the specific contributions of this research project; namely, a wide-lens snapshot of Aotearoa victims' experiences and intervention needs, the application of several of Bourdieu's theories to this specific field, and finally an explanation of the navigation of intensely complex and ethically fraught research procedures with a 'vulnerable' population group. These layers of analysis have allowed for the enhanced understanding of individual experiences, a developing comprehension of the variance in which victimisation through trafficking can occur, and the needs for intervention (and, relatedly, broader system changes) represented by the experiences of the participant sample featured here. Additionally, this conclusion summarises the focal points of this thesis, and reiterates the central thesis statement before outlining the thesis's contribution to the field and, correspondingly, the directions for future research.

Epilogue

You will have read here tales of both insidious and confrontingly explicit acts of violence, rape, degradation, and subjugation – almost always by a ‘partner’ or family member, and through ways that are uniformly transgressive to bodily sovereignty, to young people’s attachment relationships, and to victims’ use of voice. This thesis is ultimately a story of silencing – the multitude of ways that victims were used and silenced, and that their fellow victims remain silenced. In part, this silence is born of others’ discomfort with the topic.

My hope is that you, too, found this uncomfortable. The prospect of abusers’ perpetration of such acts for monetary gain should be disconcerting. As you have seen, the callous use of victims’ bodies for sexual gratification of ‘clients’ was evidenced in their accounts of regular subjection to rape, of highly lethal types of physical violence, and of the manipulative appropriation of autonomy by fostering illusions of love.

This thesis paints a desolate picture of our treatment of our young and discarded. It also gives us a springboard from which to begin to improve. Victims have shared their pain to help us to understand it, but also have shared their views on what could have helped them and what they would like to have in place for others. This, I hope, will help us to do better.

Appendix A

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UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (UAHPEC)

02-Aug-2016

MEMORANDUM TO:

Assoc Prof Elizabeth Beddoe
Counselling, HumServ & SocWrk

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 017415): Approved

The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for your project entitled **A New Zealand Underbelly? Domestic Sex Trafficking and Forced Prostitution in Aotearoa New Zealand.**

We are pleased to inform you that ethics approval is granted for a period of three years.

The expiry date for this approval is 02-Aug-2019.

If the project changes significantly, you are required to submit a new application to UAHPEC for further consideration.

If you have obtained funding other than from UniServices, send a copy of this approval letter to the Research Office, at ro-awards@auckland.ac.nz. For UniServices contracts, send a copy of the approval letter to the Contract Manager, UniServices.

In order that an up-to-date record can be maintained, you are requested to notify UAHPEC once your project is completed.

The Chair and the members of UAHPEC would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals. If you wish to do so, please contact the UAHPEC Ethics Administrators at ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz in the first instance.

Please quote reference number: **017415** on all communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application.

(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)

UAHPEC Administrators

Appendix B

Medical Practitioners' Experiences with Forced Prostitution

Q6 I consent to taking part in this survey. I understand that no identifying information is required, and that the data will be used as the basis for a doctoral thesis and possibly as the basis for publications and conference presentations.

- Yes, I consent (1)
- No, I do not consent (2)

Q1 Which best describes your field of practice?

- Emergency Care (1)
- Sexual Health (2)
- General Practice (3)
- Mental Health (4)

Q2 When did you last (if ever) encounter the following in New Zealand?

	Never (1)	Over a year ago (2)	Within the last year (3)	Multiple times in the last year (4)
Patients who present with injuries you suspect are caused by forced prostitution or sex trafficking (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Patients who have untreated sexual infections, injuries, or chronic sexual or reproductive health conditions you suspect are caused by forced prostitution and/or sex trafficking (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Patients who you believe are involved with prostitution, who are accompanied by someone who will not leave them alone, even with an interpreter (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Patients who you believed are involved with prostitution and who have someone with them who is not a friend or family member, but appears to make all decisions on behalf of the patient (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most or all of the above at the same time (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q3 In your experience, do these patients typically:

	I don't recall (1)	Yes (2)	Sometimes (3)	No (4)
Change address frequently and present to different medical providers? (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seem afraid of interacting with professionals? (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have any tattoos such as small symbols, figures, names, or branding? (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have obvious minor injuries (such as cigarette burns, chemical burns, or significant bruising)? (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have prior histories of sexual injuries or gynaecological conditions? (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Exhibit distress or symptoms of anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder? (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Show signs of ill-health that could be attributed to poor living conditions, including malnutrition or dehydration? (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most or all of these at the same time (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q4 Has answering this survey make you think any differently about cases you have seen in the past? If so, please explain.

Q5 Would you be open to talking further about your experiences with this? If so, please leave a contact email below.

Appendix C

Social Service Professionals' Experience with Forced Prostitution

Q10 I consent to taking part in this survey. I understand that no identifying information is required, and that the data will be used as the basis for a doctoral thesis and possibly as the basis for publications and conference presentations.

- Yes, I consent (1)
- No, I do not consent (2)

If No, I do not consent Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Q1 What best describes your field of practice?

- Statutory social work (care and protection or youth justice) (1)
- Youth work (2)
- Community social work (3)
- Medical (4)
- Individual counselling, psychology, or psychotherapy (5)
- Mental health (6)
- Health promotion (7)
- School social work (8)

Q2 How recently (if ever) have you worked with clients who:

	Never (1)	Over a year ago (2)	Within the last year (3)	Multiple times in the last year (4)
Are or have been kept at a location through force or deception in order to provide sexual favours to people other than the person using force or deception? (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have been forced to do sex work (with one or multiple clients) through force or coercion? (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are or have been forced to stay in the sex industry due to debt bondage (the process through which employees accumulate 'debt' to their employers and cannot leave until it is paid)? (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are or have been forced to sleep on the premises of a brothel, even when they would rather leave? (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are or have been afraid to leave the sex industry, or their particular managers in the sex industry, because they believe their managers will use violence against them? (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Entered New Zealand believing they have got a job in another industry, and were put to work in the sex industry instead? (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have been forced to hand over all of the earnings they made from sex work to a manager? (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have been under 18 and have done sex work organised by gang members? (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have been under 18 and have done	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

sex work organised by family? (9)				
Have been under 18 and have done sex work on their own or with peers their own age? (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have been bought or sold for a sum of money? (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have been forced to participate in the making of pornographic films or photographs against their will? (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q4 What indicators would you expect to see in someone who has been trafficked for sexual purposes or forced into prostitution?

Q4 How confident would you be to appropriately respond to disclosures of sex trafficking or forced prostitution?

Q5 What actions would you consider in the event that someone disclosed to you that they were being forced to do sex work or had been trafficked for sexual purposes?

Q6 Did answering this questionnaire make you think any differently about cases or situations you have been involved with? If so, please explain:

Q7 Would you be willing to be interviewed to talk further about your answers and this topic? If so, please leave a contact email.

Appendix D

Survivor interview questions

Have you been involved in forced prostitution or trafficking?

If yes, can you tell me about how this started?

What was your life like growing up?

Can you tell me about your closest relationships over your lifetime?

Did you access any services? What was that like?

How are you affected (if at all) by your experience of trafficking?

What helped you, or what would you have like to have happen that might have helped you?

What is your life like now?

Appendix E

Key informant interview questions

Please note that this is a broad overview of the types of questions that were asked, and not all questions were asked of all key informants.

What is the nature of your experiences with this issue?

In your experience, what were the methods through which victims were recruited and entrapped?

If applicable, what have you seen to be the methods of exit for victims?

Do you think any particular policies do/could contribute to these situations?

What limitations are there in responding to the needs of victims, their social conditions, or their legal situations?

What policies/programmes/services need to be available? What do you see as the current gaps?

What do you see as the likely extent of the problem?

What are your experiences of the relationships between the victims and their perpetrators?

What are the points at which people are able/could be able to intervene?

What legal precedents exist for managing these cases? Or, what is the general policy for managing suspicions/disclosures?

What health/mental health symptoms or issues are typically associated?

What are other signs that people might be in that situation?

Do you see any indication of trauma bonding? What would indicate that this is happening?

Appendix F

**Pressured to do sex
work in the past?**

**Or weren't allowed to
stop sex work?**

Over 16 years of age?

*Tell your story to a female researcher
False names are ok
We can discuss time & place first*

**Get \$40 in vouchers for
your time**

Txt/Ph: 0211864879
Email: ntho974@aucklanduni.ac.nz

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN
PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 2-09-2006 for three (3) years.
Reference Number 017411

Appendix G



**EDUCATION AND
SOCIAL WORK**

School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work
Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland,
74 Epsom Ave, Epsom
Private Bag 92-601 Symonds St,
Auckland NZ
64 9 6238899

Participant Information

Sex Trafficking and Forced Prostitution in Aotearoa New Zealand

Researcher: Natalie Thorburn, PhD Student

Main supervisor: Associate Professor Liz Beddoe

My name is Natalie Thorburn. I am a doctoral student at the University of Auckland and am interested in researching the experiences of people who have been forced to sell sex or who have been trafficked for sex. This includes anyone who has been forced into sex work through violence or coercion, or who has been held against his or her will to do sex work when they didn't want to. I am doing this in the hope of identifying ways of making these situations better or preventing them from happening. If you have been given this form it is likely that you expressed an interest in being part of the study by texting me.

I would like to interview you in a safe place (such as a counselling room in a location close to you) if you have ever been in this situation, but you must now be in a safe situation to participate in this research. If you're not in a safe situation, you can still contact me if you would like a referral to services. The interview will take place in last for up to one hour. If you participate in the interview, you will be given \$40 of vouchers per interview to compensate you for your time and effort. There will be either one or two interviews, but it is fine if you would only like to participate in one.

I intend to voice record the interviews. Your participation is voluntary. You can ask to have the voice recorder turned off and you can withdraw your participation from the research at any time without needing to give a reason. You can also withdraw any of the information that you provide until six weeks after the interview, without giving a reason. Once the interview is completed, I will write up the interview and delete the recording. The transcript will be securely stored on the university server and then deleted after six years. If you wish, you can contact me within six weeks to arrange a time to look at and edit the transcript, or this may be read to you if you prefer. You will have two weeks from when you are given the transcript to make any changes.

You and the information that you provide can remain confidential, and I will collect no identifying information – you do not need to give your real name. However, if you disclose current risks that may lead to serious injury, or that involve possible harm to a child or young person, I will need to seek support from a third party such as the Police.

I will ask you to give verbal consent once we turn on the recorder and I will read the consent form to you. You can text me after December 2016 to ask for a summary of the findings if you would like to see them. The data will be used to prepare a Doctoral thesis and may form the basis for publications, advocacy, and conference presentations.

You can also text me anytime in the months following the interview if you would like help with accessing support.

Contact details for Researcher, Supervisors and Ethics Committee.

<p>Natalie Thorburn – Student Researcher The University of Auckland Private Bag 92601 Symonds Street Auckland 1050 New Zealand Tel: 0211864879 Email: n.thorburn@auckland.ac.nz</p>	<p>Associate Professor Liz Beddoe - Supervisor The University of Auckland Private Bag 92601 Symonds Street Auckland 1050 New Zealand Tel: +64 09 623 8899 ext. 48559 Email: e.beddoe@auckland.ac.nz</p>
<p>Associate Professor Christa Fouché Head of School The University of Auckland Private Bag 92601 Symonds Street Auckland 1050 New Zealand Tel: +64 09 623 8899 ext. 46648 Email: c.fouche@auckland.ac.nz</p>	

For any concerns regarding ethical issues you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711. Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz).

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON for (3) years, Reference Number 017415

Appendix H



**EDUCATION AND
SOCIAL WORK**

School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work
Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland,
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Private Bag 92-601 Symonds St,
Auckland NZ
64 9 6238899

Participant Information – Key Informants

Sex Trafficking and Forced Prostitution in Aotearoa New Zealand

Researcher: Natalie Thorburn, PhD Student
Main supervisor: Associate Professor Liz Beddoe

My name is Natalie Thorburn. I am a doctoral student at Auckland University and am interested in researching the experiences of people who have been forced to sell sex or trafficked for sex. This includes anyone who has been forced into sex work through violence or coercion, or who has been held against his or her will to do sex work when they didn't want to. I am hoping that this will enable me to gain an understanding of how it occurs, and what the needs are of people who have been trafficked or forced into sex work.

As part of this study, I would also like to interview professionals who have encountered this in their work. If you have worked with clients who have been involved in forced prostitution or sex trafficking, or worked in any other professional capacity with people or for people who have been forced to do sex work or have been sex trafficked, I would like to interview you. This will take between 30-60 minutes of your time per interview, and may require one to two interviews. You will receive a \$20 voucher as recognition for your time for each interview.

I intend to digitally record the interviews. I will keep all information confidential, unless a situation arises where there is imminent harm to a child or young person, in which case I will discuss possible options with you. Participation is voluntary, and if you change your mind at any time the interview will be stopped. You can also withdraw your participation anytime during the interview. You may also withdraw your contribution any time in the next six weeks without giving any reason, and the recording will be discarded. Once the interview is completed, I or an external transcriber will transcribe the interviews, and I will delete the recording, and store the transcripts on a secure university server. These will be deleted after six years. Consent forms will be kept in a locked filing cabinet for six years. You will be offered the chance to review the transcript after the interview, and will have two weeks to make any amendments.

I will also ask you to sign a consent form, which will be securely held for six years. If you would like a copy of the findings, I will send you a copy once the research has been completed.

Is it my hope that your participation will help to provide a body of knowledge that will inform future practice and policy with an at-risk population. Your employer has assured that your participation or non-participation will not have any impact on your employer-employee relationship.



EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

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If you have any questions, my contact details are below.

Thank you for showing an interest in being part of this research.

Contact details for Researcher, Supervisors and Ethics Committee.

Natalie Thorburn – Student Researcher The University of Auckland Private Bag 92601 Symonds Street Auckland 1050 New Zealand Tel: 0211864879 Email: n.thorburn@auckland.ac.nz	Associate Professor Liz Beddoe - Supervisor The University of Auckland Private Bag 92601 Symonds Street Auckland 1050 New Zealand Tel: +64 09 623 8899 ext. 48559 Email: e.beddoe@auckland.ac.nz
Associate Professor Christa Fouché Head of School The University of Auckland Private Bag 92601 Symonds Street Auckland 1050 New Zealand Tel: +64 09 623 8899 ext. 46648 Email: c.fouche@auckland.ac.nz	

For any concerns regarding ethical issues you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711. Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON for (3) years, Reference Number 017415

Appendix I



EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK

School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work
Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland,
74 Epsom Ave, Epsom
Private Bag 92-601 Symonds St,
Auckland NZ
64 9 6238899

CONSENT FORM

Participant

Sex Trafficking and Forced Prostitution in Aotearoa New Zealand

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, and understand the nature of the research and why I have been invited to participate. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to take part in this research and understand that participation is voluntary
- I have read/have had read to me the participant information sheet
- I understand that my identity will remain confidential and I do not have to give my real name
- I understand that I am free to withdraw participation at any time without giving any reason, and can refuse to answer any individual questions
- I understand that I can withdraw my contribution for up to six weeks after the interview, without giving a reason
- I understand that the interviews will be audio-taped (voice-recorded) and that I can ask for the recorder to be turned off at any point without giving any reason
- I understand that I can contact the researcher after December 2016 to request a summary of the research findings, and can contact the researcher within 6 weeks after the interview to review and edit the transcript of my interview
- I understand that an external transcribe (someone to write up the recording of the interview) may be used, and that I will have two weeks to review the transcript after it is made available to me, which be read to me if preferred
- I understand that the data will be used to prepare a Doctoral thesis and may form the basis for publications and conference presentations
- I understand that the recording will be stored on a secure university server and transcribed as soon as possible, and that this transcript will be stored for six years and then deleted
- I understand that if any situations of risk are raised in the interview, we will discuss options for support, and that if these situations involve risk of serious injury or risk to children or young people, this may need to be reported to the Police
- I do/do not wish to receive a copy of the findings (please indicate which one)

For any concerns regarding ethical issues you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711. Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON for (3) years, Reference Number 017415

Appendix J



**EDUCATION AND
SOCIAL WORK**

School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work
Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland,
74 Epsom Ave, Epsom
Private Bag 92-601 Symonds St,
Auckland NZ
64 9 6238899

CONSENT FORM For Key Informants Sex Trafficking and Forced Prostitution in Aotearoa New Zealand

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, understand the nature of the research and why I have been invited to participate. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to take part in this research and understand that participation is voluntary
- I understand that I am free to stop my participation at any time and ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time without giving a reason. I also understand that I can withdraw any information given up to six weeks after the interview without giving a reason.
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any individual questions
- I understand that the interviews will be audio-taped, that these may be transcribed using an external transcriber, and that I will be offered the opportunity to review the transcript of the recording, and will have two weeks after receiving it to make any changes
- I understand that the researcher will provide me with a copy of the findings
- I understand that a third party may need to be consulted if I disclose risks to a child or young person
- I understand that my employer has given assurance that my employer-employee will not be affected as a result of participation or non-participation in this study
- I understand that the data will be used to prepare a Doctoral thesis and may form the basis for a doctoral thesis, publications, and conference presentations
- I understand that consent forms will be kept for 6 years, after which they will be destroyed, and that recordings will be immediately transferred to a secure university server. Once interviews have been transcribed, recordings will be deleted and transcripts held on the university server for six years.

Name _____

Position _____

Signature _____ Date _____

For any concerns regarding ethical issues you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711. Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON
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