

**The Governance of Sex Trafficking:
Politics, Policy and Practice in England and Wales**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

This thesis explores how non-governmental organisation (NGOs) and the police operate as part of an ever-growing network of actors in the governance of sex trafficking in England and Wales. Drawing upon data generated through semi-structured interviews with 24 NGO actors and 18 police officers – ranging from Case Workers and Police Constables to CEOs and Chief Constables – this thesis focuses upon how anti-trafficking policy translates into practice in a field defined by ‘hyper-politicisation’. It examines how interrelationships within the anti-trafficking policy domain are structured and maintained through service delivery; how anti-trafficking policy and practice is shaped by the interests and priorities of anti-trafficking actors; and how anti-trafficking actors construct trafficking victimhood. In so doing, the thesis responds to the increasing international political attention cast onto sex trafficking in recent years and seeks to counter the rise of research in this field which has tended towards sensationalism, mythologisation and polarised feminist debate. Addressing the dearth of research on anti-trafficking service providers, the findings from this research demonstrate that trafficking is a social issue that is enveloped in, and conditioned by, moral struggles and divergent political agendas, which manifest in the control of womyn’s bodies and state borders. It therefore offers new empirical evidence to advance understanding of how sex trafficking has been taken up, both by state and non-state actors, as a noble guise through which to pursue draconian policy and practice.

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List of Abbreviations

ACF – Advocacy Coalition Framework

ACT – Active Communities Against Trafficking

CATW – Coalition Against Trafficking in Women

CO14 – Metropolitan Police Clubs and Vice Unit

COYOTE – Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics

CPS – Crown Prosecution Service

GAATW – Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

GRETA – Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings

HTT – Metropolitan Police Human Trafficking Team

MoJ – Ministry of Justice

NCA – National Crime Agency

NGOs – Non-Governmental Organisations

NRM – National Referral Mechanism

SCD9 – Metropolitan Police Human Exploitation and Organised Crime Command

SOCA – Serious Organised Crime Unit

UKBA – UK Border Agency

UKHTC – UK Human Trafficking Centre

UKVI – Home Office Visas and Immigration

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Chapter I: Introduction

We are told that there are 35 million slaves alive today (Free the Slaves, 2016), more than at any other point in history (Bales et al., 2009). We are told that human trafficking is the fastest growing international crime (Stop the Traffic, 2016a), with someone victimised every 30 seconds (A21, 2016). We are urged to pause to consider the victims “hidden in plain sight” (Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group, 2013: 1) and reminded by a raft of celebrities that ‘real men don’t buy girls’.¹ The Oscar-award winning actress, Emma Thomson, even invites us to step inside an installation of cargo containers to experience, just for five minutes, what it might be like to be sold into sexual slavery.² President Obama (2015) implores us to act now to end the scourge of trafficking that attacks the ‘social fabric’ of civilised societies, and David Cameron (2007) encourages us to seek our inspiration from ‘celebrated’ abolitionists such as William Wilberforce. The trafficking of people is considered to be incompatible with the values of ‘freedom’ the Western world believes itself to embody. How can we then not be exhorted to action? After all, “you may choose to look the other way but you can never say again that you did not know.” (Wilberforce, 1791: unpag.)

For some, the sort of statements outlined above have motivated them to join the global fight against human trafficking. So often repeated, they have taken on an almost mantric quality. For many, they have become axiomatic: the unquestioned truth. Yet while these ‘truths’ abound, there in fact remains little consensus about ‘the problem’ of trafficking since it continues to be understood through a range of (rival) narratives (Kempadoo, 2011). Trafficking may in this regard be understood as an ‘essentially contested concept’ (Gallie, 1956). Its contested nature has not however stopped politicians, the media, scholars, and actors from the public, private and voluntary sectors employing it for their own purposes. Indeed, as O’Connell Davidson (2015) contends, the same ‘platitudinous’ stock phrases about trafficking – or ‘modern slavery’ as it has

¹ The ‘real men don’t buy girls’ campaign was launched by Aston Kutcher and Demi Moore in 2011, to raise awareness around child sexual slavery. It was subsequently supported by a whole host of celebrities, including: Justin Timberlake, Sean Penn, Jamie Foxx and Bradley Cooper.

² Thomson is considered to be one of the driving forces behind a unique art installation - "Journey"- which used transport containers to illustrate to the public the ‘experience of sexual slavery’.

ostensibly come to be known – are commonly wheeled out in discussions about a whole host of social issues, from prostitution to immigration to organised crime and terrorism. Despite often being portrayed as something that lies beyond politics, human trafficking is used by many as a vehicle to pursue their own political agenda (Anderson and Andrijasevic, 2008). It is to these politics – and particularly to how they manifest in anti-trafficking policy and practice – that I cast a critical eye in this thesis.

Specifically, this thesis explores the role non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the police play, as part of an ever-increasing network of actors, in the governance of sex trafficking in England and Wales. In particular, it focuses upon how anti-trafficking policy translates into practice in a field defined by “hyper-politicisation” (McLaughlin, 2011: 53), examining how (competing) strategic priorities and organisational politics are negotiated, structured and maintained through service delivery. In so doing, it advances understandings of how anti-trafficking actors construct trafficking victimhood and why the ‘victim’ label is conferred upon some migrant womyn,³ and withheld from others, in the pursuit of different political agendas. Central to the thesis, is the notion that sex trafficking is oftentimes utilised, both by state and non-state actors, as a noble guise through which draconian practices can be pursued, practices which intervene to control the lives of migrant womyn.

While anti-trafficking actors provide important support to some migrant womyn, this thesis suggests that they also produce a smokescreen to obscure the limits of Western hegemony. In an era defined by pluralist policy-making and implementation (Klinj, 2008; Pierre and Peters, 2000; Rhodes, 1997), steadily fewer NGOs challenge Western status quo, and instead function as a vector through which ‘the West’ exerts and extends its power over ‘the rest’ (Kapoor, 2002). To this end, anti-trafficking actors may be understood as perpetuating damaging myths about trafficking, rather than as posing a comprehensive challenge to the structural causes of trafficking and the systemic inequalities that promote victims’ adversity. They propagate the myth, for example, that the blame for trafficking ought to be directed at the individual criminal and that the solution lies in the reform and rehabilitation of the victim. Anti-trafficking actors are

³ An alternative spelling has been utilised throughout this thesis as a feminist political act. This is explained further in a discussion about semantics and feminist scholarly work on p. 12.

therefore not mobilising a concerted and sustained campaign for the opening of state borders for subaltern migrant womyn – and thereby reducing some of the risk of trafficking that womyn face in their migratory journeys – but rather, perhaps inadvertently, they are providing reinforcements for ‘Fortress Europe’. In effect, by not actively opposing the systemic inequalities produced by neoliberal capitalism, neocolonialism, and patriarchy, anti-trafficking actors help to maintain the repressive status quo. Indeed, as Shirley Tate (2016: 74) notes in relation to endemic racism, “...to do nothing is to collude with and keep in place, a system from which you stand to gain.”

This introductory chapter begins by contextualising the research, positioning it within the existing knowledge base, and offering a rationale for its undertaking (1.1). Next the research is positioned within broader debates brought about by processes of globalisation, such as those around (in)security, migration and the regulation of prostitution (1.2). It then documents the focus of the thesis, the research questions it answers and, in the interest of providing a reflexive account, briefly states my own feminist politics (1.3). Finally, it concludes by outlining the structure of the thesis (1.5).

1.1 The existing knowledge base of sex trafficking

With purported antecedents in the trans-Atlantic (Bravo, 2007) and ‘white’ slave trades (Doezema, 2010), the issue of sex trafficking is far from new to the international community (Munro, 2008). Yet it was not until the mid-1990s that it began to permeate public consciousness and mass-mediated discourse, its profile subsequently rising to such an extent that it is currently considered to be one of “*the* human rights issues of the twenty-first century” (Lee and Lewis, 2003: 170). Trafficking is thus no longer the concern of a few feminist activists and NGOs but rather, it is a global concern (Doezema, 2010). It has simultaneously been constructed as a heinous aberration in human progression (Bravo, 2007), a threat to national security (Rizer and Glaser, 2011) and a modern form of slavery (Kara, 2009). As such, its contemporary advancement as a ‘political priority’ in Europe (Coso, 2011) has been both swift and unprecedented, fuelling a profusion of legislative responses and re-galvanising anti-trafficking lobbyists. This is irrespective of the contention coalescing around the prevalence (Home Affairs Committee, 2009) and definition of sex trafficking (Laczko, 2005), and the degree

to which anti-trafficking mechanisms have a positive impact upon human rights (Dotteridge, 2007). Unsubstantiated claims abound that the human trafficking business is not only vast but also burgeoning at an ever-increasing rate. Indeed, Belser's (2005: 18) assertion that human trafficking is the "second most profitable form of organised crime" has formed somewhat of a mantra amongst anti-trafficking actors, unquestionably repeated at every opportunity. While as Weitzer (2011) points out, no one is likely to argue that sex trafficking does not exist, many of the claims made about it are, at the very least, contested and often form part of the 'mythology of trafficking'. It is the effect this 'mythologisation' of trafficking has at the coalface of anti-trafficking service delivery that is essentially the focus of this thesis.

Despite both its progress up the international political agenda and its permeation of public consciousness (Munro, 2008), there remains a dearth of empirically, methodologically and theoretically rigorous research into sex trafficking. In his edited collection, *New Directions in Research on Human Trafficking*, Weitzer (2014) observes that little high-quality research has been conducted on the topic of sex trafficking. Similarly, Goździak and Bump (2008) highlight, in their attempt to compile a comprehensive bibliography of research-based human trafficking publications, that few published sources on human trafficking are based upon empirical enquiry. This observation is also supported by Zhang (2009), whom posits that few scholarly journal articles incorporate original data on human trafficking. Instead, many rely upon 'evidence' from governmental and non-governmental agencies, typically in the form of atypical, anecdotal accounts of the worst human rights abuses (Andrijasevic, 2007). In particular, this thesis endeavours to address the notable paucity in research which takes governmental and non-governmental organisation organisations as its focus of study i.e. the anti-trafficking service providers (Meshkovska et al., 2015).

While research on the subject of trafficking has undoubtedly proliferated in recent years, much ignores the complexities of the issue, instead pursuing various ideological agendas. Populist writings on the topic are often based upon sensationalist accounts and both popular- and research-interest has tended to dissolve once a victim has been emancipated and their 'horror story' told (Brennan, 2005). A significant proportion of sex trafficking knowledge is

generated by 'neo-abolitionists', which has led some commentators to suggest that the construction of mythologies about sex trafficking are prioritised over evidence-based understandings (Sanghera, 2012). Consequently, Weitzer (2005: 934) argues that too often in writings on sex trafficking, the "cannons of scientific inquiry are suspended and research deliberately skewed to serve a particular political and moral agenda". With this in mind, some commentators suggest that the knowledge base of human trafficking is limited (Di Nicola, 2007; Goździak and Bump, 2008; Liu, 2011; Shelley, 2010). Others have voiced concerns that governmental, non-governmental, media and public interest is running ahead of empirical evidence (Agustín, 2007; Salt, 2000). This thesis, therefore, aims to inject some critical insight into the common (mis)understanding proliferating throughout anti-trafficking rhetoric, to add to the growing body of scholarly work which challenges the sensationalised and mythologised nature of sex trafficking discourse.

1.2 Positioning this research within broader debates

The 'mythologisation' of trafficking (Weitzer, 2011) is compounded by the lack of a universal definition of human trafficking. Although the definition delineated in article 3a of the *United Nations Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* (the Palermo Protocol) is widely-recognised as a key legal reference point (Rijken, 2003), its purposefully broad meaning permits governments to interpret it differently according to their individual interests (Omelaniuk, 2005). Consensus does, however, appear to suggest that its defining characteristics are transfer, force and deception:

...trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, *transfer*, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or *use of force* or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, *deception*... for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include... forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs (UN, 2000: 2 *emphasis added*).

Initially considered to represent a prominent attempt at alleviating some of the historical disputation around the definition of trafficking, the Palermo Protocol seems to have done little to prevent trafficking being used by a range of state and non-state actors in the pursuit of their political and moral agendas. Radical feminists and neo-abolitionists have consistently conflated sex trafficking with

prostitution more broadly, using anti-trafficking as a vehicle by which to promote their anti-prostitution ideology. From this perspective, prostitution is constructed as creating the demand for sex trafficking (Hughes, 2003a) and the root cause of the global trade in human traffic (Raymond, 2004). For the last century, radical feminist ideology has dominated both sex industry discourse, and policy and practice (Doezema, 1998). It has, for example, recently found support at the level of the European Parliament through Mary Honeyball MEP's proposals to criminalise the purchase of sex, as well as in England and Wales through the End Demand Campaign,⁴ which calls upon the UK Government to follow Sweden's lead in adopting a Sex Purchase Law.⁵

Yet proponents of this radical feminist position are fervently criticised on the basis that the pillars of their paradigm are erected in ignorance of compelling counter-evidence (Weitzer, 2012). Indeed, rigorous empirical research indicates that more often than not, migrant womyn involved in the sex industry actually make conscious decisions to travel to offer sexual labour (Agustín, 2007; Doezema, 2002). The prospect of improving their socio-economic position through flexible labour may be appealing to womyn living in both absolute and relative poverty, and the sex industry may be perceived to provide a more rewarding and less exploitative environment than some other non-sexual forms of informal labour (Mai, 2009). Nonetheless, radical feminists fail to distinguish between forced sex labour and voluntary sex work and in so doing, legitimise anti-trafficking policies which critics claim "criminalise, stigmatise and threaten" the health of sex workers, and drive sex work underground (Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women, 2011: 32). Additionally, by assigning the blame for sex trafficking to the sex industry *per se*, the criminalisation of sex work diverts attention away from both trafficking for purposes *beyond* sexual exploitation (Smith, 2007) and the socio-structural factors which 'push' womyn into taking risk they may otherwise not (Zimmerman et al., 2006). The role of the neo-abolitionist ideology in anti-trafficking policy and practice and the themes touched upon here are developed throughout this thesis.

⁴ Details about this campaign available at: <http://enddemand.uk/about/end-demand/> [Accessed: 01.04.16].

⁵ See: Connelly (2016a) for a 'public sociology' critique of the Sex Purchase Law.

More broadly, however, human trafficking has been conflated with immigration, with anti-trafficking often serving as a guise through which draconian border practices can be implemented. Indeed, framed as a way of preventing sex trafficking, increasingly repressive border restrictions can be implemented with legitimacy. The interchangeable usage of the terms 'trafficking' and 'migration' in sex trafficking discourses (Salt, 2000) functions to simultaneously construct irregular migrants as victims and thus deny their agency (Agustín, 2003), and construct trafficking victims as illegal aliens who represent a threat to national security (Gallagher, 2002). This conceptualisation of the forced/voluntary dichotomy lacks nuance, however, and fails to recognise that irregular migrants may make conscious decisions to migrate, by seeking out the services of a 'smuggler' to aid cross-border movement, only to find themselves in unexpectedly exploitative situations (Aronowitz, 2001). Risk of exploitation in the sex industry is in fact enhanced by seemingly hardened attitudes towards immigration in England and Wales which, through the development of restrictive immigration policy, operate to force migrants to pursue illegal mechanisms of entry and unregulated forms of employment. Furthermore, Haynes (2003) contends that anti-trafficking policy and practice also functions to disguise the deportation of voluntary migrants behind the noble and eminent façade of 'rescuing' victims of trafficking.

Although the conflation of trafficking and migrant sex work has harmful consequences, as outlined above, the two issues are inevitably intertwined. As such, a central theme throughout this thesis is the relationship between migration and trafficking. The label 'migrant' is almost invariably applied to those who are by virtue of the actions of the Western world, subaltern (Agustín, 2003: 32): that is, they are socio-economically, politically and geographically marginal from, and oppressed by, the hegemonic power structure. Steadily more womyn are migrating and yet paradoxically, legitimate routes into Western countries are increasingly closed. These restrictive immigration policies do not prevent migration, however, but rather: encourage migrants to turn to (potentially) more dangerous methods of movement (Andrijasevic, 2010); push womyn into the hand of intermediary agents who facilitate travel; and accept increasingly precarious working conditions (Inda and Dowling, 2013). The ever-growing number of migrants who perish crossing the Mediterranean Sea serves as a

poignant reminder of the risks people will take when legal routes of migration are restricted. Yet Western governments continue to ignore the role that they play in tragedies of this nature; instead, they individualise the problem by directing blame towards the ‘trafficker’. To this extent, the complexities of migration, and the consequences of restrictive border control practices, are reduced to a problem of criminality.

The European Union’s commitment to reinforcing ‘Fortress Europe’ is evidence of the growing trend toward the criminalisation of migration (Gerard and Pickering, 2013) and the redirection of blame away from states towards the criminal i.e. the individual. The European Commission has recently, for example, announced a ten point action plan on migration which includes military action: what it calls “a systematic effort to capture and destroy vessels used by the smugglers” (European Commission, 2015: 1). The ‘collateral damage’ – that is, the deaths of all on board these vessels – is, apparently, justified. What we witness in England and Wales then is the governance of immigration through crime, which can also be similarly observed in the United States (Inda and Dowling, 2013) and in other Western states. Indeed from this perspective, the solution to the ‘problem’ of immigration – in addition to a whole host of other ‘social problems’ – is to fortify state borders. The aim of ‘the West’ is to deter potential migrants and control those already within its borders.

1.3 Focus of the thesis

This next section situates the thesis within its broader political context and timeframe, and sets out the focus of the thesis. This thesis was undertaken between October 2011 and June 2016 and as such, spanned two governments: the Conservative-Liberal Democratic Coalition Government (2010-2015) and then subsequently, the Conservative Government led by David Cameron (2015-2016). During this period, little legislative change occurred in relation to the regulation of the sex industry, with the exception of the *Modern Slavery Act* in 2015. This Act, championed by the then Home Secretary Theresa May, represents a shift away from the historical framing of trafficking as a violence against womyn issue and as causally related to the demand for prostitution, to its ‘rebranding’ as ‘modern slavery’ [see: section 6.4.1]. Prior to the Coalition administration, however, New Labour (1997-2010) had been very active in their reviews of and reforms to sex

offences, which have had lasting implications upon policy and practice within the sex industry. Driven in large part by female MPs such as Fiona Mactaggart, Harriet Harman and others, these prostitution reforms are noted by scholars as being preoccupied with criminalising kerb-crawlers (Brooks-Gordon and Gelsthorpe, 2003), and with law enforcement and the exiting of sex workers (Sanders, 2005). Notably, the 2004 consultation paper *Paying the Price* signalled a shift away from viewing sex workers as problematic to firmly positioning them within the role of victim, while their clients were vilified as ‘abusers’ (Kingston, 2014). This victimising discourse, which is informed in part by the Swedish Model of prostitution regulation (Connelly and Sanders, 2016) – a model which has gained popularity across the world in recent years – underpinned much of successive UK governments’ approach to trafficking (see: section 6.1.2). Indeed, this thesis explores how the victim label may be imposed both to bring about the care and control of womyn [see: Chapter VII in particular].

More broadly, during my undertaking of the thesis, two political philosophies – which sit in what Phipps (2014) describes as an ‘uneasy alliance’ – appeared to underpin both the UK government approach and wider societal attitudes: neoliberalism and neoconservatism. With this in mind, this research sits within a broader political context that prioritises minimal state interference and a mixed economy of service provision (neoliberalism), alongside a neoconservative concern for morality and sovereignty. As this thesis will go on to show, these seemingly paradoxical philosophies find some common ground in New Rights politics and its preference for ‘steering’ social policy, whilst allowing networks of public, private and voluntary sectors actors to carry out the ‘rowing’ (Crawford, 2006; Peters, 2012; Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). That is to say, both the Coalition and Conservative governments have ensured that power remains centralised, despite relinquishing some of the responsibility for governing sex trafficking to a range of non-state actors. A discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of neoliberalism and neoconservatism is first introduced in section 3.3.1, yet their effect upon anti-trafficking politics, policy and practice is developed throughout this remainder of the thesis.

Central to this thesis then is the concept of ‘governance’, which despite its definitional difficulties has become increasingly popular in theorising within the social science. While the existing literature on governance is reviewed in detail in

Chapter III [see: section 3.3], it is important to briefly introduce the concept here and, given its nebulous nature (Levi-Faur, 2012), outline how it has been defined and employed within this thesis. The concept of governance is widely utilised to point to the changing nature of state power in recent decades (Rhodes, 1997), which has shifted from involving largely unicentric to multilateral action. That is to say, a wider network of state and non-state actors have been 'responsibilised' (Garland, 2000) in the governing of social problems. With this has followed an increasing number of partnerships between central government, local government, and public, private and voluntary sector agencies. The concept of governance is therefore utilised in this thesis, inspired by Foucauldian notions of government, to focus on the practices performed by a range of anti-trafficking actors in the control of sex trafficking. While some scholars suggest that this shift from government to governance constitutes a loss of parliamentary sovereignty and power (Stoker, 1998), many argue that that central government has merely been reshaped in order to foster greater, and more effective, social control (Evans et al., 2005; Saward, 1997). With this in mind, governance is employed here to focus attention on the manner in which anti-trafficking policy and practice is utilised as a mechanism through which the state can extend its control of border and bodies, using the vector of anti-trafficking actors.

Specifically, this thesis is concerned with the role that NGOs and the police play in the governance of sex trafficking in England and Wales, a social problem which is enveloped in and conditioned by ideological struggles and divergent political agendas. It seeks to develop an understanding of how NGOs and the police respond to sex trafficking by examining how their interrelationships are structured by, and maintained through, the services that they deliver. It explores how anti-trafficking actors form around shared understandings of trafficking, and tussle to influence the development and implementation of anti-trafficking policy and practice according to their own interests and politics. It also considers how anti-trafficking actors construct trafficking victimhood, which is not an objective experience but rather, conferred upon some womyn and withheld from others as part of the political manoeuvring of a range of state and non-state actors. With an interest in anti-trafficking politics, policy and practice, my focus centres on how NGOs and the police operate as part of a larger network of actors within the anti-trafficking 'policy domain'. Unlike some other scholars, I do not make a distinction

between ‘policy’ and ‘practice’ domains (Trevillion, 2010), since I consider the two to be inherently intertwined. Indeed, as the boundary between the state and civil society becomes increasingly blurred (Skinns, 2003), our focus must turn to the role played by actors that extend beyond the core executive in the development and implementation of policy (Hadjimatheou and Lynch, 2016). Underpinning this thesis, therefore, is the idea that the problem of trafficking is socially constructed by a diverse network of actors and taken up to pursue broader political and moral agendas. Specifically, it is guided by the following research questions:

How does the network of non-governmental organisations and the police govern sex trafficking in England and Wales? Why do they govern sex trafficking in the manner that they do?

In order to limit its scope, this thesis focuses on the governance of one type of human trafficking – that is, trafficking for sexual exploitation.⁶ In selecting sex trafficking as the focus of this thesis, I do not wish to privilege it in terms of its harm over other types of trafficking, nor do I wish to contribute to the at times sensationalist focus on sex crimes. Rather, of all the different types of trafficking, it is sex trafficking that has produced the most contentious debate both in England and Wales, and globally. Given my interest in examining the politicised nature of trafficking, sex trafficking intuitively represents an appropriate site for the analysis of anti-trafficking politics, policy and practice.

The gendered nature of this research also serves to narrow its focus. It is concerned with anti-trafficking responses that are directed at womyn who have been trafficked into England and Wales. In so doing, it does not seek to deny the experiences of men or transgender people trafficked for sexual exploitation, nor does it ignore the fact that children may also experience trafficking, or that people may be trafficked internally within the UK (Bastia, 2005; Dottridge, 2002; O’Connell Davidson, 2005, 2011). Instead, it recognises that the needs of migrant womyn as a social group are unique and as such, that the anti-trafficking practices

⁶ There are many manifestations of human trafficking but there is some consensus that they can be encapsulated under the broad categories of: sex trafficking, labour trafficking, domestic servitude and organ harvesting.

directed towards them, and affecting them, ought to be studied separately. Moreover, according to data produced by the National Crime Agency (NCA) (2016), womyn are more likely to be defined as ‘victims of trafficking’ for sexual exploitation than men, transgender people and children. Indeed, in 2015, 813 adult females claiming sex trafficking victimisation were referred into the UK National Referral Mechanism (NRM): a tool introduced by the Government to enable the identification of victims of trafficking and ensure that they receive appropriate support. Comparatively fewer male (n = 48), transgender (n = 2), internally trafficked minors (n = 95), and externally trafficked minors (n = 89) were referred into the NRM. Although this data represents little more than reporting practices,⁷ the general trend of womyn being the most likely victims of sex trafficking is well-documented (Demir and Finckenauer, 2011; Kelly and Regan, 2000).

1.4 Positionality and a feminist approach to research

This section now moves on to explore the influence my own epistemology and feminist politics have upon it. Although it does have a gendered focus, this thesis rejects the dominant trafficking narratives that frame the issue as ‘violence against womyn’ and/or consign migrant sex work to notions of slavery. It does not position (migrant) womyn involved in the sex industry as the victims of men’s criminality since I do not believe ‘victim’ is (migrant) womyn’s sole, or even their main, identity. As such, this thesis does not view trafficking only through the lens of criminality. Instead, it demonstrates the complexities of the issue, the need to understand the socio-structural factors that inform womyn’s decisions to migrate, and the role of the state in maintaining the conditions under which migrant womyn are vulnerable to exploitation in the sex industry. I am not claiming, however, that migrant womyn do not suffer exploitation at the hands of a third-party, nor do I intend to underplay the severe trauma caused by sexual exploitation. Rather, I posit that the term ‘trafficking’ is over-applied in order to serve Western political agendas and the ‘trafficker’ used as a convenient scapegoat by the state. Indeed, by shifting the blame for trafficking onto the individual the neoliberal, neoconservative and neocolonial state can divert

⁷ The limitations of the NRM are explored in Chapter VI p. 142. Reporting and recording practices effect the data presented here.

attention away from the role it plays in creating and maintaining the conditions which enable the exploitation of migrant womyn.

Written from a feminist perspective, this thesis emerges from a dissatisfaction with the intersecting structures of inequality which impact upon the lives of womyn, particularly migrant womyn. The research was undertaken during a period in which the advances made toward gender equality by feminists in the 1960s and 1970s were under attack by the 'New Right' politics of combined neoliberalism and neoconservatism (Phipps, 2014; Walby, 2011). These continued attacks function, in particular, to deny womyn's bodily autonomy and maintain socio-economic inequality (Evans, 2015). Inspired by bell hooks (2000) and others (Crenshaw, 1991; Hill Collins, 2000), my feminism seeks to uphold the notion that other aspects of identity beyond gender may compound womyn's oppression. Indeed, I hope to make clear through this thesis that anti-trafficking policy and practice, and the social control they foster, is felt more by non-Western womyn. I believe it is as important as ever to contribute to a sustained effort for gender equality for all womyn, not simply those who have experienced some positive change: the white, middle class, heterosexual, able-bodied woman. Indeed, I consider it important that my academic work challenges structural inequalities, particularly in an era of growing anti-feminist and men's-rights activists (Evans, 2015), and one defined by the simultaneous control of state borders and womyn's bodies (Berman, 2010).

Like most other feminist scholars, I reject the notion that research ought to be – or can possibly be – objective (Naffine, 1997). Instead, the design, implementation and writing up of this research has inevitably been dictated by my own decision making and as such, it is important that I acknowledge how my feminist politics have shaped this thesis. With this in mind, I break with academic tradition where appropriate, by using the first-person. I do so in order to move away from the principle of objectivity that is implied by using the third-person (Webb, 1992) and instead, to highlight the role I have played in generating the data this thesis is based upon. It is indeed in keeping with my feminist social constructionist epistemology to acknowledge the role I have played in the construction of this thesis, by demonstrating ownership through first-person. In so doing, my intention is to highlight the social element of research. I reflect more

upon this and other, largely epistemological, issues in methodological discussions in Chapter IV.

It is also important to make a brief point here about semantics since some of the terms I use are, in some respects, more than just 'words'. Instead, they are symbolic of my own feminism. First, throughout this thesis, I use the terms 'womyn' and 'womon', rather than the traditional spelling of 'women' and 'woman'. The use of this alternative spelling is a conscious political act, one that promotes the notion that womyn ought to be viewed on our own terms and not simply defined in relation to men. In the traditional spelling, 'woman' is a derivative of 'man' and thus implies that her identity is inherently reliant upon his. To this extent, I use the terms 'womyn/womon' as a way of demonstrating that I do not see womyn as a sub-category of men. The re-spelling represents a reclamation of a word that has symbolised the sexual subordination womyn have, and continue to, experience. To this extent, it is part of an expression of independence. It forms part of a broader movement which demands that womyn are no longer understood in reference to, and treated according to, male norms. I do not, however, wish to force my own politics upon the accounts of others and as such, any direct quotations take from interviews or scholarly literature include only traditional spellings.

Second, throughout this thesis I periodically place the term 'victim of trafficking' within single quotation marks. This should not be interpreted as a dismissal of the abuse, violence and exploitation that can occur within the commercial sex industry. Rather, the quotation marks serve to draw attention to the socially constructed and contested nature of the victim category, and that the 'victim' label is applied to some womyn more readily than others. There is often no objective difference between the experiences of those who are labelled through institutional mechanisms as 'victims of trafficking' and those who are not; one has simply acquired victim status. This is indicative of the feminist standpoint I hold, since I do not seek to impose a victimising discourse upon womyn involved in the sex industry. I recognise the importance of sexual and bodily autonomy as a means of destabilising patriarchal repression. It is also indicative of the social constructionist epistemology underpinning this thesis. Ultimately, this thesis is based upon the philosophy that trafficking does not hold an existential reality of its own: it does not, in effect, exist. Only acts exist, acts that have been so labelled

as 'trafficking'. To this extent, this thesis is heavily influenced by the theoretical work of Howard Becker (1963) on the labelling of deviants and in particular, the work of Nils Christie (2004: 3), who famously stated:

Crime does not exist. Only acts exist, acts often given different meanings within various social frameworks.

Indeed, I am interested in the various social frameworks through which trafficking is constructed.

Third, I used the distinction of 'Western' and 'non-Western' throughout this thesis. It is neither possible, nor considered advantageous, to offer a precise definition of what constitutes 'the Western' and 'non-Western' worlds since these are highly-nebulous terms (Acharya and Buzan, 2010; Granholm, 2013). Often, 'the West' is considered to constitute Western Europe, Central Europe and America. Yet my intention here is not to categorically demarcate the countries that make up 'the West' since I use these terms in the cultural-political rather than geographical sense. To this extent, 'the West' broadly refers to the countries that adopt a Western culture which views itself as superior to the subaltern 'Other'. One recognised limitation of this distinction is that it may be interpreted as reaffirming the superiority of the West since it defines 'the rest' in relation to 'the West.' This is not, however, my intention. Instead, I seek to demonstrate that the view that the 'non-West' is 'the West's' other is indeed hegemonic amongst Western states and one that they actively perpetuate through their neocolonial practices. By employing the 'West/non-West' distinction, I hope to demonstrate that Western states present themselves as the antithesis of the non-Western world and that it is only in relation to the 'the rest' that 'the West' can define itself (Said, 1993; Prasad and Prasad, 2002).

1.5 Chapter outline of the thesis

This thesis is divided into the following sections. Chapter II introduces the literature framing this thesis, offering an in-depth review of pertinent scholarly work. Ultimately, it seeks to contextualise the issue of sex trafficking by examining some of the dominant themes and debates, and begin to demonstrate its socially constructed nature. In so doing, I draw upon existing research which challenges some of the common (mis)understandings proliferate throughout much anti-

trafficking rhetoric. This commitment to injecting critical insight into discussions around sex trafficking underpins this thesis.

Chapter III positions sex trafficking within its policy context. It reviews pertinent international and domestic policy and guidance, as well as outlining how policy is theorised in literature on 'governance' and 'policy networks'. In particular, it introduces a dominant theme within this thesis that policy development and implementation no longer lies solely with the state but rather, it involves an ever-increasing multiplicity of state and non-state actors. In effect then, this chapter introduces the policies that inform how the police and voluntary sector respond to sex trafficking, as well as the pluralist theories that inform my empirical analysis of anti-trafficking policy and practice.

Chapter IV outlines the research methods and methodology employed, which includes a discussion of the realities of interviewing 'elites' in a politicised policy area. In keeping with feminist scholarly traditions, my own positionality within, and influence upon, the research process is a theme running through this chapter and beyond to the remainder of the thesis.

Chapters V, VI and VII are empirical in nature, and predominantly draw upon data generated from semi-structured interviews with anti-trafficking NGOs and the police. Chapter V examines the politics of anti-trafficking actors and how their constructions of trafficking shape understandings of, and response to, sex trafficking in England and Wales. It applies Haas' (1992) 'epistemic communities' framework – first introduced in Chapter III – to the anti-trafficking policy domain. It explores the different belief systems and interests that anti-trafficking actors form around, and how rival anti-trafficking 'communities' vie for power and influence over policy and practice. In so doing, it demonstrates that the radical feminist monopoly over anti-trafficking discourse, policy and practice has given way to a range of at times competing, and at other times converging, anti-trafficking 'communities.'

Chapter VI explores how NGOs and the police respond to sex trafficking, exploring how they operationalise the three strategic aims ('3Ps') of: prevention, protection and prosecution. It examines how interrelationships between anti-trafficking actors are structured and maintained through service delivery, focusing on the extent to which NGOs and the police work in partnership to govern sex trafficking. In so doing, it explores the key points of contention that function

as barriers to effective partnership working within the anti-trafficking policy domain, and how they are compounded by competition for scarce resources and inter-organisational distrust.

While Chapter V and VI are largely concerned with differences between and tensions amongst the police and the voluntary sector, Chapter VII is concerned with how anti-trafficking actors combine to form a 'rescue industry' (Agustín, 2007): an industry made up of social helpers who look to rescue womyn from exploitation in the commercial sex industry. It explores how NGOs and the police construct victimhood, why they apply it to some migrant womyn and not others, and how anti-trafficking actors may *produce* victims of trafficking through their rescue practices. In so doing, it demonstrates that the rescue industry simultaneously cares for and controls migrant womyn.

The final chapter, Chapter VII, draw together the core arguments I make throughout this thesis, and comments upon the implications of this thesis for theory and research method by outlining its key contributions. It is here that I make some final reflections on my own positionality within, and experiences of, the research.

Chapter II: The Social Construction of Sex Trafficking

Reviewing the available literature, this chapter explores how the issue of sex trafficking is socially constructed in human trafficking discourse(s), particularly those dominant within the academic and anti-trafficking communities. In order to do so, this chapter begins by historicising the contemporary trafficking debate, exploring its putative antecedents in the trans-Atlantic and ‘white’ slave trades (2.1). This is followed by an examination of the modern anti-trafficking paradigm, which is characterised by a polarised ideological fragmentation consistent with radical feminist and liberal feminist attitudes towards the commercial sex industry (2.2). The chapter then critically evaluates current statistical knowledge about the extent of sex trafficking both nationally and at a global level (2.3), before exploring how it is socially organised (2.4). This involves a brief discussion of the common routes taken by sex traffickers, the characteristics of victims and traffickers, and the structure of trafficking networks and criminal organisations. The final section of this chapter examines the extent to which the feminisation of poverty and migration, and the growth of the global sex industry – processes associated with the developments of globalisation – have impacted upon the phenomenon of sex trafficking (2.5). In so doing, this chapter contextualises sex trafficking by exploring some of the dominant themes and debates present within existing literature, and seeks to inject some critical insight into the common (mis)understandings proliferating throughout anti-trafficking discourse(s). Indeed, a developed and critical appreciation of the phenomenon of sex trafficking is a necessary prerequisite to any empirical exploration of its governance.

2.1 Trading in persons: A historical perspective

In recent years, human trafficking has transformed from a “poorly funded, NGO women’s issue” to one that has not only succeeded in penetrating public consciousness but also galvanised the international ‘high politics’ agenda (Wong, 2005: 69). Its contemporary advancement as a ‘political priority’ in Europe (Coso, 2011) has subsequently been swift, fuelling a profusion of legislative responses, and lobbyist and media attention (Munro, 2008). Yet this characterisation largely promotes an ahistorical understanding of trafficking, thus failing to acknowledge

its long history. While the processes associated with globalisation – thought to have been ‘unleashed’ at the end of the Cold War⁸ – are typically cast as the fundamental causes of trafficking (Picarelli, 2007), historical accounts elucidate that the sale of human beings is ‘as old as trade itself’ (Andreas, 1998). Indeed, both scholars and NGOs are increasingly drawing parallels between contemporary trafficking and the trans-Atlantic slave trade as they seek to reframe trafficking as a modern form of slavery (Anti-Slavery International, 2016; Bales et al., 2015; Kara, 2009).

Following the ‘discovery’ of the New World in the fifteen century (Davis, 2006), and the ensuing rush by European states to exploit its assets, the trade in human beings for the purpose of slavery rapidly became both the economic and social norm (Bravo, 2007). Expressed through their mercantilist policies, European states had a strong interest in the continuation and growth of the trans-Atlantic slave trade (Picarelli, 2007). Not only was the trade in African people a significant source of tax revenue but it was also considered to be vital to the prosperity of slave-holding colonies and slaving ports (Lee, 2011). As such, estimates suggest that between 1400 and 1888⁹ at least 9.5 million African slaves were shipped to the Americas, European colonies and elsewhere (Bravo, 2011), the majority of whom were subject to forced agricultural labour on sugar plantations and/or domestic work. Britain is considered to be one of the foremost slave-trading countries, having transported a recorded 3.1 million African slaves to the British colonies (The National Archives, 2016); although, this is often a fact conveniently forgotten in ‘post-racial’ society. Britain’s role as a leading slave-trader is, for example, downplayed in a colonised curriculum that presents a version of history in which Britain’s role in the abolition of slavery is emphasised (Keith, 2015; Joseph-Salisbury, 2015) and slave resistance and rebellion is erased (Davis, 1981; Gott, 2011).

Bales (2000) posits that it is not until *after* its abolition, however, that slavery can be strictly labelled an antecedent of human trafficking – that is, following its shift from a legally regulated industry into the ‘shadow economy.’

⁸ The Cold War is the term applied to the political conflict between the communist Soviet Union and the capitalist Western world – particularly the USA – between 1946 and 1991.

⁹ Brazil was the last country to abolish its slave trade in 1888, following its abolition in Britain and the USA in 1807 and 1808 respectively. It was not until 1834, however, that slavery itself was abolished in Britain.

From this perspective, as part of the 'shadow economy' the movement of people for purposes of labour exploitation became an illegal and clandestine enterprise, thus paralleling our contemporary understanding of trafficking in persons. Yet the analogy drawn between contemporary trafficking and the trans-Atlantic slave trade has attracted some scholarly critique, which is made reference to and developed as this thesis progresses. Julia O'Connell Davidson (2015) notes that while African slaves were stolen and transported as *objects*, the people usually described as contemporary 'victims of trafficking' are active *subjects* who have made rational decisions to migrate based upon the choices available to them. Bravo (2011: 293) suggest that the analogy has been employed superficially and in a sensationalist manner, and is thus exploited by neo-abolitionists for emotional gain. She goes as far as to denounce the analogy drawn between contemporary trafficking and the trans-Atlantic slave trade as "next to useless."

A more apposite precursor to contemporary manifestations of sex trafficking is perhaps that of the so-called 'white slave' trade (Goździak and Collett, 2005), which first emerged as a 'problem' during the nineteenth century. Ubiquitous in anti-white slavery campaigns – which are believed to have reached their acme in the UK between 1910 and 1913 – is the archetypical portrayal of the innocent white woman forced into prostitution against her will by the evil male (foreign) villain (Doezema, 2010; Lee, 2011). Concern about the 'white slave' trade represented a shift away from pre-Victorian portrayals of sex workers as 'fallen womyn' and 'sexual deviants' toward their construction as innocent victims, thus representing a period of great social change for commercial sex (Brooks-Gordon and Gelsthorpe, 2003). As such, by constructing the 'white slave' as devoid of agency, these campaigns served to appeal to the sympathies of middle-class reformers and therefore generated support for the abolition of the sex industry (Doezema, 2000). The success of abolitionist-oriented purity reformers in the early-twentieth century was notable: their efforts received extensive coverage throughout worldwide mass-mediated discourse; were instrumental in galvanising public opinion; resulted in an expansion of NGOs devoted to abolishing prostitution; and continue to have a prolific effect upon policy and practice today (Wong, 2005).

Notwithstanding the success of abolitionist-oriented campaigns, some contemporary commentators question whether the 'white slave' trade ever truly

existed to the extent that purity reformers purported (Walkowitz, 1992) and instead, suggest that it is better understood as a metaphor for the clustering of a number of anxieties regarding morality (Irwin, 1996). Most notably, 'white slavery' is frequently considered to relate to anxieties around the emergence of the 'new' trans-Atlantic migrations, with particular concern clustering around the movement of non-traditional womyn migrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. From this perspective, the narratives of innocent, virginal victims were largely utilised by abolitionist lobbyists to exacerbate anxieties about female autonomy and womyn's sexuality (Doezema, 2000). Furthermore, other commentators have argued that anti-white slave crusades functioned to demarcate racial hierarchies, by demonising 'foreign others' (Donovan, 2006), particularly those from Africa, the Orient and South America. Most pertinently, perhaps, is that sensationalised accounts of this nature remain omnipresent in *contemporary* neo-abolitionist anti-trafficking campaigns, exemplifying sex trafficking's parallels with campaigns against 'white slavery'. Indeed, concerns about 'white slavery' have left a lasting legacy in which slavery and prostitution continue to be habitually associated today (Goodey, 2008).

2.2 The modern anti-trafficking paradigm: A debate of two polarities

Historical accounts of this nature, which link contemporary trafficking with its putative precursors, point to trafficking being far from a new problem. Instead, it has occupied a wide range of national and international organisations since the emergence of clandestine cross-border movement for purposes of prostitution.¹⁰ Since the turn of the century, however, the phenomenon has gained *renewed* attention, particularly from feminist anti-trafficking campaign groups. Although most would agree that sex trafficking represents a heinous violation of human rights, the modern feminist anti-trafficking paradigm is characterised by a notable fragmentation consistent with ideological beliefs about sex work. As such, two polarities of opinion are evident, both of which are deeply divided in terms of their

¹⁰ See for example: The International Agreement for the Suppression of White Slave Traffic 1904; The International Convention for the Suppression of White Slave Traffic 1910; The International Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children 1921; and The UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others 1949.

understanding of prostitution and its relationship with sex trafficking – that is, those adopting an ‘neo-abolitionist’ or ‘radical feminist’ ideology, and those supporting a ‘sex workers rights’ or ‘liberal feminist’ perspective (Dempsey, 2010; Outshoorn, 2005). Broadly speaking, while radical feminists consider sex trafficking to be synonymous with prostitution (Lobasz, 2010), liberal feminists – though refusing to totalise the experiences of sex workers – argue that most exercise their own free will in their decisions about how they use their bodies and thus, partake in the sex industry voluntarily.

2.2.1 Radical feminism and neo-abolitionism

One of the fundamental tenets of the radical feminist ideological position is that all prostitution is a violation of womyn’s human rights, regardless of consent (Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, 2012). In her discussion of the political debates on prostitution and trafficking, Outshoorn (2005) suggests that the radical feminist perspective essentially constructs the concept of ‘forced prostitution’ as a pleonasm, by espousing the assumption that no woman would voluntarily migrate in order to find employment in the sex industry. One of the most prominent adherents of this position, Janice Raymond (1998: 2), suggests that “for most of the womyn and children in prostitution, it’s not a living; it’s barely surviving.” This view is also supported by Bindel (2006) and Hughes (2003a), whom argue that migration for the purpose of sex work should be understood as both a ‘choice out of no choice’ and a ‘euphemism’ for sex trafficking, respectively. Prostitution is therefore regarded as rape and abuse to which no woman can consent, and understood to fundamentally reduce womyn to sexual objects. Proponents of this position often conflate prostitution and sex trafficking in order to generate support for campaigns to eliminate the entire sex industry, under the premise that male demand for prostitution is the root cause of sex trafficking (Raymond, 2004). This viewpoint is not only advocated by radical feminist lobbyists, who argue that most ‘prostitutes’ originally start out as trafficked womyn and girls (Hughes, 2003a), but also through official discourse. The US Government, which is widely considered to have taken the lead in the fight against human trafficking (Kralis, 2006), explicitly states that “prostitution is inherently harmful and dehumanizing, and *fuels* trafficking in persons” (US Department of State, 2004, *emphasis added*).

The neo-abolitionist ideological position also promotes the assumption that by maintaining male domination and female subordination, and thus reinforcing patriarchy, prostitution affects *all* womyn negatively. This viewpoint is ubiquitous in the work of Kathleen Barry (1995: 24), who argues that “prostitution, with or without a woman’s consent, is the institutional, economic, and sexual model for women’s oppression.” To this extent, prostitution is understood as the foundation of all sexual exploitation against womyn, and the prostituted woman is constructed as the paradigmatic image of womyn’s economic, sexual and social subordination in society as a whole (Giobbe, 1990). Indeed, often described as “the absolute embodiment of patriarchal male privilege” (Kesler, 2002: 219), prostitution is considered to represent the *epitome* of gendered violence and is viewed as incompatible with the promotion of gender equality. Farley et al. (2015) posit, for example, that men who buy sex are more likely to perpetrate rape. From this perspective, the radical feminist perspective argues that the sex industry is a male-driven market and therefore, prostitution is not about or for womyn but rather, to fulfil the sexual desires of men.

Radical feminism is deemed by some to ignore the views of sex workers unless they confirm the “victim-oriented mainstream discourse” (Gould, 2001: 452; Scoular, 2004a). Described as a staple of neo-abolitionist-oriented anti-trafficking campaigns, the inclusion of victims’ accounts are judged by Weitzer (2007) to be geared towards: attracting public awareness and sympathy; encouraging donor funding; inviting attention from policy makers; and generating media attention. In particular, the newspaper media is considered to provide an important outlet through which a radical feminist ideology is promoted. The omnipresence of victims’ ‘horror stories’ within mass-mediated discourse reinforces the perception that it is invariably young, innocent, and (usually) white girls that are coerced into prostitution by evil organised-crime gangs. According to Berman (2003), these notions of gendered and racialised innocence are ubiquitous throughout anti-trafficking discourse as a whole, and it is by virtue of both their gender and ‘whiteness’ that womyn are considered to be victimised by traffickers. Similarly, neo-abolitionist-oriented anti-trafficking campaigns often have Evangelical Christian undertones, in which the commoditisation of sex is perceived to damage the moral fabric of society (Morgan, 2006). From this perspective, prostitution – and sexual ‘deviance’ more broadly – is considered to

symbolise the moral decay of society and to pose a threat to the sanctity of marriage, by instigating a breakdown in traditional sexual relations which are reserved for the marital relationship (Weitzer, 2007). It is on the issue of prostitution that (separatist) radical feminists and the religious-Right have found an uneasy alliance (Brooks-Gordon, 2006).

Broadly speaking, radical feminists tend to advocate for the complete eradication of the sex industry, typically promoting the implementation of neo-abolitionist prostitution policy based upon the 'Swedish Model' in which the purchase of sex is outlawed (Ekberg, 2004).¹¹ Consequently, they argue that the deregulation and decriminalisation of prostitution will create a situation in which there is less risk involved for traffickers and trafficking networks, thus making sex trafficking a more profitable enterprise. Radical feminists often believe that the numbers of victims of trafficking will rise in response to legalisation or decriminalisation, and the subsequent diminution of risk for traffickers (Jakobsson and Kotsadam, 2010). Furthermore, some neo-abolitionist anti-trafficking campaigns endeavour to reduce levels of sex trafficking by discouraging womyn's informal labour migration (Andrijasevic, 2007) and promoting the perception that avenues of migration often lead to sexual exploitation. Critics argue that this may function to justify the implementation of xenophobic immigration policy by European governments (Haynes, 2003), thus promoting attitudes of intolerance towards migrants (Gallagher, 2002) and legitimising the deportation of voluntary migrant sex workers (Doezema, 2002). Yet the radical feminist/neo-abolitionist perspective is widely believed to have subjugated both trafficking discourse, and policy and practice for almost 100 years (Doezema, 1998, Hubbard et al., 2008), with a criminalisation agenda becoming the current preferred strategy in many parts of the world: a dominant global trend (Connelly, 2016a; Sanders and Campbell, 2014). As such, the influence of radical feminism upon international and domestic policy responses is considered in the following chapter [see: sections 3.1 and 3.2].

¹¹ The Swedish Government's decision to introduce the *Prohibition of the Purchase of Sexual Services Act 1998*, signified a shift away from the criminalisation of soliciting towards the criminalisation of buying sex (Scholar, 2004).

2.2.2 Liberal feminism and workers' rights

In stark contrast to the radical feminist position on prostitution and sex trafficking is the liberal feminist or sex workers' rights ideology. The fundamental tenet of this perspective is that the sale of sex should be understood in much the same way as other mainstream business transactions and so, sex workers – instead of being constructed as sexual deviants or subordinates (Scoular, 2004b) – should be treated in much the same way as other labour market members (Sanders, 2005). From this position, sex work is not *inherently* violent. It is recognised that sex work can be violent and oppressive (Connelly, 2014; Deering et al., 2014; Kinnell, 2008) but that the majority of sex work is voluntary. The violence that is experienced by sex workers is not only considered to be a product of a “classist, sexist and racist society” (Shrage, 1994: 161) but also a ‘discourse of the disposable’ (Lowman, 2000). This discourse constructs sex workers as non-citizens and therefore, promotes cultural attitudes in which violence towards sex workers is condoned. Consequently, advocates strive for sex workers to be accorded the same basic human, legal, political and workers' rights as other members of society (O'Connell Davidson, 2002). For these advocates, it is not the sex industry *per se* that is problematic but rather, the lack of adequate health and safety protection, and the omnipresence of poor working conditions that facilitate exploitation (Sharma, 2003).

A further axiom of liberal feminist literature is that womyn's agency is autonomous and as such, *all* womyn should have the right to choose what they wish to do with their own bodies (Gould, 2001). Therefore, it is postulated that womyn should have the right to sexual self-determination and to commoditise sex if they so wish (Liu, 2011). The aforementioned ‘Swedish Model’ is the subject of fervent criticism from liberal feminist proponents and is deemed to leave little discursive space for individual agency (Scoular, 2004). Instead, they argue that sex work represents a credible, flexible and viable labour option for many migrant womyn seeking to escape (absolute or relative) poverty (Jenness, 1990; Liu, 2011) and it is therefore unsurprising that the majority of European sex workers are migrants (Agustín, 2005). Thus from this perspective, forced sex labour and voluntary irregular migration are too often conflated (Cusick et al., 2009; Kempadoo, 2005; Musto, 2009), which fails to recognise that some womyn may choose to migrate to work within thriving sex industries (Outshoorn, 2005) and

view themselves neither as degraded nor oppressed (Weitzer, 2007). Indeed, declining prospects in formal labour sectors in recent years dictate that womyn are increasingly turning to informal industries, including the sex industry, as an alternative source of income (Ward and Aral, 2006).

Although Agustín's (2006) observation still holds true that the body of empirical work on womyn's methods of migration in Europe is an inchoate one, research does *generally* confirm that most migrant sex workers are aware that employment in their destination country will be of a sexual nature. This view is espoused by COYOTE (Call off Your Old Tired Ethics), a key organisation within the liberal feminist camp, which suggests that "most womyn who work as prostitutes have made a conscious decision to do so" (cited in Jenness, 1990: 406). More recently, Nick Mai's (2011) ESRC-funded project exploring the experiences of migrant workers in the UK sex industry reveals that while most did not work in the sex industry before arriving in the UK, the majority were satisfied about their work within the UK sex trade. Many migrant sex workers believe that their living conditions, in addition to those of their family, improve as a direct consequence of their employment in the sex industry. Andrijasevic (2003) does point out, however, that migrant sex workers are not *always* informed about the nature of their living and working arrangements in destination countries and thus, are habitually subject to unregulated working conditions. Liberal feminists contend that the criminalisation of the commercial sex industry exacerbates and conceals the exploitation of migrant sex workers, and they therefore instead advocate the adoption of a framework in which sex workers are constructed as legitimate workers, rather than as "moral reprobates" (Doezema, 2002: 25). This ideological position can therefore be understood as advocating for the increased 'professionalisation of prostitution' (Sanders, 2005) and decriminalisation as the preferable form of regulation (Pitcher and Wijers, 2014; Sanders and Campbell, 2014).

As the findings presented in this thesis elucidate, it is not always helpful however to view the 'prostitution debate' as straightforwardly dichotomous, given that both the abolitionist and workers' rights polarities may be overly simplistic in reality [see: section 7.4, in particular]. Agustín (2005), for example, suggests that neither ideology accurately describes the experiences articulated by migrant womyn in her seminal research. This view is supported by Maher (2000),

who argues that while the radical feminist ideology virtually denies womyn's agency by constructing them as passive victims devoid of choice, the liberal feminist perspective over-endows womyn's autonomy. As such, the distinction between forced and voluntary sex work may be less straightforward than the two divergent perspectives espouse and one should instead question the degree to which agency can be simply dichotomised. In practice, the forced/voluntary dichotomy is often blurred, given that migrant womyn may voluntarily seek the services of smugglers but *subsequently* find themselves unexpectedly exposed to exploitation (Aronowitz, 2001). To this extent, both perspectives are considered to be "guilty of over-simplification" (Maher, 2000: 1), ignoring the influence of socio-structural context. Furthermore, O'Connell Davidson (2002) astutely points out that this dichotomy fails to incorporate into the debate, those that support the construction of sex workers as legitimate workers but concurrently, do not wish to celebrate the existence of an industry for commoditised sex.

It would also be wrong to assume that all feminist concern with the sex industry falls within the streams of radical or liberal feminism. Indeed, Marxist feminists are concerned with prostitution as a form of labour and are thus concerned with the way in which those working in the sex industry are oppressed by, and serve to reinforce, the exploitative capitalist structure (Chateauvert, 2014). Socialist feminists, while opposed to the increasing commodification of every area of human experience, advocate for the greater self-organisation of sex workers, which is considered to be easier to fulfil under a model of decriminalisation (Brenner, 2015). What is clear is that although there are numerous overlapping strands of feminist thought, a polarised debate has discouraged scholars from straying far from the two feminist factions of radical and liberal feminism (Chapkis, 1997). It is for this reason that this thesis focuses in large part on these two strands.

2.3 The extent of sex trafficking: Measuring the immeasurable?

Irrespective of one's positioning within the modern feminist anti-trafficking paradigm, it is considered incontrovertible that sex trafficking represents a violation of human rights. Yet, there remains little agreement of its scale and consequently, it has become almost axiomatic for commentators to lament the statistical void surrounding sex trafficking (Cusick et al., 2009; Easton and

Matthews, 2015). The *EU Strategy Towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016* actions the European Commission and member states to develop an EU-wide system for the collection of reliable, comparable data on human trafficking (Eurostat, 2014). Yet, differences in counting rules, reporting practices, monitoring systems and criminal codes remain a barrier to achieving this aim. According to data collected through the UK Government's National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – a central point for the identification, support and systematic counting of victims of trafficking – 3266 potential victims of trafficking were reported into the system in 2015 (NCA, 2016). This statistic reveals little in reality, however, since many victims of trafficking are not referred into the NRM, either because they do not come to the attention of the authorities and agencies who can make a referral or because they do not wish to be processed in this manner (Centre for Social Justice, 2013). Consistent with most forms of (organised) crime, the under-detected, under-reported and under-prosecuted nature of sex trafficking dictates that official crime statistics represent a significant underestimate of the problem (Aronowitz, 2009; Goodey, 2008). Compounding the problem of measurement is the fact that the cross-border nature of trafficking determines that different states around the globe must effectively share information, in order to accurately measure its prevalence. This, Gallagher (2010) notes, represents a challenge in practice. It seems that any attempt to assess the prevalence of trafficking faces near-insuperable difficulties, leading Zhang and Pineda (2008) to suggest that it essentially remains guess work.

This has not, however, suppressed the myriad attempts to quantify the problem, many of which appear to be based upon dubious methodologies. In an analysis of 42 books on sex trafficking published between 2005 and 2012, for example, Fedina (2015) found that 78% had cited one of three flawed sources of data on the prevalence of trafficking, without any acknowledgement of their limitations. Whilst two-thirds of these texts were published by academic presses, their evidence base was not discernibly different to that of the populist texts. Assertions that the prevalence of sex trafficking has soared to epic proportions are omnipresent in a substantial proportion of academic literature, with guesstimates indicating that the annual number of victims is between 2 million (Riegler, 2007) and 27 million (Herzfeld, 2002). Such substantial incongruities in

the documentation of the extent of the problem demonstrate the unreliable and unverifiable nature of much of this research and as such, one must question how much can be extrapolated from these findings. As Salt (2000) observes, statistics documenting the prevalence of irregular migration are often used as 'surrogate' statistics for trafficking and therefore, are best understood as an over-estimation of the problem. Nonetheless, exaggerated and sensationalised claims continue to proliferate throughout anti-trafficking rhetoric (Brooks-Gordon, 2010), and are utilised to further 'moral crusades' to criminalise the sex trade (Weitzer, 2007).

2.4 The social organisation of sex trafficking

Having historicised the contemporary trafficking debate by exploring its purported precursors, and offered some critical insight into the fragmented ideologies and sensationalised statistics proliferating throughout anti-trafficking discourses, this chapter will now examine how sex trafficking is socially organised. Here the chapter shifts from focusing on the key debates present in academic literature on trafficking and more towards the practicalities of sex trafficking. In order to do so, it draws upon literature which examines the common routes taken by sex traffickers, the common characteristics of victims and offenders, and the structure of trafficking organisations. By examining existing research on these practical elements of trafficking, I offer a foundation upon which to build an empirical exploration of the governance of sex trafficking in England and Wales. A key theme emerging from these bodies of literature is that as a 'live' issue, the social organisation of sex trafficking is fluid, thus changing in response to: the porosity of borders, the global economy, and the development of anti-trafficking policy and practice.

2.4.1 Routes of sex traffic

Routes of sex trafficking are far from stable but they are far-reaching. Although it was not until the late-1980s and the collapse of the USSR that 'the problem' of trafficking is thought to have spread beyond Asia (Stoecker and Shelley, 2002), it is now recognised that, to a greater or lesser extent, human trafficking is an issue that affects every country around the globe (Wallinger, 2010). One Poppy Project

report (2008),¹² for example, reveals that the 699 victims referred to its outreach services between March 2003 and July 2007, originated from 66 different source countries. Broadly speaking, trafficking victims are understood to enter the UK from source countries which are often characterised by a deteriorating or poor economy; incomplete legislation or inconsistent law enforcement; and/or a fragmented social or political structure (Väyrynen, 2003). According to data collected by the UK Government, the most common countries of origin for those referred into the NRM as potential victims of sex trafficking in 2015 were: Albania, Nigeria, Vietnam, and Romania (NCA, 2015). Yet as Kelly (2002) warns, this data ought to be regarded with caution as it may merely represent detection practices. The habitual conflation of trafficking and migrant sex work (Agustín, 2006; Chapkis, 2003; Jordan, 2002) also casts doubt upon the veracity of data of this nature.

It is exceptionally difficult, however, to determine with any degree of certainty the exact routes taken by traffickers, given that trafficking routes are fluid and thus vary depending upon the current effectiveness of mechanisms of law enforcement and the porosity of borders (Kelly, 2002). Thus, it is unsurprising that knowledge about routes of sex traffic is limited. Evidence indicates that the identification of trafficking routes is becoming increasingly problematic as traffickers develop new mechanisms through which to avoid detection from law enforcement agencies. Having said that, it is likely that the routes from source countries to destination countries utilised by traffickers correspond with routes of illegal migration, given that traffickers are understood to “fish in the stream of migration” (Coomaraswamy, 2000 cited in Sharma, 2007: 88). Moreover, there is also evidence to suggest that the trafficking of human beings may follow much the same routes as *legal* commerce, which poses for governments a notable problem in terms of regulation. While states strive to implement policies which facilitate the flow of legal trade and promote economic liberalisation, the very same policies may also unintentionally aid traffickers (Andreas, 1998). It should be noted, however, that geographies of sex trafficking are fluid and therefore, routes from source countries to destination countries are constantly changing (Salt and Stein,

¹² The Poppy Project was one of the main anti-trafficking NGOs in the UK until it went into administration in late-2015. Before its demise, it was vociferous in its condemnation of the commercial sex industry: It recently emerged that ‘Poppy’ is an abbreviation of: ‘Pissing Off Pimps and Punters, Yay!’ (Bindel, 2015a).

1997). This fluidity is reflective of the 'live' nature of sex trafficking, which has also made it difficult to carry out research with victims and offenders.

2.4.2 *Victims and their traffickers*

The characteristics of trafficking victims have received very little empirical attention to date and thus, there is a notable paucity of reliable information (Lee, 2011). Of the little research that does exist, much of the emphasis has tended to be on the gender of trafficking victims, suggesting that a disproportionate number are womyn and girls. This is often attributed to the fact that they carry the greatest burden of poverty (Brooks-Gordon, 2006; Jordan, 2002). As such, other characteristics such as age, marital status, socio-economic position and histories of victimisation are largely overlooked. Zimmerman et al.'s (2006) study of the health of victims of trafficking in Europe is one of a few that have attempted to analyse victims' experiences of trafficking into the UK. It suggests that the majority of victims (47% of the 207 womyn interviewed) were between the ages of 21 and 25. This finding is somewhat unsurprising, given that young womyn are frequently considered to be more vulnerable to all forms of gendered violence (Sarkar, 2011) and the demand for young womyn in the sex industry is far greater than it is for older womyn (Kemadoo, 1999).

It is also relatively unsurprising that the majority of victims in Zimmerman et al.'s (2006) sample (89%) reported being 'single' or 'divorced' prior to being trafficked. This may be explained by the fact that economic stress is more often experienced by financially independent womyn and therefore, they are more likely to voluntarily seek the services of a 'smuggler' in order to find work abroad.¹³ This subsequently leaves them vulnerable to exploitation at the hands of traffickers (Zimmerman et al., 2003). Furthermore, the desire to acquire the services of 'smugglers' to aid migration for purposes of labour, may be exacerbated in cases in which victims consider themselves to be of a low socio-economic status. Indeed, victims of trafficking often originate from post-conflict countries in which socio-economic conditions are difficult (Salt, 2000), and in

¹³ Smuggling can be crudely distinguished from trafficking on the basis that the former involves *voluntary* migration and the latter involves *forced* migration. This is, however, a rather simplistic conceptualisation of the forced/voluntary dichotomy, as the boundaries between the two concepts are blurred and fluid.

which experiences of physical and sexual violence may act as ‘push’ factors (Schierup et al., 2006). Other factors also intersect to encourage womyn to pursue risky migratory practices, such as: poverty, unemployment, debt, ethnic cleansing, family breakdown, interpersonal violence, social unrest, and war (Zimmerman et al, 2003). It should be noted, however, that while the existence of such ‘push’ factors are unarguable, notions of agency and choice are perhaps too often neglected in discussion of trafficking, and migration more broadly (Agustín, 2003). With this in mind, it should be recognised that womyn may choose to migrate to work in the sex industry as an alternative source of income; this is an integral tenet of the aforementioned liberal feminist perspective.

Although anti-trafficking discourses have frequently converged around retelling the ‘horror stories’ of victims of trafficking and their subsequent emancipation, information on the characteristics of traffickers is at best sketchy (Salt, 2000). The little evidence that does exist – most of which derives from case study research – suggests that traffickers intersect all ethnicities, socio-economic classes and ages (The Standing Against Global Exploitation Project, 2011). Although Bruinsma and Meershoek (1999) suggest that traffickers are almost invariably male, more recent work elucidates that some traffickers are older womyn, who themselves were forced into prostitution and have ‘climbed the employment ladder’ within a trafficking organisation (Iacono, 2014; Kienast et al., 2015; Sankar, 2005). Despite the prevalence of notions of abduction in the media (Connelly, 2011), notably few traffickers ‘take’ their victims and rather, the majority are in fact approached by voluntary migrants seeking services which provide illegal entry and employment aboard (Doezema, 1998). In this regard, the trafficker may operate under the guise of a ‘smuggler’ and is commonly someone that the victim trusts, either as an: acquaintance, friend, partner or family member (Shelley, 2010). Frequent *modus operandi* used in the acquisition of trafficking victims are to deceive through fictitious marriage proposals and false job offers (Kara, 2009), and to lie about the conditions in which womyn will undertake sex work (Kelly, 2002). Fictitious marriage proposals are most effective in countries in which social acceptance and basic human rights are only achievable to womyn through marriage (Zimmerman et al., 2003).

2.4.3 Trafficking as (dis)organised crime

Irrespective of the conceptual contestability of organised crime, specifically the degree to which it is in the formal sense 'organised' (Wright, 2006), sex trafficking continues to be described as a 'branch' (Stoecker, 2000) or 'element' (Väyrynen, 2003) of organised crime and the illicit global economy. This notion is undoubtedly reinforced in policy by its framing within the *UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime 2000* (O'Connell Davidson, 2006). While it is recognised that crime has never been completely constrained by geographical boundary (Bowling, 2009), sex trafficking is often considered to represent the latest organised criminal enterprise to have occurred in response to changing world markets. From this perspective, the opening-up of state borders to trade has transformed the nature of crime, allowing organised crime groups to adopt a more international nature, unconfined by state borders (Deflam, 2002). There is a plethora of evidence to suggest that sex trafficking symbolises a relatively lower risk/higher reward alternative to drug trafficking (Anti-Slavery International, 2005; Danailova-Trainor and Bleser, 2006; Kelly and Regan, 2000), following international crackdowns on the trade in drugs during the late-1980s and early-1990s (Staley, 1992): the so-called 'War on Drugs.'

A prominent theme in literature on sex trafficking is that law enforcement represents little threat to trafficking organisations (Salt, 2000), with international law enforcement co-operations often remaining one step behind traffickers (Brady, 2007). While law enforcement agencies may be able to eliminate individual traffickers or trafficking organisations, their efforts rarely lead to a significant reduction in sex trafficking. This notion is encapsulated by Andreas (1998: 81), who observes that "every time one head is cut off a replacement head grows back." Indeed, evidence indicates that organised criminal groups can continually restructure their enterprises in response to law enforcement, in addition to being adept at driving the trade further underground and altering their routes of entry into destination countries (Friman and Reich, 2007). Although the 'transnationalisation' of clandestine markets is considered to have forced police agencies to operate increasingly transnationally, some critics argue that differences in the operationalisation of police forces in the EU dictate that a coordinated response to trafficking is problematic (Sheptycki, 1998). In response to difficulties in transnational policing, the NCA was tasked with building

intelligence-gathering capabilities in relation to the international organised criminal gangs involved in human trafficking (Home Office, 2012).¹⁴ Yet there has been no academic evaluation to date of the extent to which the NCA has achieved its aims.

In light of the difficulties law enforcement agencies experience in identifying trafficking organisations, it is relatively unsurprising that empirical research into their organisational structure is somewhat embryonic. There is however some international evidence to suggest that the perpetrators of trafficking are often highly-organised, professionally structured, and well-disciplined (Salt, 2000; Juhász, 1999). Okólski's (1999) exploration of the organisation of migrant trafficking in Poland indicates that trafficking organisations tend to be structured in a hierarchical fashion. Therefore, this goes some way towards substantiating the link between sex trafficking and organised crime. Research also suggest that for many organised trafficking groups, sex trafficking is but one aspect of their criminal enterprise and to this extent, they are understood to have a 'multi-crime' nature (Salt, 2000). Ruggiero (1997) suggests, for example, that there is a strong relationship between organised crime and a plethora of illegal activities employed within the market economy. This has led commentators such as Glonti (2004: 70) to describe trafficking as "a global business bringing huge profits to organised criminal syndicates."

Other scholars question the degree to which organised criminals are operational in the business of trafficking (Hobbs, 1998; Lee, 2007; Lehti and Aromaa, 2004; Sheptycki, 2003). Proponents of the 'disorganised crime thesis' purport that much of what is commonly regarded as organised crime is in fact distinctly disorganised (Wright, 2006): it is based upon fragmented relationships, short-term contracts and a culture of mistrust (Hobbs, 1998). As such, the perpetrators of trafficking are often considered to operate in a somewhat amateur capacity, providing single services such as brothel ownership, document forgery and/or transport (UNICEF, 2009). These services may not be illegal in nature *per se* since employees working for hotels and taxi firms may unknowingly facilitate and profit from sex trafficking (Viuhko, 2010). Furthermore, there is a plethora of evidence which documents the relationship between perpetrator and victim as

¹⁴ The National Crime Agency was introduced by the UK Government in 2013 to replace the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA).

one based upon familial or personal connections. From this perspective, some voluntary migrant womyn are understood to approach acquaintances, friends, partners and family members who pose as 'smugglers', seeking services which facilitate illegal cross-border movement, and thus unwittingly heighten their own vulnerability to exploitation (Doezema, 1998; Sanghera, 2005).

Perhaps one of the most pertinent themes to emerge from the literature is that there is in fact often substantial 'contingency' within the structure of organised criminal groups. To this extent, organised crime syndicates are likely to adopt varying models of organisation, which are flexible to changes in their social environment (Wright, 2006). Whilst it is outdated, Bruinsma and Meershoek's (1999) review of police files in The Netherlands represents one of few systematic attempts to examine the structure of sex trafficking organisations. For them, trafficking is likely to *range* from loosely organised and informal 'relationships', to highly organised and professionalised 'networks'. In this regard, the organisation of trafficking may be best viewed along a continuum of organisation, characterised by extreme variation in the level of structure. One might question why therefore that irrespective of the evidence, the trafficking 'problem' continues to be framed almost exclusively as a highly-organised criminal endeavour throughout anti-trafficking and policy rhetoric. Harasymiw (2003) argues that the nebulous nature of the concept of 'organised crime' functions to allow interest groups and state governments to define it in a way that best serves their interests. Therefore, framed as an organised crime problem, blame can be shifted onto 'alien others' and away from states that, through their neoliberal desire for a more transnational business market may facilitate human trafficking (Levi, 1998).

There are also concerns expressed in the literature that the framing of trafficking as an organised crime problem may be used to rationalise the resources directed at specialist police units which may operate to erode the civil liberties of (migrant) sex workers. Indeed, evidence indicates that the establishment of the Metropolitan Police Human Exploitation and Organised Crime Command (SCD9) was legitimised on the basis of a 'rumoured link' between sex trafficking and the London 2012 Olympic Games (Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women, 2011). Furthermore, the framing of trafficking as organised crime may disguise as anti-trafficking measures the mechanisms that criminalise

the self-willed migration of people and their voluntary participation in the commercial sex industry (O'Connell Davidson, 2006). From this position, the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (2011) suggest that the Metropolitan Police can conceal the arrest, harassment and deportation of voluntary migrant sex workers behind a noble and eminent façade.¹⁵ Rather than helping migrant sex workers, enforcement-led responses are often considered to displace the womyn that states deem 'undesirable' (Agustín, 2003), and promote xenophobic attitudes of abhorrence toward migrants (Gallagher, 2002).

2.5 Globalising processes: Poverty, migration and the sex industry

It is clear from the literature reviewed thus far that trafficking is a global crime and as such, this section reviews the processes of globalisation deemed to have the greatest impact upon contemporary sex trafficking, as well as why their influence is so great. Specifically, this involves an exploration of the feminisation of poverty and migration, and the growth of the sex industry. While some commentators emphasise trafficking's purported links with the trans-Atlantic and 'white' slave trades, it is globalisation that is more often described as the backdrop against which trafficking has developed (Nagel, 2008; Oxman-Martinez et al., 2001; Williams, 1999). This has led Lee (2011) to suggest that on one level, trafficking can be understood as a 'new' phenomenon. From this perspective, processes of globalisation have allowed relationships to develop between distinct localities in such a way that "local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away" (Giddens, 1990: 64). As well as enabling the spread of global capitalism through the international distribution of trade (Khor, 2001), the implementation of policies of economic liberalisation have resulted in increasingly porous state borders (Passos, 2001). Early theorising of globalisation focused on how porous borders facilitate 'deterritorialisation': the process by which state borders are eroded and may eventually become obsolete. More recently, however, a second generation of research has emerged in which processes of globalisation and bordering are understood to occur concurrently:

¹⁵ GAATW – an alliance of 106 non-governmental organisations across Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin American Countries and North America – is a key organisation within the sex workers' rights movement.

what Cunningham (2004) refers to as a 'gated globalism'. From this perspective, migration is highly-stratified in nature, with the Western migrant celebrated, whilst the non-Western 'Other' is feared (Andersson, 2014; Bauman, 1998; Cunningham, 2004).

2.5.1 The feminisation of poverty and migration

Ubiquitous in literature on trafficking is the notion that the 'feminisation of poverty', and the simultaneous 'feminisation of migration', are the main conducive contexts of sex trafficking. Given that an estimated 70% of the world's 1.3 billion absolute poor are womyn and their children (Kornblum, 2012) – which is often attributed to their limited opportunities relative to men in relation to education and employment – it is perhaps unsurprising that socio-economically deprived womyn are increasingly migrating to more affluent countries. The developments of globalisation and the ensuing 'race to the bottom' have promoted the employment of migrant womyn in all regions across the globe (Oishi, 2005).¹⁶ As such, the increased demand for womyn as autonomous workers means that labour migration offers womyn access to greater employment prospects and the possibility of achieving a (perceived) better quality of life (Rijken, 2003). Although victims of trafficking are frequently portrayed in anti-trafficking discourse(s) as passive recipients, there is a plethora of academic literature to suggest that more often than not, womyn actually make conscious decisions to migrate (Doezema, 2002; Pickup, 1998; Sharma, 2003). As Zimmerman et al. (2003) observe, however, dreams of securing better living conditions may subsequently fall foul to exploitation. Nonetheless, it is this growth in population movement, following the fall of the Soviet Union and in the wake of recent war and conflict¹⁷ (Goodey, 2008), that is often considered to have renewed the global interest in the issue of sex trafficking.

Although migratory flows are oftentimes clandestine in nature and thus many migrants go undocumented (Agustín, 2007), official estimates from February 2016 indicate that in the previous year there was a net influx of

¹⁶ Oishi (2005) defines 'race to the bottom' as the process whereby competition emerges between business corporations to provide the cheapest labour.

¹⁷ To name but a few: Afghanistan civil war 1989-2001; Bosnian civil war 1992-1995; Central African Republic coup and civil war 1980s-1990s; Liberia civil war 1999-2003; Russia Chechen uprising 1994-1996; Eritrean-Ethiopian War 1998-2000; 'The War on Terror' (2001-present); Syrian civil war (2011-present).

approximately 323,000 long-term migrants into the UK (Office for National Statistics, 2016). The growing gap between affluent and poor countries dictates that people are increasingly migrating in order to access employment opportunities. Yet scholars have drawn attention to how socio-economically deprived womyn are excluded from *formal* labour markets and instead, relegated to *informal* markets which have few legal mechanisms of entry. As such, without legitimate migrant status and devoid of state protection, womyn are 'pushed' into accepting unregulated working conditions (Anderson and O'Connell Davidson, 2003), and exposed to exploitative situations (Wijers, 1998). There are, however, many different reasons why womyn 'choose' to migrate beyond employment, including: divorce and separation, family formation or reunification, desire to travel, pre-marital pregnancy, debt, ethnic cleansing, interpersonal violence, social unrest, and war. Indeed, womyn are far from an homogenous group; their experiences are mediated by race, nationality, class, sexuality, age, religion and disability (Crenshaw, 1991). Yet despite their heterogeneity, the label 'migrant' is almost invariably used to describe the movement of subaltern womyn (Agustín, 2003): that is, womyn who are socio-economically, politically, and geographically marginal from the dominant (neocolonial) culture. Seldom is the 'migrant' label applied to people from the Western world.

While the desire to migrate is continuously increasing, somewhat paradoxically there are progressively fewer legal opportunities to do so (Van Impe, 2000). Wijers (1998) contends that immigration policy in affluent countries is becoming ever more restrictive, 'forbidding' migration from Third World countries. These policies, according to Ibrahim (2005: 163), represent "racism in its most modern form." In the aftermath of the '9/11' and '7/7' attacks, the UK is considered to have developed policies in which migration is increasingly 'securitised' (Gerard and Pickering, 2013). From this perspective, immigration is constructed not only as an inherent threat to the integrity of the nation but also as a factor that facilitates terrorism (Ting, 2007). Yet, Väyrynen (2003) posits that the intensification of border controls may actually serve to 'force' potential migrants to seek out illicit mechanisms of entry through the help of professional 'smugglers', thus enhancing their risk of trafficking/exploitation.

There is also a concern expressed in scholarly literature that the issue of trafficking is too often used by the UK government to harness support for other

political objectives, particularly the ‘sedenterization’ of womyn (Haynes, 2003). According to Rutvica Andrijasevic (2007), the ‘atrocities tales’ of trafficked womyn that feature heavily in anti-trafficking campaigns are oft-utilised by governments to encourage womyn to embrace the ‘safe’ option and remain in the home (Andrijasevic, 2007). This may serve to reinforce biased gender assumptions that womyn need the protection of men and should remain in the private sphere for their own safety (Sanghera, 2005), thus controverting credible evidence that the prevalence of victimisation is in fact greater in the private sphere than the public sphere (Dobash and Dobash, 1980; Hatty, 2000; Walby and Allen, 2004). For Haynes (2003) then, the UK Governments’ focus upon restricting immigration as a mechanism to reduce trafficking is merely a guise under which it can legitimise xenophobic immigration policy and reinforce biased gender assumptions about womyn’s safety. Hussein (2015) argues that instead, a radical solution is required in order to address the problem of trafficking, one in which the economies of less-economically-developed countries are facilitated to prosper. From this perspective, it is only by moving towards global socio-economic equality that the need is removed for migrant womyn to seek out risky practice to improve their social, economic and political opportunities.

2.5.2 The globalised sex industry

Globalisation has also facilitated both a growth in the size and visibility of the global sex industry (Hammond and Attwood, 2015; Scoular and Sanders, 2010). Facilitated by neoliberal state policies which promote changing consumption patterns and global mobility (Brents and Sanders, 2010), the sex industry has undergone notable changes since the mid-1970s (Poulin, 2003), including: “industrialisation”, “normalisation” and “widespread global diffusion” (Barry, 1995: 122). Sexual liberalisation may, in part, have led to a growing demand for commercial sex, evidenced amongst other things by: the extensive availability of internet pornography (Attwood, 2007); the mushrooming of lap-dancing clubs (Herzog-Jewell, 2008); and the increased utilisation of sexual imagery in advertising (Ward and Aral, 2006). Perhaps one of the best examples of the growing commoditisation of sex can be found in ‘sex tourism’, which can be understood both as being instigated by, and an instigator of, the development of new forms of labour and consumption in the global market place (Kempadoo,

1999; Sanchez Taylor, 2001; Sanchez-Taylor and O'Connell Davidson, 2010). For those adopting an anti-prostitution position, the growing global demand for commoditised sex is likely to lead to an increase in sex trafficking (Jeffreys, 2009; Raymond, 2004).

Other scholars have drawn attention to the reductive nature of 'demand' arguments (Anderson and Andrijasevic, 2008), instead noting the complex interplay between supply and demand fostered by globalising processes (Scouler and Sanders, 2010), alongside other broader changes in social and economic infrastructures. From this perspective, while the emergence of new technologies dictate that the consumption of sex can be accessed worldwide with relative ease and affordability (Soothill and Sanders, 2005), increased opportunities for migration expands the pool of potential itinerant sex workers (Wonders and Michalowski, 2001). Truong (1996) suggests that the commercial sex industry is in fact increasingly embracing the appearance of an ordinary employment sector and becoming ever more attractive to many women, offering them viable and flexible labour (Ward and Aral, 2006). Yet as Pitcher (2015) observes, broader changes in the formal economy, such as the growth in casual employment relations and reduced labour market options, shape the entry of migrant women into the commercial sex industry. Precarious labour market conditions may facilitate the exploitation of migrant sex workers and provide incentives for sex traffickers to undercut the (semi-)regulated market (Lee, 2011). It is therefore clear that the worldwide escalation of commercial sex, both in its legal and illegal forms, has resulted in sex work shifting from a marginal industry to a central component in the development of international, late-capitalist globalisation (Brents and Sanders, 2010; Poulin, 2003).

2.6 Closing remarks

By historicising the contemporary trafficking debate within its putative antecedents in the trans-Atlantic and 'white' slave trades, this chapter has demonstrated that concern about sex trafficking is not new. Its contemporary advancement as a global 'political priority' in recent years does, however, evidence a *renewed* interest in the issue; this interest is characterised by an ideological fragmentation consistent with broader approaches to sex work. Through an exploration of the social organisation of sex trafficking, this chapter

has also problematised the bifurcation of voluntary migrant sex work and forced sex labour, as well as the rhetorical preference for viewing trafficking through the lens of organised crime. Moreover, this chapter has demonstrated that the implementation of policies which promote the global flow of legal trade and economic liberalisation also – albeit unintentionally – facilitate sex trafficking. From this perspective, existing research elucidates that the feminisation of poverty and migration, and the growth in the sex industry, may not only provide environments in which sex trafficking may flourish but also sex trafficking may become a guise under which governments can justify xenophobic immigration policies and the criminalisation of sex work. To this end, I have provided the foundations upon which this thesis can be built, by exploring the social construction of a problem that governments world-wide are responding to. The following chapter, which advances some of the themes discussed here, draws upon existing literature to examine the transnational and domestic policy responses to sex trafficking. It also outlines existing theorising of the concepts that are central to this thesis, including governance and policy networks.

Chapter III: The Nature of the Anti-Trafficking Policy Process: Horizontal, Plural and Networked

This chapter positions the issue of sex trafficking within its national and international policy context, by providing a review of academic literature and key policy documents. It begins by introducing the legal framework around trafficking (3.1), focusing on the transnational and regional legal instruments that have had the greatest influence upon anti-trafficking politics, policy and practice in England and Wales: the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children*,¹⁸ and the *European Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings*.¹⁹ Indeed, these legal instruments have had far-reaching implications for the framing of anti-trafficking debates and the strategic aims of anti-trafficking actors in England and Wales, and for ensuring the UK Government is legally obliged to meet international minimal standards. The chapter then explores domestic anti-trafficking legislation and guidance (3.2), examining some of their underpinning themes and points of debate. It then examines how policy is theorised, reviewing the literature on the topic of ‘governance’, a concept which remains notably difficult to define, despite gaining salience in recent years (3.3). The final substantive section of this chapter involves a review of the literature on models of policy-making (3.4), focusing in particular upon the ‘horizontal’ dimension of the policy process (Colebatch, 2002). This involves a review of the literature on various pluralist models of policy and policy network approaches, with an emphasis on Haas’s (1992) ‘epistemic communities’ given that it is the approach I apply to my empirical data [see: Chapter V] in order to explore anti-trafficking actors’ interrelationships, priorities and politics. In effect then, this chapter introduces the international and domestic policies that inform how the police and the voluntary sector respond to sex trafficking, as well as the pluralist theories that inform my analysis of anti-trafficking policy and practice.

¹⁸ Henceforth, Palermo Protocol or Protocol

¹⁹ Henceforth, European Convention or Convention

3.1 The legal framework of trafficking

3.1.1 Transnational legal framework

Concerns about ‘white slavery’ in the early twentieth century led to the introduction of four international instruments between 1904 and 1933 but it was not until the late 1990s that the international community fully engaged with questions of trafficking (Anderson, 2013). It was the United Nations (2000) Palermo Protocol that first introduced an internationally-recognised definition of trafficking [see: p. five] and provided states with the impetus to develop their own domestic anti-trafficking policies (Gallagher, 2015). With 169 ratified states to date,²⁰ the Palermo Protocol has achieved unprecedented success in gaining state signatories. As Balch (2015) observes, more than three times the number of state signatories have been gained by the Palermo Protocol than by the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers*, despite the latter being adopted 10 years earlier, in 1990.²¹ The UK government signed the Palermo Protocol on 14 December 2000; although, it did not ratify until 9 February 2006 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2008). In other words, while the UK government expressed its willingness to proceed with the Protocol in 2000, it did not consent to be bound by it until six years later.

As an optional supplement to the United Nations *Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime*, the Palermo Protocol can be understood as reflecting broader concerns about emerging transnational and organised crime. Although crime has never been completely constrained by geographical boundary (Bowling, 2009), many commentators have highlighted the pressing need for ‘global governance’ in response to the increasingly diversifying threat posed by organised crime (Kendall, 2001; McLaughlin, 2007; Sheptycki, 1998; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2010; Williams and Vlassis, 2001). From this perspective, the opening-up of state borders to trade has transformed the nature of crime, allowing organised crime groups to adopt a more international nature which operates across state boundaries. In response to the changing nature of

²⁰ Figure accurate as of May 2016. Available: https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=XVIII-12-a&chapter=18&lang=en [Accessed: 31.05.16.]

²¹ As of May 2016, the Migrant Worker Convention has gained only 48 ratified state signatories. Available: https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-13&chapter=4&lang=en [Accessed: 31.05.16.]

crime, there has been a growth in international governance treaties and criminal law instruments (McLaughlin, 2007), with the Palermo Protocol representing one such example. Positioning trafficking within the discourse of organised crime, the Protocol encourages signatory states to focus more upon punishing the criminal organisations involved in the exploitation of human beings, rather than punishing victims (United Nations, 1999). To this extent, it represents an attempt to guide domestic policy away from viewing trafficked womyn as immigration offenders and towards seeing them as victims of crime.

While both the formulation of trafficking outlined in the Protocol and its positioning within the broader organised crime framework have had far-reaching impacts upon the contemporary development of anti-trafficking efforts, Balch (2015) notes that the Protocol has done little to circumvent the political differences that perpetuate globally about what trafficking actually is and how best to respond to it. Issues such as state sovereignty and international security were key during the deliberation period prior to the Protocol (Balch, 2015); although, the most fervent debates took place between neo-abolitionists and human rights advocates and have abated little in the years since its adoption. Led on one 'side' by the anti-prostitution Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW), and on the other by the sex workers' rights organisation the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW), much contention centred on how trafficking ought to be defined (Doezema, 2002). As Wijers (2015) notes, the attention directed at developing a definition of trafficking was hardly surprising given that prior to the Palermo Protocol the lack of a unitary definition was attributed by states as one of the main barriers to effectively tackling trafficking. While GAATW led calls from sex workers' rights activists to ensure the adopted definition clearly distinguished trafficking from voluntary migrant sex work by emphasising the possibility that people can consent to sell sex, CATW and neo-abolitionists more broadly wanted to include all sex work within the definition. This position is based upon the assumption that no woman can consent to sex work or that their consent is meaningless (Jeffreys, 2008); a viewpoint through which separatist feminists and the religious Right have aligned (Brooks-Gordon, 2010).

Given that this stark dichotomisation in views about prostitution and its relationship with trafficking was a defining element of the preparatory phase of

the Protocol, it is perhaps also unsurprising that the extent to which the Palermo Protocol is deemed a success remains a matter of considerable debate. Gallagher and Surtees (2012) are quite right to question what counts as ‘success’ since with a range of stakeholders involved in global anti-trafficking efforts, a wide array of (competing) views exist as to what constitutes a desirable outcome. Much has been made, however, about the importance of the clear definition of trafficking offered in the Protocol. In providing the first definition of trafficking in international law (Gallagher, 2010), one that is widely accepted around the globe (Gallagher, 2006), the Protocol is widely considered to be successful. Without a shared definition, it is difficult to see how international cooperation in relation to anti-trafficking efforts and the development of a normative framework could have been possible. As Gallagher (2015: 15) observes “the definition was... critical in forging a common vision between states.” Not all commentators are willing, however, to commend the UN on its definition of trafficking; rather, some recognise the inherent ambiguity of the definition and the lack of conceptual clarity therein. Kotiswaran (2015) observes, for example, that terms such as ‘exploitation’ and ‘coercion’ go undefined, which, given the subjective nature of these concepts, raises questions about how a universal definition can be possible.

The definition of trafficking offered in the Palermo Protocol is one that Chuang (2010: 1676), O’Brien et al., (2013: 6) and Wijers (2015: 62) all argue represents a political and/or ideological ‘compromise’ between the two divergent positions outlined above – that is, the neo-abolitionist and human rights perspectives. Indeed, it appears reasonable that the neo-abolitionist and human rights groups would both have claimed some victories over the definition set forth in the Protocol. On one issue, for example, both groups found the definition favourable. From a neo-abolitionist perspective, the use of the phrases “exploitation of the prostitution of others” and “other forms of sexual exploitation” were said to demonstrate that prostitution and trafficking could not be easily separated (Raymond, 2001: 5), which conforms to their view that no woman can consent to prostitution. On the same issue, those from the human rights caucus were satisfied that the phrases “exploitation of the prostitution of others” and “other forms of sexual exploitation” were intentionally left undefined so as to leave it the responsibility of each state to determine their own prostitution policy (Chuang, 2010: 1676; Wijers, 2015: 62).

Others, however, point out that the Protocol favours one perspective on prostitution over the other, namely the neo-abolitionist position over the human rights caucus. While the UN may have made some attempt to distinguish trafficking from prostitution by defining the ‘means’ as involving threat, force and/or coercion [see: definition on p. five] and by including other forms of trafficking in the definition, CATW largely succeeded in ensuring that the focus of the Protocol remained on sex trafficking. The very naming of the Protocol – with its emphasis on ‘women and children’²² – serves to frame trafficking in a particular (gendered) way and ensures it remains consistent with the historical framing of trafficking as an issue related to prostitution (Ditmore, 2005) and symbolic of the violent oppression of all womyn. Moreover, by making the consent of a migrant irrelevant if they have experienced any form of abuse, deception or coercion,²³ the definition of trafficking adopted in the Palermo Protocol expands the scope of trafficking (Sharma, 2005). This broadening of the definition, in effect, moves it ever further away from a ‘sex work as work’ perspective to that of neo-abolitionism, a move that is reflected further still in the separating out of ‘sexual exploitation’ and ‘labour exploitation’. The distinction drawn between sexual exploitation and labour exploitation implies both that sex work is not a form of labour and that forced labour cannot exist in the sex industry (Wijers, 2015).

Perhaps one of the most common points of critique, however, is the ‘collateral damage’ inflicted by the Palermo Protocol (Bhabha, 2015: 4). While Joy N Ezeilo (2015) – the former UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking – argues that the Protocol has the benefit of offering a victim-centred approach, many other commentators refute such a claim. Some argue, for example, that although ratified states are obligated under Articles five and nine respectively to criminalise trafficking, and develop comprehensive policies and measures to prevent and combat trafficking, they are only obligated to *consider* providing protection and reparative assistance to victims of trafficking (Article six). To this extent, some critics argue that the Protocol prioritises criminal justice principles over human rights principles, which mean that through enforced anti-trafficking measures

²² The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, *Especially Women and Children* (my emphasis).

²³ The Protocol definition states that “...The consent of the victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation... shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth... have been used” (UN, 2000).

some ratified states have exacerbated the vulnerability of migrant womyn (Bhabha, 2015). There is in fact a global body of evidence which indicates that the Protocol has been used as a vehicle through which to enhance the social control of (subaltern) migrant womyn. Critics suggest that the Palermo Protocol is used to justify anti-immigration and anti-prostitution policy and practice in ratified states and as such, has deleterious effects upon the rights of migrant womyn (Bhabha, 2015; Kotiswaran, 2015; Jahnsen and Skilbrei, 2015). They argue that the Protocol has, for example, been used to justify: the detention and deportation of migrant womyn, brothel raids, and the prosecution of 'victims of trafficking' for crimes committed as a result of their trafficking victimisation (Kotiswaran, 2015; Wijers, 2015). With these criticisms in mind, Gallagher (2015) posits that states have been granted too much discretionary freedom in relation to their victim protection obligations, which not only means that victims of trafficking have rarely benefitted from the Protocol's provisions but also that migrant womyn experience adverse consequences.

While the extent to which the Protocol can be deemed a success is as contentious as the debates that preceded its introduction, the Protocol remains perhaps the single most significant development in global anti-trafficking action (Gallagher, 2015). The definition of trafficking outlined in the Protocol functions to ensure that every ratified state recognises that there are forms of trafficking beyond those for the purpose of sexual exploitation. This was something that was not emphasised in earlier international laws, which focused on 'white slavery' (Doezema, 2010). Although many states do appear to continue to prioritise sex trafficking over other forms of trafficking, at least their laws acknowledge the conception of trafficking outlined in the Protocol (Gallagher, 2015). To this end, the Palermo Protocol can be said to have advanced understandings of trafficking; yet, considering the harms to migrant womyn that it has both enabled and justified, few have concluded that the Protocol has been an outright success.

3.1.2 Regional legal framework

Introduced to complement and build upon the Palermo Protocol, a further pertinent international legal instrument is the European Convention, which was adopted in May 2005 and ratified by the UK in 2008. The drafting of the Convention was an altogether different affair to the drafting of the Palermo

Protocol: debates were restricted and thus the Convention was not as easily influenced by NGOs and advocacy groups as the Protocol had been (Gallagher, 2006). In many ways, the Council of Europe sought to extend the provisions set forth by the Palermo Protocol, which it viewed as minimum standards. The Convention went further than the Protocol, for example, by including internal trafficking. Indeed, as specified in Article two, the Convention applies to all forms of both national (internal) and international (external) trafficking (Council of Europe, 2005: 8).

It is on the issue of victim protection, however, that the Convention can be most easily distinguished from the Palermo Protocol. Unlike the Protocol, the Convention concerns itself less with crime prevention and criminal justice issues, and more with the protection and safeguarding of those labelled 'victims of trafficking'. It is stated in the Convention's preamble that it:

Tak[es] due account of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol thereto to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children with a view to improving the protection which they afford and developing the standards established by them [Council of Europe, 2005: 7].

To this extent, the Council of Europe claimed to establish a Convention that was focused upon human rights (Lee, 2011), by reframing trafficking less as an organised crime issue and more as a violation of human "dignity and integrity" (Council of Europe, 2005: 1). Yet while a commitment to human rights and victim provision was alleged to feature at the heart of the drafting process, Gallagher (2006) notes that little agreement was reached as to how best to reflect this commitment in the Convention itself. Planitzer (2014) argues that as a result, although the Convention significantly raised the minimal standards of victim protection set forth in previous international legal instruments, it might have gone further by ensuring the right to unconditional residence permits for victims. Nonetheless, some significant provisions were indeed included in the Convention to obligate states to provide victims with physical, social and psychological care during a recovery period (Morehouse, 2009). This has lead Gallagher (2006: 187) to laud its "revolutionary way of thinking about trafficking and victims of trafficking" and to a general consensus that the Convention represents an advancement in international victims' rights (Lee, 2011; Morehouse, 2009; Planitzer, 2014).

In relation to victims' rights, the Convention makes advances in a number of areas. It established for the first time in international law, the need to ensure victims of trafficking are correctly identified and as such, that states are required to ensure the necessary domestic frameworks are in place to support victim identification (Article ten). Further, Article twelve outlines provision for the assistance to and protection of victims of trafficking, ensuring that they become a *requirement* rather than an advised consideration, and available to all victims regardless of their willingness to act as witnesses in a court of law (Council of Europe, 2005: 12). The Convention prevents the deportation of victims for a period of at least 30 days, allowing victims a period in which to recover, reflect and decide whether or not to cooperate with law enforcement agencies in the (potential) prosecution of their trafficker(s). During this period, Article twelve stipulates that victims are entitled to appropriate and secure accommodation, access to emergency health treatment, translation services, counselling, information about their legal rights, and access to education for children (Council of Europe, 2005). In addition, the Convention seeks to ensure that states avoid the criminalisation of victims of trafficking.

With these provisions in mind, while the lack of substantial evaluation of the Convention makes it difficult to determine its success, there appears to be some consensus that the Convention has improved victim protection and provision, particularly compared to the Palermo Protocol (Gallagher, 2006; GRETA, 2012, 2014). Yet the Convention has not managed to overcome the resurgence of anti-immigration sentiment in Europe (Koff, 2008), which remains a notable barrier to effective anti-trafficking efforts. It continues that states, in some cases, treat victims of trafficking as immigration offenders and that repressive border practices are legitimised under the noble guise of anti-trafficking (Sharma, 2015). These notions are returned to, and developed, throughout the empirical chapters of this thesis. There is no doubt that victim provisions could have been extended further still. As Anderson and Andrijasevic (2008) note, short-term residence permits remain conditional on cooperation with law-enforcement rather than being available to all 'victims of trafficking'. Nevertheless, the establishment of a group of impartial experts to monitor

implementation of the Convention, named 'GRETA',²⁴ enhances the potential for success.

3.2 Domestic anti-trafficking policy

Since signing the Palermo Protocol alongside 120 other countries in December 2000 (Kantola and Squires, 2004), the UK Government has actively included trafficking within its domestic legal framework (Goodey, 2008). Trafficking has not, however, been legislated by one single Act alone (HM Government, 2012) and it was not until 2003 that a specific human trafficking offence was legislated in England and Wales. Prior to that, other offences had been applied instead, such as: kidnap, false imprisonment and facilitation of illegal entry (Lipscombe and Beard, 2014). In keeping with the global trend of associating slavery/trafficking with prostitution – which began in the nineteenth century with concerns around 'white slavery' and has continued thereafter – domestic law in the England and Wales initially constructed human trafficking in somewhat limiting terms as involving only 'traffic in prostitution'. Subsequently, it was recommended in the Home Office (2000) White Paper, *Setting the Boundaries: Reforming the Law on Sexual Offences*, that there should be a specific trafficking offence for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. This was re-emphasised in a later White Paper, *Secure Borders Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain*, in which the then Home Secretary David Blunkett announced that the Government would use forthcoming immigration legislation to close the 'loophole' that existed to allow foreign nationals to be brought to the UK for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation (Home Office, 2002: 84). The *Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002* was therefore used as a stopgap to significant legislative reform, introducing the offence of 'trafficking in prostitution' under Section 145.

A move to broaden the trafficking offence was made in 2003, in light of recognition that people could be trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation outside of prostitution. As such, sections 57-60 of the *Sexual Offences Act 2003* consolidated the offence of 'trafficking in prostitution' into the broader offences of 'trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation' (Anderson, 2013). This Act includes the offences of trafficking *into* the UK for sexual exploitation (section 57),

²⁴ GRETA is the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. It is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention outlined in section: 3.1.2.

trafficking *within* the UK for sexual exploitation (section 58), and trafficking *out of* the UK for sexual exploitation (section 59). Goodey (2008) argues that relative to the Palermo Protocol, the *Sexual Offences Act 2003* 'goes further' – that is to say, it does not require traffickers to use coercion, deception or force. Therefore, the influence of neo-abolitionism upon domestic policy in England and Wales appears greater than upon the drafting of the Protocol since domestic policy has largely conflated trafficking and prostitution.

It was not then until the *Asylum and Immigration Act 2004* that the definition of trafficking was extended to include other forms of exploitation, reflecting growing awareness around labour trafficking. The same year, the *Gangmasters (Licensing) Act 2004* sought to legislate against the exploitation of vulnerable (migrant) workers by 'gangmasters', which was in large brought about by the Morecambe Bay cockling disaster earlier in 2000.²⁵ Although the *Gangmasters (Licensing) Act 2004* does not relate to trafficking *per se*, it formed part of broader concerns around the exploitation of migrant workers and notably, around (illegal) migration into the UK. As Anderson (2013) notes, since 2004 we have seen a shift in the framing of the debate towards viewing trafficking as an issue of immigration and one that can be tackled through restrictive immigration policies and border control practices. That is not to say, however, that the association between trafficking and immigration brought about an end to the long-standing link drawn between trafficking and prostitution. Rather, trafficking's perceived relationship with the commercial sex industry was once again emphasised in statute by Section 14 of the *Policing and Crime Act 2009*, which introduced the strict liability offence of paying for sexual services from a prostitute subject to force (including, via trafficking).

Domestic policy in England and Wales has attracted a great deal of criticism, particularly in relation to the systematic conflation of prostitution and sexual exploitation (Scoular, 2015). Critics, such as Sanders (2005), contend that legislation ought to be based less upon neoconservative notions of sex as immoral and more upon evidence-based understandings of how best to protect sex workers and migrant womyn involved in the sex industry both voluntarily and

²⁵ This tragedy refers to an event which took place on 5 February 2004 in Morecambe Bay, North West England. At least 23 men and womyn lost their lives picking cockles for a Chinese gangmaster. The drowning became a high-profile, international news story, which provoked disbelief amongst the general public and is believed to have prompted legislative change.

involuntarily. Particularly contentious is section 14 of the *Policing and Crime Act 2009*, which Belinda Brooks-Gordon (2010) argues, in effect, criminalises almost all clients because of the broad definition of ‘gain’ it employs. She argues that if commercial sex work did not involve ‘gain’, it would not constitute sex work but rather, just sex. Furthermore, scholars have argued that rather than illuminating instances of trafficking, section 14 is likely to serve to conceal them since clients, fearing criminalisation, may be less likely to report to the police if they have any concerns about the welfare of sex workers (Kingston and Thomas, 2014). More broadly, as Goodey (2008) observes, much criticism has arisen around the lack of victim protection provision included in the laws outlined above. In response to this criticism, and following its signing of the European Convention – which obliges States to allow a recovery period of 30 days for victims of trafficking – the UK Government launched its *Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking* in 2007. Under the New Labour Government, this Action Plan became a ‘living document’, updated in 2008 and 2009. Since, the UK Government has published *Human Trafficking: The Government’s Strategy* in 2011 and perhaps most notably, introduced the *Modern Slavery Act* in 2015. Yet there is a dearth of empirical evaluation to determine whether enhanced provisions for victims have moved beyond lip service. Nonetheless, the *Modern Slavery Act 2015*, championed by the Home Secretary Theresa May, reflects what could be described as the most recent shift in the framing of trafficking debates towards its rebranding as ‘modern day slavery’ [see: section 5.4].

3.3 Governance theory

Having examined the legal framework that shapes how the police and voluntary sector govern sex trafficking, the remainder of this chapter explores the theoretical approaches to the policy process that inform my empirical analysis. Specifically, this section reviews the literature on theories of ‘governance’, a concept that despite its centrality in this thesis, remains difficult to define (Pierre, 2000; Pierre and Peters, 2000; Pierre and Stoker, 2000; Schneider, 2012). As Levi-Faur (2012:3) observes:

Governance is said to be many things, including a buzzword, a fad, a framing devise, a bridging concept, an umbrella concept, a descriptor concept, a slippery concept, an

empty signifier, a weasel word, a fetish, a field, an approach, a theory and a perspective.

Despite these recognised definitional difficulties, the concept of governance as a tool of analysis has grown in popularity in theories of public administration (e.g. Fenger and Bekkers, 2007), public sector reform and political studies (e.g. Rhodes, 1996), as well as now being commonly utilised in the disciplines of criminology (e.g. Crawford, 2006) and sociology (e.g. Hunter, 2015). Its 'en-vogue' status (Rhodes, 1996: 652) has not, however, functioned to clarify its meaning but instead its multiplicitous usage has served to veil the concept in ambiguity. Stoker, (1998: 18) for example, draws attention to the eclectic nature of the 'governance' concept when he asserts:

Its theoretical routes are various: institutional economics, international relations, organizational studies, development studies, political science, public administration and Foucauldian-inspired theorists

Therefore, it is clear that the term has been used in a variety of different ways, leaving the academic literature on governance somewhat 'disjointed' (Jessop 1995).

With wide-ranging theoretical routes, it is perhaps unsurprising that a plethora of definitions of governance have developed (Richards and Smith, 2002). Rhodes (1997), for example, offers a comprehensive analysis of the different forms of governance, positing six separate uses of the term: as the minimal state; as corporate governance; as the new public management; as 'good governance'; as a socio-cybernetic system; and as self-organizing networks. Rhodes (1997) concludes, however, that the term's ambiguous usage limits its utility and as such, he proposes a definition which combines its most important uses. He suggests, therefore, that governance refers to:

Self-organizing, interorganizational networks characterized by interdependence, resource exchange, rules of the game and significant autonomy from the state (Rhodes, 1997:15 emphasis in original).

Pierre and Stoker (2000), on the other hand, argue that approaches to governance have largely advanced from just two positions. The first locates self-governing networks as the 'key instrument of governance' and focuses upon formal and informal processes of public-private coordination, cooperation and interaction. Conversely, the second adopts a more 'state-centric perspective', suggesting that the state continues to define the agenda and remains the key decision-maker

steering society and the economy. That said, the concept is, primarily, conceptualised and applied to advance an understanding of the changing nature of the state in recent decades, reflecting the supplanting of an era of 'government' with one of 'governance' (Pierre, 2000; Rhodes, 1997; Richards and Smith, 2002; emphasis added). It draws attention to the shift from hierarchical and unicentric forms of state control which characterised the classic welfare state, to today's multilateral action undertaken by a plurality of state and non-state actors (Torfing, 2012). The 'steering' metaphor has therefore been used by a number of scholars (Crawford, 2006; Peters, 2012; Osborne and Gaebler, 1992) to reflect the way in which the government's role is now to steer, while it leaves the rowing to others.

3.3.1 The routes of governance: Neoliberalism

According to Bevir and Rhodes (2001), academic concern with governance largely originated in the neoliberal reforms of the public sector, instigated by both the British and US governments in the 1980s. With this in mind, it is important to briefly examine what it is we mean by neoliberalism. Despite often being espoused as the dominant political ideology of our time and its widespread use in academic discourses, neoliberalism remains an extremely nebulous concept. Thorsen (2010: 197) argues that it has become somewhat of a "generic term of deprecation describing almost any economic and political development deemed to be undesirable." It is typically used, with very few exceptions, to critique the retreating welfare state and the spread of capitalism (Thorsen, 2010). Yet both in this body of 'critical literature' and in the work of more favourable accounts of neoliberalism, it remains a concept that is inadequately defined (Lind, 2005).

Some scholars have provided a degree of definitional clarity. Harvey (2005:2), for example, explains that some have defined neoliberalism as a "distinctive economic theory" which promotes individualism, free markets and trade, and limited state interference. Others see it more as a 'political philosophy' that encourages individual freedoms and rights to private property (Thorsen, 2010). What is clear is that there is neither a unitary definition of neoliberalism nor much worth to be found in utilising a narrow definition. Rather, it may be most usefully conceived of as "a convenient descriptor for an amorphous set of political theories" (Thorsen, 2010: 203). There does appear to be some consensus,

however, that neoliberalism broadly refers to a set of political beliefs that the state ought to play a minimal role in governing economic and political life. To this end, it advocates the responsabilisation of individuals and private organisations in free economic markets. Neoliberalism, it is argued, largely rose in prominence under the Regan and Thatcher governments of the early 1980s in the US and UK, respectively. It manifests perhaps most notably in the privatisation of state activities and a push for private provision over state expenditure on public services (van Krieken et al., 2014). To this extent, the withdrawal of the state is a key characteristic of neoliberalism (Harvey, 2005).

While the advent of neoliberal politics is often attributed to the New Right ideology of Regan and Thatcher, some scholars argue that it was in fact the Major administration that instigated the greatest shift in the nature of state governing. This, it is argued, is best demonstrated through the processes of new public managerialism, privatisation, globalisation, transnationalisation, and the opening up of government (Pierre, 2000; Richards and Smith, 2000; Solesbury, 2001; Wincup, 2013). Others argue that these processes, which reflect a general shift towards governance rather than governing, were best aligned with New Labour's modernization agenda (Geddes, 2006). What *is* evident, however, is that processes of neoliberalisation have resulted in a breakdown of the nation state, one that for Kooiman (2000: 142) signals a shift away from an era when "governing was basically regarded as 'one way traffic' from those governing to those governed." What has emerged instead is a model based upon 'two-way traffic', in which state-centric decision making is replaced by interrelationships between a diverse and vast network of actors.

Yet others argue that New Right politics are not simply a neoliberal project. Instead, New Right politics have enabled the seemingly contradictory philosophies of neoliberalism and neoconservatism to converge (Brown, 2006): they have formed, what Phipps (2014) refers to as, an 'unholy alliance'. Although the lack of definitional consensus that surrounds neoliberalism also shrouds neoconservatism, it is broadly understood as a moral-political rationality which is based upon tradition, morality, Christianity, and sovereignty (Brown, 2006; Levitas, 1985). This rationality functions to govern populations through a strong state, which operated in defence of national and cultural borders and manifest in draconian border controls and imperialist, expansionist foreign policy (Norton,

2004). In many ways then, neoliberalism runs counter to neoconservatism. While the former promotes individualised self-interest, the later encourages a moral, upright and self-sacrificing subject. Moreover, the neoliberal aims of a universal market in which cultural boundaries are erased are challenged by neoconservative re-articulation of the national state (Brown, 2006). Yet both appear present in recent UK Governments which have imposed moral regulation upon citizens *through* market mechanisms and have drawn upon ‘moral’ justifications for their neoliberal policies (King, 1988). Therefore, while Loic Wacquant (2009) and others may be right to point out that the Western world is largely governed by a neoliberal philosophy, the importance of neoconservative rationalities ought not to be dismissed.

3.3.2 Shifting from government to governance

A fundamental characteristic of broader processes of neoliberalisation is the shift ‘from government to governance’, which was at least in part brought about through growing awareness that social problems could be addressed more effectively, and efficiently, by drawing upon the expertise and resources of a wide range of actors (Sorensen and Torfing, 2005; Klinj, 2011). Competition, fiscal constraint, and performance management are encouraged from these actors by the government (Evans et al., 2005). As Torfing (2012: 100) argues, it has become increasingly clear in recent years that the social issues we currently face require a collective response since:

...globalization, the fragmentation of social and political life, the growing number of wicked problems, and the new ideas of how to govern through ‘regulated self-regulation’ make it clear that public agencies cannot govern alone

Thus, as the complexity of social issues increases and the society in which we live changes, a multi-faceted and multi-agency response becomes a necessity (Klinj, 2008; Sorenson and Torfing, 2005). This has led Kooiman (2000: 142) to observe that multilateral approaches to governing are required because no one actor possesses the knowledge necessary to single-handedly solve “complex, dynamic and diversified problems.”

Central to the concept of governance, therefore, is a recognition that the core executive has relinquished some of its functions to an ever-expanding miscellany of actors, which have become involved in policy-making and

implementation (Richards and Smith, 2002). Consequently, a style of governing has emerged in which “public-private mobilization” is promoted, thus blurring the boundaries between the responsibilities of the public sector and the private and/or voluntary sectors (Pierre and Stoker, 2000: 30). Agreement largely exists that governance refers to the move towards a style of governing that involves (formal and informal) interactions between a plurality of public, private and voluntary sector actors (Stoker, 1998). With this, ‘partnerships’ have developed between government, local government, and the private and voluntary sectors. As such, the policy process has been ‘de-governmentalized’, that is, the incorporation of a range of actors in the policy process allows the state to “govern at a distance” (Rose, 1996: 43). Rhodes (1997: 17) avers that these changes in the way the British government governs epitomises the “hollowing of the state”, in which some of its functions have been forfeited “upwards to the European Union, downwards to special-purpose bodies and outwards to agencies.” Stoker (1998) similarly suggests that a ‘hollowing-out’ of the nation state has resulted in a loss of parliamentary sovereignty and ultimately, in its power.

Other scholars, however, do not readily accept the notion that the state has become ‘hollowed’ or eroded. Instead, they contend that the centre has merely been reshaped to foster *more* effective control (Saward, 1997). From this perspective, rather than weakening the power of the state, privatisation is considered to consolidate its regulatory capacity. Agencification – the process by which governance is dispersed across a range of actors (Moynihan, 2006) – is believed to generate greater flexibility for government ministers, allowing them to focus their attention on selected issues (Saward, 1997). In effect then, while agencies beyond government may ‘share’ some of the responsibility for governance, power largely remains centralised – that is, it lies with the neoliberal state (Evans et al., 2005: 78).

Although contention exists over whether or not the core executive has *willingly* surrendered some of its functions, there is nonetheless a consensus in the governance literature that the core executive no longer exercises “a monopoly of the orchestration of governance” (Pierre, 2000: 4). Instead, a baseline agreement exists that a multiplicity of actors, reaching far beyond the core executive, are responsible for policy-thinking and implementation (Pierre, 2000; Richards and Smith, 2002; Stoker, 1998). Therefore, while the routes of

governance are often assumed to lie in the advent of neoliberalism, it appears to draw inspiration from Foucauldian notions of government (Stoker, 1998). Indeed as Sending and Neumann (2006) posit, Foucault's (1991; 2000) 'government' involves:

...a range of techniques and practices, performed by different actors, aimed to shape, guide, and direct individuals' and groups' behavior and actions in particular directions.

Yet the increasing role of non-state actors in governing does not *ipso facto* reflect the state relinquishing its power. Rather, non-state actors shift from being acted upon to being both an object and a subject.

3.4 Horizontal approaches to the policy process

Brought about by the shift towards governance explored above, policy-making and implementation in a neoliberal era involves an ever-increasing multiplicity of actors; it is becoming an increasingly "plural phenomenon" (Bevir, 2011: 3). Plural conceptualisations of the policy process have largely arisen out of dissatisfaction with 'vertical' models (Colebatch, 2002), which construct policy as something which is transmitted downwards from authorised decision-makers to subordinate officials. Pierre and Stoker (2000: 31), for example, assert that vertical models do not accurately reflect the structure of government, which they contend is "fragmented into a maze of institutions and organizations." This view is shared by Hudson and Lowe (2004), who suggest that in reality it is policy networks that operate at the 'heart' of politics, rather than parliamentary sovereignty and public sector specificity. Indeed, by positioning legislators as the focus of their attention, vertical models overlook the importance of other actors in policy-making processes, such as those from across the public, private and voluntary sectors (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier, 1993). Nakamura (1987) contends, therefore, that vertical models in effect represent little more than a 'textbook approach', one that has little relevance in reality and is unrealistic in practice. With these criticisms in mind, some commentators posit that we have moved into an era defined by 'horizontal' policy dimensions, whereby authority is dispersed and decision-making 'diffuse' (Colebatch, 2002; Nutley et al., 2007).

Coterminous with the concept of governance more broadly (Monaghan, 2011), 'plural' or 'horizontal' approaches to studying policy development and

implementation seek to explore how the policy process is defined by interaction and negotiation between actors from diffuse organisations. In this regard, the range of public, private and voluntary sector actors involved in pluralist policy-making and implementation are often understood to form a network. Indeed, Börzel (1998) suggests that policy-making and governance are only possible within networks of actors. After all, as Rhodes (1997: 21) claims, “messy problems need messy solutions”. With this in mind, it is perhaps unsurprising that even in spite of the multiplicitous usage of the term, one of the main ways in which governance is conceptualised is as ‘networked governance’ (Pierre and Peters, 2000; Osborne, 2006). Given the growth of agencification in neoliberal societies, including the UK, approaches that analyse how various actors interact within particular policy domains have gained currency in recent years. Research with a focus on networked governance tends to be concerned with the complex relationships between a network of actors, their interactions, and their processes of negotiation (Klinj, 2008).

To capture the nature of the actors engaged in policy development and implementation – particularly their diversity, range and fluidity (Dalglish et al., 2015) – scholars have employed the policy network concept. The popularity of the network concept has burgeoned in recent decades, producing a ‘Babylonian’ variety (Börzel, 1998) of policy network conceptualisations between and within scholarly disciplines. What each tends to share in common, however, is a concern for understanding the interrelations between organisations, and how linkages are created, developed and maintained. Originally developed by Sabatier (1987), the ‘advocacy coalition framework’ (ACF) is one of the most popular approaches to theorising the policy process, having ‘captured the minds’ of myriad policy scholars both in Europe and the US (Fischer, 2003). ACF assumes that within a policy-subsystem actors can be divided into between one and four separate and competing coalitions, comprising individuals or groups that share the same normative and causal beliefs (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier, 1994). Yet despite its wide appeal, it is deemed more suitable for positivistic research and does little to explain why and how the same actors can say very different things in different situations (Fischer, 2003). It is these seemingly contradictory statements that Hajer’s (1995) ‘discourse coalition’ approach endeavours to capture. It constructs the policy process as a product of argument and debate (Fischer and Gottweis,

2012), and emphasises the importance of the discourses actors utilise to generate 'storylines' on particular policy issues. For Hajer (1995), coalition membership tends to be dynamic, as actors draw upon different storylines and shift between coalitions (Bulkeley, 2000). For this reason, discourse coalitions are less stable than their ACF counter-parts.

Described by Nutley et al., (2007) as appropriate for exploring the least stable types of policy networks, 'issue networks' were originally developed by Hecló (1978) to study relatively *ad hoc* policy structures and their fluid membership. To this extent, 'issue networks' describe a politics in which all 'join in.' Indeed, individuals and organisations continually join and leave 'issue networks', creating a blurred boundary between the policy network and the surrounding environment (Nutley et al., 2007). Rhodes (1997) furthers Hecló's (1978) work, developing a typology of five networks which range along a continuum from stable and tightly-integrated 'policy communities' at one end, to unstable and loosely-integrated 'issue networks' at the other. While these are just some of the most widely-utilised conceptions of policy networks, many others exist to explore, explain and theorise the policy process. This has led Börzel (1998) and Ball (2012) to emphasise that there is little agreement as to what constitutes a 'policy network' and whether it represents: a theory, framework, analytical tool, method or simply a metaphor.

Despite the lack of agreement in the conceptualisation of policy network approaches, they have become a popular tool through which to analyse policy domains. In particular, Börzel (1998: 259) emphasises their utility for exploring policy domains that "cannot be explained by centrally concerted policy action towards common goals." In other words, the network concept has been widely-employed in order to draw attention to the interactions that take place between pluralities of actors, and is particularly helpful for examining politicised policy areas. Although networks have been taken up in quantitative social structure analysis, it is their qualitative use that is pertinent to this thesis – that is, its focus is on the content of actors' interactions, rather than the structure of their interactions (Börzel, 1998). It is their ability to aid the study of sets of relations between different actors, and the content of these relations (Cope, 2001), that is appealing for the purposes of this thesis. While Dowding (1995) and others have questioned the ability of policy networks to aid in the theorisation of social policy

and practice, my own aim is to use policy networks as a ‘framework’ to enable interpretation of anti-trafficking actors’ interactions and their politics, which at times converge and at other times diverge but are ultimately structured around governing the same social problem.

3.4.1 Epistemic Communities

The most pertinent policy network approach here is Peter Haas’ (1992) ‘epistemic communities’, since it is the approach that I deem most appropriate to take up in Chapter V in the empirical study of the anti-trafficking policy domain [see: section 5.7, in particular]. The epistemic community approach draws sustenance from a number of different sources, including Fleck’s (1981) ‘thought collectives’ and Foucault’s (1973) conceptualisation of ‘episteme’. Yet it is Peter Haas’ (1992) conception that is widely regarded to have facilitated the rise in prominence of epistemic communities, initially within and later far beyond the discipline of International Relations. For Haas (1992: 3), epistemic communities are:

...a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area.

Although Haas (1992) provides little definitional discussion of his conceptualisation of the term ‘community’ – itself, a highly nebulous concept (Hillary, 1955) – it can be understood in its most simple form as ‘being together’ (Somerville, 2016). To extrapolate from Haas’ (1992) employment of the epistemic community concept then, knowledge is understood to connect or link people in some way. To this end, epistemic communities can be understood as groups of actors that have come together around a particular paradigm – or ‘episteme’ – that links their consensual knowledge on a subject to a set of interdependent policy problems (Haas and Haas, 1995). To this extent, the actors and organisations that make up an epistemic community find solidarity from their shared understanding and framing of a policy problem, their proposed solution, and the interest from which they may stand to gain (Dobusch and Sigrid, 2008; Marier, 2008).

Members of the epistemic community not only accept the knowledge associated with a common episteme but they also act as purveyors of that knowledge. They therefore create, justify and disseminate knowledge about a

policy issue beyond the membership of the epistemic community. At the nucleus of an epistemic community rests the desire to affect policy change and so, it promulgates its knowledge position in order to influence policy development and implementation (Greene, 2014). The concept therefore assumes that consensual knowledge influences policy (Sugden, 2006). A number of communities may operate within one policy domain and each one claims to have the authoritative policy-relevant knowledge. To this extent, they compete within the policy domain to assert themselves. According to Haas (1992; 2016), epistemic communities have four identifying features: 1) a shared set of normative and principled beliefs, which provide “a valued-based rationale for social action” (Haas, 2016: 5); 2) shared causal beliefs; 3) common criteria upon which to judge the validity of knowledge; 4) and a common policy enterprise in which shared practices are considered to provide an appropriate solution to the policy problem at hand. Lending support to the claim that social problems are becoming increasingly complex and thus require increasingly complex responses, Haas and Haas (1995) suggest that the (Western) world is becoming increasingly reliant upon specialist knowledge. They argue that this has enabled epistemic communities to grow in influence.

One of the appeals of the epistemic community approach lies in its emphasis on collective knowledge and its ability to capture the normative notion that knowledge is socially constituted. In recent years, interest has grown amongst social scientists in studying how groups of actors are related by common concerns and concepts (Roth and Bourgine, 2005) – that is, how knowledge can serve as a unifier. Thus for Antoniadou (2003: 21), epistemic communities are an essential component of the ‘knowledge/power’ equation since their claims to knowledge play an important role in affecting world politics. Indeed, it is in this regard that Foucault’s (1980) influence is clear since he reminds us of the causal link between knowledge and power: what he terms the knowledge/power nexus. Sugden (2006) contends that an application of Foucauldian conceptions of knowledge and power to the epistemic community concept emphasises the importance of the politics behind knowledge. To this end, epistemic communities enable a comprehensive understanding of how policies are developed and implemented, and how this is influenced by wide ranging actors beyond the core executive (Sugden, 2006).

The epistemic community approach is not, however, without its limitations. Sugden (2006) contends, for example, that those who employ the concept too often over-emphasise the causal link between the epistemic community and policy change. Yet by and far the most common criticism levelled at the epistemic community approach is that while its conceptualisation as 'networks of knowledge-based experts' is widespread (Dobusch and Sigrid, 2008), few have offered a comprehensive account of what actually constitutes 'expertise'. Haas (1992) himself places great importance on the role of 'experts', yet neither expounds nor problematises what it means to be an expert in a particular policy domain (Sugden, 2006). For the most part, expertise has been conceptualised in a somewhat narrow sense as technical or scientific expertise (Davis Cross, 2013; Toke, 1999). This reflects the assumption articulated by Marier (2008) that experts tend to dominate most when policy problems are characterised by technical difficulty since other actors lack the knowledge to play a potent role. Yet one may draw upon the body of feminist scholarship, which positions those that have traditionally been the 'subjects' of research as the 'expert' (O'Neill, 2001), in order to problematize the concept of expertise. From this perspective, expertise is inherently subjective and fluid, and is socially constructed within and by social groups. With this in mind, broader definitions of expertise, and an application of the concept to research of a more sociological nature (Meyer and Molyneux-Hodgson, 2010), may widen the appeal of the epistemic community approach. As it stands, the epistemic community approach remains somewhat under-developed, particularly within the social sciences. Some scholars have, however, hailed the concept's amenability to modification (Antoniades, 2002: 26), which in part enables one to circumvent some of the aforementioned limitations.

3.5 Closing remarks

Although some allege that human trafficking has antecedents in the trans-Atlantic and 'white' slave trades, it is only in relatively recent years that its political profile has risen to the extent we currently observe. Since the Palermo Protocol in 2000, a range of international and domestic policies have been introduced, in which similar themes are embedded. Consistently, trafficking has been conflated with prostitution more broadly, largely brought about through lobbying by radical feminist and neo-abolitionist actors. While this conflation has not subsided,

another has been added into recent legal frameworks: that is, the conflation of trafficking with immigration more broadly. These are themes that underpin this thesis and are developed throughout but they also represent manifestations of neoliberalisation. Neoliberalism has enabled a whole range of public, private and voluntary actors to become involved in the policy-development and implementation process. This 'network' of actors is indeed central to the concept of governance. Policy networks are thought to have emerged in response to the notion that solutions to the complex social issues faced by contemporary societies lie not in the core executive but rather, in the multiple actors that exist beyond government, in the 'partnerships' that exist between state and non-state actors. Governance also refers to the way in which the state facilitates this horizontal management of policy (Evans et al., 2005), best encapsulated in Crawford's (2006) metaphor of the state 'steering', while non-state actors do the 'rowing'. This chapter has reviewed some examples of policy network approaches and in so doing, introduces theories of policy networks which are integral to the analysis of the anti-trafficking policy domain I present in this thesis, particularly in Chapters V and VI. Haas' conception of epistemic communities, the plural policy process, partnerships and the interactions between diverse actors are indeed returned to in my empirical chapters.

Chapter IV: Methodology: Researching Anti-Trafficking Politics, Policy and Practice

This chapter sets out the research methods and methodology employed in this research, thereby outlining how this research was conducted. In keeping with Gouldner's (1970) calls for a 'reflexive sociology', my own positionality within and influence upon the research process is a theme running throughout this chapter. Interwoven, therefore, is a discussion of how my own social identity and approach to research has inherently influenced the data I have generated and, ultimately, the knowledge I have thus produced. Rather than producing a 'sanitised' version (Waters, 2001) of the research methods and methodology employed in this research, I offer a sincere reflection on the (messy) realities of conducting qualitative research in a politicised policy area. It should therefore be noted from the outset that I reject Max Weber's notion of '*wertfreiheit*' (value-neutrality) in social research (Ringer, 1997) and the centrality of 'objectivity' found in orthodox sociology. In light of my commitment to employing an iterative approach to the research process, this chapter begins by documenting the shift from 'navigational tools' to research questions (4.1). Next, I offer some reflexive observations about the research strategy and philosophical and theoretical standpoints underpinning this thesis, focusing upon the praxis of conducting feminist social constructionist research (4.2). Consideration is then given to the multiple research methods I employed to generate data, including a critical reflection on the realities of interviewing 'elites' in a politicised policy area (4.3). Following this, the sampling strategy is outlined and in so doing, I evaluate the processes by which interviewees were identified, approached and recruited (4.4). Focus then turns to the data analysis processes that I adopted (4.5), before the main ethical considerations are highlighted alongside my elected solutions (4.6). Finally, I briefly reflect upon my positionality in the research process, with particular reference to how my own feminist identity and politics have influenced the data generated (4.7).

4.1 From navigational tools to research questions

Traditionally understood as a necessary component of social research, particularly by those adopting a philosophically deductive approach (Blaikie, 2010), the importance of hypotheses in delimiting areas of enquiry and providing a guiding function to research is undoubtedly well-established (Barros, 2008). Yet the dearth in previous research into the governance of sex trafficking dictated that the formulation of a ‘provisional solution’ or ‘tentative answer’ to the research questions posed in this thesis was problematic. While it was acknowledged that to not demarcate areas of enquiry at all would likely be “disastrous” (Carlsson, 1958: 18), there was a substantial concern that the imposition of hypotheses may lead to unnecessary rigidities in the way that data was collected and thus prevent the generation of emergent questions (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). Therefore, in order to give direction to the research without restricting areas of enquiry too greatly, the research questions initially posed were relatively open-ended and evolving – characteristics Creswell (2007) suggests are common features of qualitative research questions. Indeed, in line with Blumer’s (1954) argument for the utilisation of ‘sensitizing concepts’ in the place of quantitatively-oriented ‘definitive concepts’, the initial research questions merely provided a point of reference by which to direct data generation. To this extent, they were iterative ‘navigational tools’ which articulated the focus of the research but concurrently, allowed for inquiries into ‘the unexpected’ (Agee, 2009).

It was therefore through a process of regular refinement at multiple stages along my ‘inquiry journey’ (Agee, 2009) that the research questions outlined on page 11 were developed into their current form. I found that my initial questions required minor modification, particularly as a result of my gradually increasing understanding of the topic at hand. Indeed, I acquired a more nuanced awareness of the politics of anti-trafficking policy and practice than would otherwise have been possible by *immersing* myself – at least, to the best of my ability²⁶ – in the anti-trafficking policy domain. I attended relevant events organised by NGOs and engaged in social media, which enabled me to keep abreast of a ‘live’ policy issue (Monaghan, 2008), one which, because of its highly-politicised nature, operated in what appeared to be a constant state of flux. Over the course of this research,

²⁶ I felt that the anti-trafficking policy domain was not always receptive of ‘outsiders’, particularly those who were engaged in academic research.

for example, new anti-trafficking organisations, projects and initiatives were established, and key legislation was introduced in the form of the *Modern Slavery Act 2015*.

The primary purpose of this thesis is to offer an empirically-founded *exploration* (rich description) and *understanding* (reasoning) of the role played by a diverse network of anti-trafficking actors in the development and implementation of anti-trafficking policy and practice. Indeed, through an *exploration* of anti-trafficking policy and practice, this thesis provides a new insight into a 'little known issue' (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). I have therefore sought to develop a well-rounded picture of *how* anti-trafficking policy and practice operates on the ground, having applied this knowledge to existing theory as well as tentatively generated emerging theory – characteristics Neuman (2006) suggests are common of exploratory qualitative research. Furthermore, through the examination of interviewees' accounts, this thesis develops an *understanding* of *why* anti-trafficking actors govern trafficking in the manner that they do. As such, it has endeavoured to understand the extent to which the practices of these organisation are informed by their own independent interests, priorities and politics.

In line with Max Weber's distinction between *kausal erklären* (causal explanation) and *verstehen* (understanding) (Winch, 1990), this research did not, however, try to establish a law-governed explanation for regularities or patterns (Bransen, 2001). Rather, it was concerned with examining the meanings of social action (Brewer, 2003b), by drawing upon the experiences and interpretations of interviewees, and using this data to develop a social scientific account. Due to resource constraints, however, this thesis neither attempted to explore nor understand the governance of sex trafficking at a European or at a global level, except where it had a direct impact upon the way in which the police and NGOs govern trafficking in England and Wales.

4.2 Research strategy, philosophical and theoretical orientations

Not only did a dearth of previous research render the formulation of an adequate hypothesis extremely difficult and thus essentially rule out the adoption of a 'deductive' or 'retroductive' research strategy but also there was a concern that such strategies may unwittingly restrict the focus of study (Bottoms, 2008).

Further, although the 'inductive' research strategy may have provided an adequate level of descriptive detail to *explore* contemporary responses to sex trafficking, its ability to offer an *understanding* of anti-trafficking responses may have been somewhat limited. Instead, it seemed inherently logical that Blaikie's (2007, 2010) conceptualisation of the 'abductive' research strategy was adopted which, unlike the 'inductive' and 'deductive' strategies, prioritises social actors' accounts of the social world. This strategy prioritised the descriptions of anti-trafficking policy and practice derived from the accounts that interviewees gave to their own actions and the actions of others. Indeed, in stark contrast to much previous trafficking research which has traditionally neglected the voices of anti-trafficking actors, their accounts are central to this thesis. This approach encourages the construction of theory in the meanings of social actors (Blaikie, 2000), by not only *exploring* the interpretations, meanings and motives they attributed to anti-trafficking policy and practice but also generating an *understanding* of the governance of trafficking in relation to existing social theory and/or new social scientific knowledge.

The 'abductive' research strategy allowed me to elevate to centre stage the subjective meanings anti-trafficking actors attributed to their everyday behaviours (Blaikie, 2007), which were formed through interaction with others (Creswell, 2007). To this extent, this thesis is informed by social constructionism; it is based upon the foundational assumption that reality is constructed by social actors (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Not a unified position but instead a broad and multifaceted one (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009), social constructionism is concerned with how social information is created and produced (Rafter, 1990). It tends to assume that to understand the complex social world one must explore the knowledge and experiences of those who live in it (Monette et al., 2011). From this philosophical position, this thesis draws upon the experiences and reflections of anti-trafficking actors in order to explore and understand the governance of sex trafficking in England and Wales. As such, I reject the 'empiricist' claim that human senses can yield a *true* representation of the social world (Blaikie, 2007). Instead, this perspective purports that there is no one 'truth', for our assumptions are the

product of socially-mediated discourse and as such, the ‘findings’²⁷ presented in this thesis were *created* through interactions between interviewees and myself. A central tenet of social constructionism, and of this research, is that knowledge is created through the interactions between individuals. In this case, I was concerned with how anti-trafficking is constructed by anti-trafficking actors as a field of intervention.

I do not, however, completely accept the ‘relativist position’ that multiple realities have an equal claim to truth, although nor do I accept the ‘realist’ notion that there is a single social reality. Indeed, I find the ontological dichotomy of relativism and realism (Andrews, 2012) unhelpful and instead prefer a ‘midway’ position, which recognises that an existential reality exists but rejects the notion that we can directly access it, independent of our perceptions. In other words, I accept that there is a world ‘out there’ but that there are multiple different ways of making sense of the external world. Blaikie (2007: 17) refers to this position as ‘perspective idealism.’ To this extent, it was recognised that trafficking is governed in a plethora of different ways, depending upon organisations’ independent interests, ideologies, priorities and politics. Yet it would be wrong to assume that as a social constructionist my approach to research denies that an objective reality exists. Indeed, that would represent a misunderstanding of social constructionism since constructionists do recognise that society exists both as an objective and subjective reality (Andrews, 2012; Rafter, 1990). Rather, this thesis is grounded in the perspective that reality is “approachable only through social definitions” (Dunn, 2007: 103) and I therefore present the different social definitions of trafficking and the different social frameworks through which they are constructed.

In light of the epistemological foundations of this research, I recognise that this thesis is inevitably shaped by my own background and ideological standpoint and as such, the production of value-free knowledge is considered impossible (Creswell, 2007). This is a point articulated by Patricia Hill Collins (2000), who notes that theory can never be truly objective since it will always remain influenced by the producer. In recognition of the axiological standpoint of this

²⁷ I use the term ‘findings’ with reluctance, as I do not believe that data can be merely excavated and found; instead, I believe that data is *generated* through a process of interaction between the researcher and the research participant.

research, it is therefore necessary to not only openly discuss the values that shape the narrative but also include my own interpretations in conjunction with those of interviewees. Indeed, significantly influenced by a 'feminist' approach to research, in this thesis I reject the somewhat 'malestream' theoretical assumption that all social research ought to be objective. Rather, I acknowledge that "all research is ideological because no one can separate themselves from the world" (Letherby, 2003: 5) and as such, a reflexive approach was adopted throughout the duration of this research, taking into consideration my own ideological standpoints on sex work and sex trafficking.

4.3 Methods of data generation

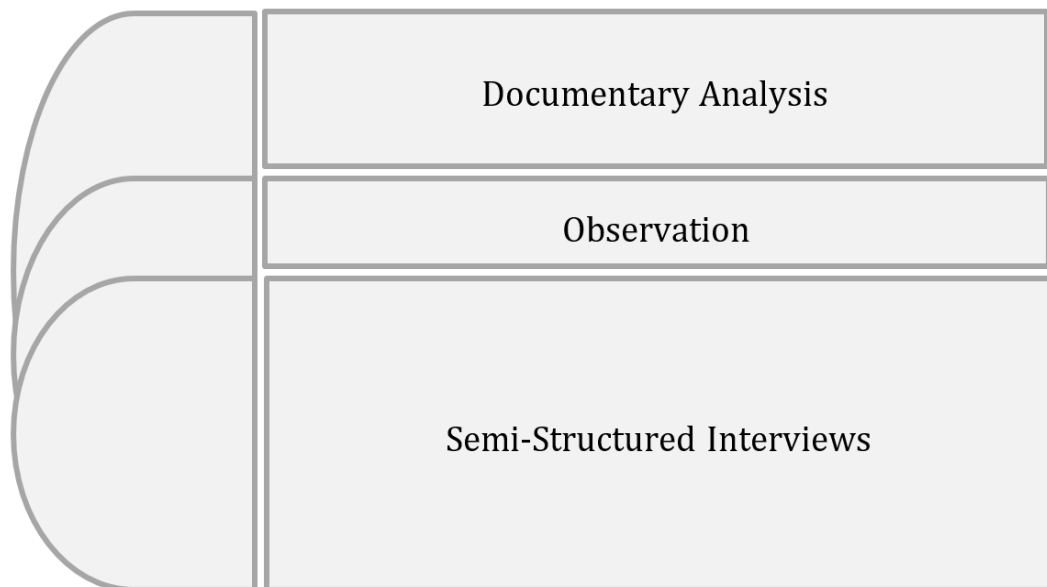
A range of research methods have been employed in previous studies of governance, with American researchers tending to employ quantitative methods to the study of policy networks and their European counterparts preferring to conduct qualitative research (Klinj, 2012). For this research, I deemed qualitative methods of data generation to be most appropriate, on the basis that they enabled: a predilection for viewing the social world through the eyes of the research participants (Bryman, 2008); a prioritisation of rich detail to offer a complex contextual understanding of the issue (Marshall and Rossman, 2006); and an openness to emerging concepts (Snape and Spencer, 2003). Although a resource-intensive enterprise (Hewson, 2006), the generation of *primary* data was required to answer the research questions posed in this thesis. In keeping with the philosophical and theoretical orientations of this research, data was not however considered to be amenable to 'collection'; rather, through an interactive relationship with interviewees I actively facilitated the construction of knowledge (Mason, 2002). Methodological triangulation – defined by Denzin (1970) as the use of multiple research methods – was employed in this research to enhance the quality of the data generated. As outlined in Figure 4.1, several research methods were therefore utilised – albeit, to varying degrees – in order to generate rich qualitative data. It is to each of these methods that this chapter now turns.

4.3.1 Documentary analysis and observation

While the importance of documentary data was acknowledged in the works of Marx, Durkheim and Weber, its utilisation has become somewhat neglected in

more recent years (Punch, 2005) and its use as a stand-alone method of data collection is judged by some researchers to be somewhat limited (Flick, 2006). The analysis of documentary sources, however, forms an important part of this thesis. It not only facilitated the identification of key stakeholders and potential interviewees but also, perhaps more importantly, aided the contextualisation of the thesis and formed part of the body of data. I conducted a literature review during my first year of study (2011/12), using key terms to guide my exploration of mainly academic sources. This was augmented over the course of the fieldwork and writing-up phases, and supplemented with an analysis of policy documentation and ‘grey’ literature. In so doing, documents derived from both state and private sources were collected and thematically analysed. In addition, although functioning largely in a pragmatic role rather than forming a coherent or discrete method of data generation, I also undertook some observation at relevant anti-trafficking events and of social media. While I took field notes following observation at events, attendance was utilised primarily to identify and recruit interviewees [see: section 4.4].

Figure 4.1: An Overview of Multiple Research Methods in Action



In keeping with my social constructionist epistemological position, neither the documentary sources nor observation at anti-trafficking events were merely understood as a direct reflection of ‘reality’. Instead, the context, construction and

meanings of the interactions and documents were interpreted (Mason, 2002), in order to understand the various ways in which trafficking is governed and how anti-trafficking actors interrelate. To this extent, through the methodological triangulation of data, I utilised documents to augment, challenge and/or validate data generated from the qualitative interviews. I believe that as a consequence the findings presented in this thesis are richer than would have been achieved by one method alone.

4.3.2 The qualitative interview

The main source of data generation deemed most appropriate for this research was the semi-structured in-depth interview method. Adopting an abductive research strategy (Blaikie, 2007, 2010), I considered it essential that the chosen method prioritised interviewees' experiences, interpretations and understandings (Mason, 2002). The qualitative interview method also permitted both myself and the interviewee to diverge freely and structure the interview in the manner we deemed most fitting (Gillham, 2005). It therefore had the benefit of not only allowing me to probe for more information and thus yielding a greater depth of detail but also of generating data which was unexpected or unforeseen (Walsh, 2001). Indeed, as a 'live' policy issue, it was imperative that I adopted a 'real time' research approach (Pawson, 2001), remaining flexible and responsive to pertinent changes in policy and practice, as well as to unexpected emerging data. To avoid interviewees diverging too widely from the focus on the research, I utilised an interview guide (Gillham, 2005; Schensul et al., 1999). Although the interview guide was piloted with two interviewees – which usefully highlighted problems in the framing of questions, and gaps and wastage in data generation – it was continually refined and redeveloped throughout the fieldwork process. I found it helpful to tailor the interview guide to each interviewee in advance of the interview, in order to ensure that only pertinent questions were included and in the interest of building good rapport.

Most interviews (n = 37 of 42) were conducted on a face-to-face basis, thereby creating an interactive process between the interviewee and myself, with the expectation that this would best generate data pertinent to answering my research questions. It became apparent, however, that interviewees' demanding work schedules and the geographically dispersed nature of this research dictated

that some interviews (n = 5) had to be conducted over the telephone. Telephone interviews were not only more cost-effective than face-to-face interviews (Miller, 1995) but also, in some cases, I found that they appeared to increase interviewees' sense of anonymity and consequently yielded richer data (Fenig et al., 1993). I considered it preferable to digitally audio-record the interviews, in light of observations that it can correct the natural limitations of memory recall (Silverman, 2006) and may have a liberating influence, allowing one to devote their full attention to the interviewee. Furthermore, it allowed for the potential to re-analyse data at a later date, in light of emerging theoretical ideas (Heritage, 1984) and developments in anti-trafficking policy and practice. It was recognised, however, that it might be disconcerting to some interviewees to digitally audio-record their interview (Moyle, 2011) and as such, they were given the right to refuse. In light of this, one police and one NGO interviewee requested that their interview not be audio-recorded and instead, only hand-written notes were taken. In line with the philosophical and theoretical assumptions underpinning this research, field notes were also taken and utilised to analyse my own role in the generation of the data, a process Mason (2002) deems 'vital' in reflexive qualitative research.

While due consideration was given to the method of data generation adopted, the qualitative interview does inevitably have its limitations. Indeed, a common critique frequently levelled at qualitative interviews, particularly from those informed by a positivist research paradigm (Golafshani, 2003), is that the 'external reliability' and 'internal validity' of the data is poor. As such, it is argued that findings cannot be generalised to the population as a whole (Bryman, 2008). Yet this research does not attempt to produce data which is replicable; instead, I acknowledge that my predilections and subjective leanings have inevitably influenced the data generated and therefore, a reflexive approach has been essential throughout. Similarly, this thesis does not endeavour to generalise its findings to the (somewhat enumerate) population of anti-trafficking actors but rather, it strives to generalise to theory, by developing a coherent theoretically-informed argument (Bryman, 2008). It is, however, the 'elite' nature of many of my interviewees which raised the greatest challenges in relation to fieldwork, rather than the interview method itself. It is to the practice of interviewing 'elites' in a politicised policy area that this chapter now turns.

4.3.3 Interviewing 'elites' in a politicised policy area

As Morris (2009) observes, although the body of literature on the interview method itself is substantial, there is notably less written on how to research 'experts' or 'elites'. This may be the product of a paucity in research about people in positions of power, as social scientists relatively rarely "study up" (Ostrander, 1995: 133). What is more, the practice of interviewing 'elites' in *politicised* policy areas has largely been neglected in methodological writings (Connelly and Wicker, 2013; Lancaster, 2016). Although widely regarded as one of the most authoritative sources on the practice of elite interviewing – credited with advancing the method from an under-researched tool to one of central importance – Dexter (2006), like many of the scholars that follow, does not fully deconstruct the meaning of 'elite' (Richards, 1996). There does appear to be some consensus in the literature, however, that elite interviewees are those with particular expertise on an issue and/or those that command a position of authority or privilege (Burnham et al., 2004; Dexter, 2006; Kezar, 2003; Lilleker, 2003).

Smith (2006) has, however, problematised the power relations present in elite interviews, suggesting that it is difficult to identify who is 'powerful' and what the meaning is of the 'power' that they hold. Indeed in my research, interviewees did vary in terms of their authority and influence, or their level and nature of 'eliteness' [see: section 4.4 for more detail regarding the sample]. Similarly, as Duke (2002) recommends, I was aware that the power dynamics between myself and interviewees were not one-dimensional. Instead, my own power appeared to be in a state of flux throughout the fieldwork process, and at times interviewees appeared to display insecurity and construct me in the position of authority. In recognition of the complex and/or problematic nature of the term 'elite', scholars have sought to adopt alternative terminology such as 'influential' (Monaghan, 2008) and 'expert' (Bogner et al., 2009). Although I use the term 'elite', I saw it as a site for constant reflection throughout the research process. Casting a critically-reflexive eye over three stages of the fieldwork process – pre-interview, interview, and post-interview – I now consider some of the realities of 'elite' interviewing in a politicised policy area.

Firstly, at the pre-interview stage, the challenges associated with gaining access to and recruiting 'elites' are acknowledged throughout the methodological

literature (Goldstein, 2002; Hertz and Imber, 1995; Morris, 2009), and it was thus important that I sought ways to anticipate and mitigate some of these barriers. One of the earliest lessons I learnt was the necessity of perseverance when contacting potential interviewees, as well as being flexible with appointments. I also came to realise that recruitment emails were most successful if they were targeted at specific individuals within organisations, rather than generic email addresses, as it allowed less opportunity for the recipient to pass on the responsibility for responding. In addition, I employed a number of techniques for enhancing the effectiveness of my 'cold call' emails, including: ensuring that they remained succinct; personalising each one with information acquired through preparatory research; mentioning, where appropriate, prominent organisations which had already engaged with the research; and emphasising how the research would benefit from their involvement, all the while taking care not to appear sycophantic. Difficulties in negotiating access were, nonetheless, exacerbated by the politicised nature of the topic at hand. For example, in the wake of major events or policy changes, and during times of renewed public interest, I found that the expertise of elites was in particularly high demand, with one CEO suggesting that they in fact receive one request for their expertise every day. In this and similar situations, I felt it particularly important to differentiate my research from others and emphasise the importance of rigorous academic research, an approach that prompted many to respond positively and echo the importance of a 'research-based' response to sex trafficking.

Second, at the interview stage I soon learnt that the sensitive nature of the subject matter at hand dictated that I carefully manage the way I presented myself in interviews, positioning myself in a way which best built rapport with the interviewee. While Harvey (2011) highlights the importance of considering researcher positionality when interviewing all types of respondents, I felt this was particularly important in my research given that the anti-trafficking policy domain is fraught with contention. I recognised that the use of language, for example, was extremely significant and conveyed a great deal about one's ideological perspective. Indeed, one interviewee stated:

I much prefer the word survivor than victim. It's a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy to keep calling them victims, so I try to talk in our organisation about survivors [NGO interviewee, 03].

I therefore tended to be sensitive to the language used by the interviewee during the interview, to ensure that I made them feel as comfortable as possible. For example, I oscillated between using the term 'victim' or 'survivor', depending on whether I was speaking to an individual who seemed to adopt a crime-control perspective or a radical feminist position [see: Chapter V]. Although the importance of the 'presentation of self' (Goffman, 1978) is also recognised elsewhere in the elite interview (Conti and O'Neil, 2007; Harvey, 2011) and ethnographic literature (Roberts and Sanders, 2005), I considered it to be particularly salient when exploring a highly-politicised policy area, where an unreserved display of my feminist politics could have resulted in alienating the interviewee.

As part of the fieldwork process, I also realised that the sensitive nature of my research meant I must carefully consider the framing of the interview questions I posed. Literature on interviewing usually recommends that interviewers begin with questions that are non-challenging, moving on to those that are more sensitive once rapport has been established (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002). Although I did adopt this strategy, I found it difficult to predict which questions interviewees might find controversial. For example, while one NGO interviewee [03] avoided answering a seemingly straightforward question on the grounds that he did not wish to "get into the politics of it all", others seemed to embrace the politicised nature of the topic, suggesting that they "liked to wind up" those who advocate an ideology that conflicted with their own. In light of this challenge, I found the most effective way to pose a contentious question was to de-personalise it, by presenting a viewpoint that had been espoused by another interviewee or in existing literature (Lilleker, 2003). I thus introduced questions using phrases such as "one of my other interviewees mentioned that...", which I found helped to maintain rapport.

There was also a concern – one I anticipated from an early stage – that some interviewees may deliberately withhold information or provide socially-desirable responses to questions. Although difficulties in getting 'beyond the official line' are a common feature of interviewing 'elites' (Duke, 2002; Morris, 2009), I perceived there to be a particularly high risk of this given the highly-politicised nature of the topic at hand. Indeed, there was the potential for a backlash to occur should an organisation be quoted in a report which criticises

their funding body or should a Government-funded organisation be quoted as criticising Government policy. I found that despite my best attempts to encourage interviewees to 'open up', some did in fact toe the official line. One police interviewee [2R], when asked about how he defines trafficking, merely pointed me to the Palermo Protocol definition. Another NGO interviewee [22] refused to go 'on record', and instead answered my questions by referring me to the relevant pages of a report she had recently co-authored. As I became a more adept interviewer over the course of fieldwork, I did begin to develop ways of probing beyond the official line. One method I found particular helpful to employ was to carefully manage my own 'knowledgeability' during the interview. In some situations, I found it helpful to demonstrate knowledgeability, which appeared to enhance my credibility as a researcher and imply I was 'in the know' and thus functioned to encourage interviewees to divulge further information. I seemed unknowing in other instances, however, which I found positioned me as unthreatening and encouraged interviewees to expand more on themes I wanted to explore in more detail.

Thirdly, further points for reflection arose at the post-interview stage in relation to the elite nature of interviewees. Although applicable to a range of interview-based research projects, Goldstein (2002) suggests that it is particularly important for researchers to take full advantage of the good rapport they cultivate with some interviewees to recruit further interviewees because of the inherent challenges of negotiating access to 'elites'. With this in mind, I asked for names and contact details of people that they recommended I speak with: an auxiliary mechanism, known as snowball sampling, utilised to enrich the sample. In a number of cases, I was introduced by my interviewees via email to others working in the anti-trafficking policy domain, which usually led to successful recruitment. It seemed that these emails not only served the valuable purpose of putting me in touch with relevant people but perhaps more importantly, functioned as a 'seal of approval', adding credibility to my research. Having said that, I had to take care not to depend too heavily upon this method of recruitment because the divisive nature of the anti-trafficking policy domain increased the risk that it would merely generate contacts that shared the same ideological standpoints as the initial interviewee.

4.4 The identification and recruitment of interviewees

Since an inability to define the population parameters ruled out probability sampling, a combination of ‘purposive’ and ‘snowball’ sampling techniques were deemed most suitable. This allowed the inclusion of interviewees who were likely to facilitate an understanding of the social phenomenon of interest (Bryman, 2008). To this extent, interviewees were selected on the basis that they had experience of operating within the anti-trafficking policy domain and were thus able to provide knowledge that was pertinent to answering the research questions posed. While it was recognised that purposive and snowball samples are susceptible to idiosyncratic selection bias (Atkinson and Flint, 2003; Maxfield and Babbie, 2012), thus limiting their ‘external validity’, ‘external reliability’ and ‘representativeness’ (Bryman, 2008, Crow and Semmens, 2008), this was not considered to be detrimental to the research. Indeed, I reject these aims – which are often perceived to be rooted in the positivist philosophical position (Golafshani, 2003) – on the basis that I do not consider there to be an absolute ‘truth’ that can be extrapolated across social settings and replicated over time. Instead, this research was concerned with exploring and understanding the *multiple* accounts and interpretations that interviewees gave of their experiences of anti-trafficking politics, policy and practice.

As outlined in Figure 4.2, I adopted a relatively systematic three-stage approach to identifying and recruiting interviewees. I now briefly reflect on each of these three processes in turn. The first stage in the identification of potential interviewees was to compile a list of actors and organisations responsible for anti-trafficking policy and practice, using the knowledge I had gained through i) literature reviewing (2011/12); ii) a subsequent analysis of policy sources and grey literature; iii) and observation at anti-trafficking events. To maximise rigor, I then initially ranked the key stakeholders in relation to their level of involvement in, and influence upon, anti-trafficking policy and practice. In order to do so, the frequency by which organisations and actors occurred in the documents were counted, on the basis that those that appeared most often were considered to be, at least in theory, the most involved in ‘anti-trafficking’ in England and Wales. I soon came to realise, however, that the quantitative content analysis did not recognise the nuances of anti-trafficking politics. Indeed, as I spent more time in the field, I increasingly realised that the voices of some organisations are

prioritised over others and thereby over-represented in policy documents and anti-trafficking material. Similarly, the 'live' nature of the issue meant that the influence of particular organisations was fluid, thus shifting over the course of the research. To this extent, I decided that ranking organisations in relation to their influence was inappropriate and I should instead use the knowledge I had gained through emersion in the field to decide which organisations to contact.

Figure 4.2: The Process of Identifying and Recruiting Research Interviewees



Secondly, once the key organisations and actors had been identified, I then sought to recruit potential interviewees. I first sought to target more marginal stakeholders and once my confidence and competency levels had grown somewhat, I then moved on to targeting some of the key stakeholders. All potential interviewees were initially sent an invitation to participate in the research either from my University of Leeds email account or by post [see: Appendix II for an example], which was accompanied by an information sheet [see: Appendix III]. In some cases, potential interviewees responded both quickly and positively, whilst in others I had to send follow-up emails/letters and make telephone calls. In recognition of the importance of utilising one's own circles to facilitate the recruitment of participants documented in elite methodologies (Ostrander, 1995), I also sought to build networks with those involved in governing sex trafficking by attending anti-trafficking events. Interestingly, although I did make connections with some interviewees at these networking events, I found 'cold call' emails to be relatively successful. While I did anticipate that the difficult nature of negotiating access had the potential to cause lengthy delays in the recruitment process, I did not expect the delays to be quite so extensive. Indeed, recruiting some of the key NGO and police stakeholders was extremely difficult. It required persistence and patience, both of which were inevitably time-consuming. My 'fieldwork period' which was initially planned for

August 2012 until August 2013 subsequently overran, not completely concluding until February 2014.

Finally, the snowball sampling technique was used to augment the list of potential interviewees, once data generation had started. To this extent, it represented an auxiliary mechanism employed to enrich the sample when other avenues for contacting potential interviewees had begun to dissolve (Noy, 2008). The value of this sampling technique has been acknowledged in projects similar to this one, in which stakeholders are few (Atkinson and Flint, 2003) and the identities of actors are unknown or difficult to establish (Tansey, 2007). I endeavoured to take advantage of the 'professional networks' of interviewees by asking them to recommend other potential interviewees who were operational within the anti-trafficking policy domain. This referral process appeared to be relatively successful, perhaps because it functioned as a 'seal of approval' and thus added to my credibility as a researcher. That said, the snowballing technique did tend to generate contacts who shared the same ideological standpoint as the initial interviewee. Thus, given the inevitable selection bias associated with snowball sampling, a reflexive account of and critical attitude towards (Brewer, 2003a) data generation was adopted throughout this research, and additional care was taken to ensure that people with a range of competing perspectives were consulted. I did find, however, that some interviewees were not forthcoming with recommendations, particularly those that either appeared unwilling to 'get involved in the politics' of sex trafficking or seemed somewhat ostracised in the anti-trafficking policy domain. For example, one NGO interviewee [15] stated: "I'd be amazed if there's anyone I could come up with that you haven't already thought of."

In total, I conducted 15 interviews with police officers – three of which included two interviewees – and 24 interviews with 22 different NGOs [see: Appendix I for a break down of interviewees]. Interviewees varied in relation to their job role and seniority: some were Case Workers and Police Constables, whilst others were CEOs and Detective Superintendents. As I expected, NGOs were generally easier to recruit than police interviewees, perhaps because they have a greater interest in raising awareness around sex trafficking, with advocacy often as one of their organisational aims. Additionally, I found it a challenge to identify the police officers who were responsible for dealing with cases of trafficking since

often this information was not publicly available. Searching grey literature, such as conference programmes and working group minutes, proved most fruitful in the identification of police interviewees. An alternative would have been to submit Freedom of Information requests. Similar to other scholars, such as Fitzgerald (2016), I decided from the outset that I would not interview womyn labelled by the authorities as 'victims of trafficking'. This was both a practical and ethical consideration. Practically, difficulties in accessing this 'hard-to-reach' group and in gaining ethical approval to interview victims were taken into account. More pertinently, however, the womyn labelled 'victims' do not always self-identify in that way (Cusick et al., 2009) and for those who have experienced exploitation, I did not wish to compound the trauma they may have experienced.

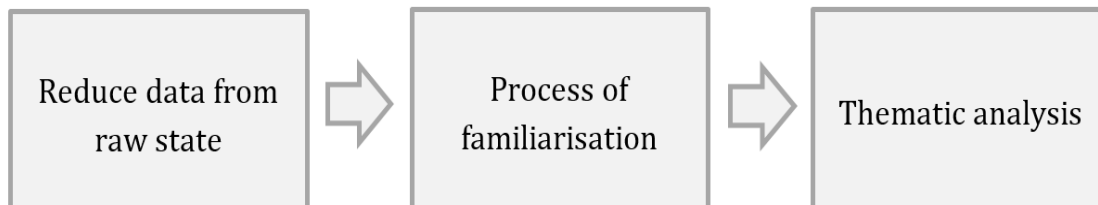
4.5 Data analysis

As Figure 4.3 details, I also adopted a three stage approach to data analysis. Firstly, given that data cannot be analysed before it has been reduced from its 'raw' state (Blaikie, 2000),²⁸ audio-recordings of the qualitative interviews were manually transcribed verbatim. Although I had planned to transcribe as soon as possible after completion of each interview – thus following Davies (2007) advice of ensuring that any problems were identified and rectified for future interviews – time pressures meant that this was not always feasible. I did, however, take time to reflect on each interview and amend both the interview guide and my own practice in light of my experiences. While the time-saving benefits associated with employing the services of a transcription agency were persistently appealing, the associated financial costs could not be absorbed by the research budget and I was keen to use transcription as an opportunity to immerse myself in the data (Neuman, 2006). To this extent, by listening to the audio-recordings of the interviews, studying the transcripts and reading my field notes, I gradually became conscious of recurring themes, which I then listed to explore in greater depth during thematic analysis (Richie and Spencer, 1994). A list of these themes is included as Appendix IV. Indeed, transcription of the qualitative interviews was not merely perceived to be a technical detail which followed data collection and

²⁸ Documentary data, on the other hand, was already in a textual format and therefore did not require transcription.

preceded data analysis; rather, as Bachman and Schutt (2010) observe, data analysis was considered to be something that began in the field and continued throughout the transcription and coding processes.

Figure 4.3: The Data Reduction and Analysis Process



Both the interview transcripts and other relevant documents were then analysed using a ‘thematic approach’: a textual-investigative technique deriving from, and drawing upon, the established qualitative content analysis tradition (Gomm, 2008). While scholars whose work is grounded in a social constructionist perspective often choose to conduct a discourse analysis, the two do not sit together in a ‘one-to-one fashion’ (Burr, 2015). Thematic analysis is becoming an increasingly common method of qualitative data analysis; although, it does not have a universal framework from which to follow (Bryman, 2008). In this research, however, thematic analysis began with the development of an index. Although the index included some *a priori* issues – such as the themes included in the interview guide – it was largely constructed ‘inductively’, by identifying emergent patterns in the transcripts (Ezzy, 2002). The index was then subsequently applied to all data, which was coded and categorised in order to organise the grouping of inferences, meanings and themes (Ericson et al., 2010). To this extent, data which did not appear in a coherent or sequential manner could be easily retrieved for the purpose of further analysis (Mason, 2002), and the relationships between themes could be identified (Pope et al., 2006). As a ‘live’ policy issue, developments in sex trafficking policy and practice inevitably dictated that new themes continually emerged from the data and as such, the index required frequent (re)development.

To facilitate the thematic analysis of interview transcripts and documents, NVivo 9 computer software was utilised to code and retrieve data, from which I then was able to compare emerging themes. Its utilisation had the primary benefit

of allowing the analysis of a greater amount of data than would be feasible to manually analyse, which according to Joffe and Yardley (2004) may yield richer findings. Similarly, Seale (2000) suggests that some audiences are coming to trust research findings produced in projects that have utilised computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software more than those that employ manual analyses, due to its perceived superior rigor. That said, *NVivo* did not represent an alternative to the careful consideration of emergent themes. In effect, I used it primarily as a tool by which to store and group data. Throughout data analysis, I was very aware that the processes of ‘constructing an index’ and ‘coding and retrieving’ involved the making of judgments as to the meaning of data. As recommended by Glaser (1978: 56), therefore, I took care to avoid subconsciously applying ‘pet’ codes. Instead, I employed ‘theoretical sensitivity’ – that is to say, I ensured that I did not over-code to nodes which merely conformed to my own ideological understandings of sex trafficking [see: section 4.7].

4.6 Ethical considerations

As a feminist social constructionist researcher, I endeavoured to adopt a critical reflexive approach throughout this research and as such, a consideration of its ethical implications significantly influenced the research design process. This research conformed to the established set of principles which guide the conduct of social research (May, 2001) set forth in: The British Sociological Association’s Statement of Ethical Practice (2002); The Social Research Association’s Ethical Guidelines (2003); and The University of Leeds Ethics Committee Guidelines (2015). It was granted ethical approval by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee on 20 June 2012 [Ref: AREA 11-171]. Emerging as a key ethical principle since the mid-1970s (Faden and Beauchamp, 1986: 186), informed consent was sought from all interviewees by way of an information sheet²⁹ and a consent form. Following a model of ‘on-going consent’ (Byrne, 2001; Wiles et al., 2007), interviewees were encouraged to ‘member check’ (Creswell and Clarke, 2011) their interview transcript to ensure that it accurately represented their experiences (Blaikie, 2010). At this point they could amend or withdraw data. This research also conformed to the obligations of the Data Protection Acts: all

²⁹ See: Appendix III for a copy of the information sheet.

confidential files were stored on the University of Leeds secure server or in lockable filing-cabinets within the School of Sociology and Social Policy.³⁰

Every effort was also taken in this thesis to uphold my 'duty of care' to protect the anonymity of individual interviewees (Coffey, 2012). Interviewees were, however, given the choice about whether or not to list their overarching organisation/police force as having participated in the research. While oft-considered the 'default position' of ethically-sound research, the guarantee of *total* anonymity to interviewees (Coffey, 2012) failed to appreciate the complexities of this thesis. I thus made interviewees aware before their participation that they may remain identifiable to their peers (Allmark et al., 2009) because of the small size of many anti-trafficking organisations and the snowball sampling method employed. Indeed, an inherent limitation of snowballing is that interviewees are aware of others that *may* be included in the sample (Pole and Lampard, 2002, Vogt et al., 2012). Similarly, Duke (2002) suggests that 'elite' interviewees are particularly likely to discuss their contribution to research and its value with each other, compromising their anonymity.

4.7. Positionality and reflexivity in the research process

Although this thesis is not based upon a heuristic methodology in which reflexivity was the 'primary methodological vehicle' (Etherington, 2004: 31), I nonetheless recognised the importance of reflecting upon my own role within the research process. By doing so, I have sought to demonstrate throughout this chapter my rejection of both Max Weber's notion of '*wertfreiheit*' (value-neutrality) in social research (Ringer, 1990) and the centrality of 'objectivity' found in orthodox sociology (O'Connell Davidson and Layder, 1994). This thesis is instead founded upon the assumption that there is no one 'truth' that can be collected or found (Blaikie, 2007). The research findings, therefore, are a product of my interactions with interviewees and given the *active* role I played in their production, there can be no denying the influence of my own personal values. I

³⁰ Confidential files included: digital audio-recording of the qualitative interviews, interview transcripts, and a master file listing the names and 'anonymisation codes' attributed to interviewees.

therefore now briefly reflect upon my positionality within the research process, with particular reference to the role of my own feminist politics.

As will be demonstrated in the subsequent chapters, the anti-trafficking policy domain is fraught with contention and fragmentation which is often concentrated on the morality (or otherwise) of prostitution. Before starting this PhD research, I was aware of the ideological debates in much academic (feminist) literature about coercion/choice in the commercial sex industry. I was less aware, however, of how these debates operate on a ground-level amongst the network of agencies involved in 'anti-trafficking'. Initially, I took care to avoid becoming embroiled in debates about the rights or wrongs of sex work, for example by ensuring that my participation in social media remained neutral. Similarly, throughout the fieldwork process I avoided voicing my own ideological position since I was concerned that my own feminist politics could lead some interviewees to give socially-desirable answers or worse still, alienate them completely. At no point, however, did I feel it necessary to lie about my own 'sex workers rights perspective' but instead I, like other 'elite' interviewers (Conti and O'Neil, 2007; Harvey, 2011), employed subtle ways of managing my 'presentation of self' (Goffman, 1978). I replicated the political language used by my interviewees, oscillating between using 'sex work' or 'prostitution' depending upon who I was interviewing, and I framed politicised questions in a manner in which they appeared de-personalised:

I've read literature lately that has challenged my own viewpoints and some of it is very critical of anti-trafficking organisations on the basis that they unquestionably assume that everyone who is referred to them has been trafficked. How would you respond to that critique?

In some of those cases, I found that the interviewees presented a very neutral viewpoint, suggesting that they were equally as reluctant as I was to get drawn into ideological debates. Indeed, in stark contrast to the vehemently anti-prostitution opinions I heard expressed at various anti-trafficking events, some interviewees claimed not to be interested in the 'politics' of trafficking and prostitution. This once again emphasised both the importance of getting beyond the 'official line' in interviews and of employing methodological triangulation to validate data.

In the last year of my thesis, I became more heavily involved in activism in this (and other) policy areas and engaged in a more ‘public sociology’ (Currie, 2007). As such, I began writing comment pieces on topics related to my work. In response to Fiona Bruce MP lending support for a Sex Purchase Act, for example, I published a critique of the Swedish Model on *Politics.co.uk* (Connelly, 2016) and an analysis of the UK ‘rescue industry’ in *The Independent* (Connelly, 2016). By this point, I felt uncomfortable with the approach I had previously adopted and believed I should use my ‘academic voice’ to support sex workers and migrant womyn who themselves may not always have the same avenues to express their views. That said, the crux of my argument has always been, and will continue to be, that the voices of sex workers ought to be prioritised, which inherently involves a redefinition of the traditional research agenda (Connelly et al., 2015).

There was one occasion in particular that really brought to the fore my position within the research and made me reflect carefully upon my research practice. As detailed in an extract from my fieldwork diary presented below, the situation I found myself in encouraged me to carefully consider my own ethics and politics, and the extent to which they were compatible with producing ‘rich’ and original data:

I found myself in an unexpected situation, which has made me consider the question, perhaps for the first time, how far am I willing to go in the pursuit of the best data possible? After my interview finished with an officer from [a police force in England], he asked if I wanted to attend a ‘pre-welfare visit meeting’, which would demonstrate the multi-agency working he had told me about in his interview. Soon, I found myself sat in a room surrounded by police and, to my disbelief, womyn from a charity I knew to be decidedly Evangelical Christian. I was told that together they would be conducting a raid, and was invited to join them. Feeling everyone’s gaze on me as they waited for my response, my mind raced. I knew I didn’t agree with the anti-prostitution ideology I considered everyone in that room to hold, nor even the idea of brothel raids as an effective anti-trafficking measure. Yet at the same time, I was curious about how this ‘multi-agency partnership’ would conduct itself and excited about the data I would have afterwards. The decision was however taken out of my hands, as the DI seemed to become aware (somewhat belatedly) of the health and safety implications my being there may have and I was asked to leave the room.

While I did not have to choose between ‘data’ and ‘ethics/politics’ on this occasion, it is an issue which I was forced to reflect upon after the event and one in which, as a feminist researcher, I may find myself considering again in the future.

Ultimately, I reached the decision that regardless of the promise of rich data such a venture might yield, I cannot justifiably engage in this sort of activity. As such, if a similar situation presents itself again, I will not merely sit back and allow the practice of brothel raiding to happen without at least first presenting a critical voice. I believe that to allow these practices to go unchallenged would make me a collaborator in the harming of sex workers.

4.8 Closing remarks

This chapter has set out the research strategy and methods employed to generate data pertinent to answering the research questions posed on page 11 of this thesis. Throughout, I have sought to demonstrate the (messy) realities of conducting social research, which are compounded in explorations of politicised policy areas. I have thus broken with the academic conventions set forth by orthodox sociology, in which the principles of objectivity are prioritised (Ringer, 1997). Like most feminist researchers, I recognise that complete detachment from the research process is neither possible nor desirable (Letherby, 2003). Instead, I recognise that my own predilections and subjective leanings have influenced the design of this research, the generation and interpretation of its data, and how findings are presented in this thesis. Yet, as Gelsthorpe (1992) notes, the rejection of objectivity in research does not mean a rejection of the need to be precise, critical and rigorous. Rather, a reflexive approach to research – one advocated by scholars such as Patricia Hill Collins (1989) – is considered to ‘improve’ empirical research and theorising. It is therefore a theme I return to in the remaining chapters of this thesis.

Chapter V - The Politics of 'Anti-Trafficking': Sex Wars, Slaves, and Illegal Aliens

This chapter draws upon my own empirical data to explore the organisational politics of anti-trafficking actors and how their constructions of trafficking shape understandings of, and response to, sex trafficking in England and Wales. It has become somewhat axiomatic in discourses around the sex industry to construct understandings of trafficking in terms of radical or liberal feminist ideology, often leading to a polarised 'sex wars' debate (Weitzer, 2005: 976). Yet while radical feminism has subjugated anti-trafficking policy and practice for the past 100 years (Doezema, 1998; Hubbard et al., 2008), the feminist monopoly has dissipated in recent years as processes of neoliberalisation have brought with them 'networked' approaches to policy development and implementation [see: section 3.3.1; Blanco et al., 2011; Rhodes, 1997]. The responsibility for 'anti-trafficking' has thus been shared across a miscellany of organisations, whose interests at times converge and other times conflict. This chapter therefore draws upon Peter Haas' (1992) 'epistemic communities' concept, introduced in Chapter III, to analyse how anti-trafficking actors have come together around particular paradigms that link their shared understanding of trafficking and the best response to it. I therefore identify five broad anti-trafficking 'communities' and present a critical analysis of how their in(ter)dependent interests, priorities, and politics influence the development and implementation of anti-trafficking policy. This chapter argues that although the radical and liberal feminist 'communities' continue to exert some power over how knowledge is constructed and disseminated in the anti-trafficking policy domain, the politics of anti-trafficking is more complex than this feminist dichotomy implies. Instead, anti-trafficking discourse, policy and practice has moved beyond the 'sex wars' to become defined by a concern over 'slaves' and 'illegal aliens'.

The chapter begins by summarising the main 'communities' I argue are active within the anti-trafficking policy domain, outlining briefly: their estimated size, the level of their influence on the policy process, and relationship relative to each other. Thereby, I demonstrate that these 'communities' are neither completely distinct nor are their boundaries and 'membership' stable (5.1). The chapter then continues with a critical exploration of each 'community' in turn,

tracing: their key beliefs, their actions, interactions with other communities, and how they have influenced policy development and implementation. I first explore the relevance of radical (5.2) and liberal (5.3) feminist politics upon contemporary anti-trafficking efforts, before offering an analysis of the modern slavery 'community' (5.4.) I argue that that modern slavery 'community' has become hegemonic within the anti-trafficking policy domain, which has far-reaching implications for policy and practice. The smaller – albeit, influential – anti-immigration 'community' (5.5) and crime control 'community' (5.6) are then examined, before the chapter concludes by returning to Haas' (1992) theorising of 'epistemic communities' (5.7). In this final section, I engage in a sociological application of Haas' (1992) work, in order to examine the extent to which his policy network framework helps explain the highly-contested anti-trafficking policy domain. This chapter therefore demonstrates that the anti-trafficking policy domain is a site upon which 'communities' battle for dominance, sometimes as bitter rivals and other times as uneasy allies, in order to push forward their own politics.

5.1 An overview of anti-trafficking politics

Human trafficking has commanded the attention of the public in a manner unlike other twenty-first century crimes (Howard and Lalani, 2008), which as a result, has enabled the proliferation of actors and agencies involved in 'anti-trafficking'. Once the reserve of a few voluntary sector organisations, anti-trafficking has become a central concern of a diverse and vast 'network' of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and state agencies. Given this rapid growth, it is perhaps unsurprising that trafficking has become an extremely politicised issue: "a volatile topic easily used to affix other political agendas" (Haynes, 2004: 231). Yet while the divisive nature of trafficking is well-documented in existing literature on the sex industry (O'Brien, 2011; Soderlund, 2005; Weitzer, 2011), few have looked beyond the ubiquitous 'sex wars' debate to other agendas that shape this "contemporary battle-ground" (Munro, 2005: 93). Vijayarasa's (2015) analysis of seven human trafficking 'agendas' is one exception to the feminist focus, and her work has informed my own understanding of the key tussles that take place within the anti-trafficking policy domain. Yet while my concern is with how different anti-trafficking 'communities' interact in their battles to exert influence

over anti-trafficking policy and practice, Vijayarasa's (2015) research is more concerned with dispelling the key myths anti-trafficking actors promulgate in the pursuit of their political agendas. Elsewhere, Kempadoo (2012) has developed a similar analysis, exploring three dominant narrative frameworks: abolitionist, criminal justice and transnational feminism. Although Kempadoo's (2012) work has also influenced my analysis, the 'narrative' concept does not quite capture my interviewees' accounts of the anti-trafficking policy domain in England and Wales. Instead, it is the 'epistemic community' concept (Haas, 1992) that best facilitates an exploration of how anti-trafficking actors at times converge, and at other times diverge, in their attempts to influence the development and implementation of policy.

My findings suggest that there are five different anti-trafficking 'communities' within the anti-trafficking policy domain in England and Wales: radical feminist/neo-abolitionist, liberal feminist, modern-slavery, anti-immigration and crime control. It ought to be noted from the outset that subjective judgment was involved in the identification of these 'communities', their defining features, and their 'membership'. It was indeed rare for interviewees to self-identify with the anti-trafficking 'communities' I present here. Rather, they reflect my interpretation of the accounts of interviewees, alongside my own documentary analysis and observations of the anti-trafficking policy domain. I prescribed anti-trafficking organisations to these 'community' categories by examining how interviewees framed trafficking, their causal understandings, practical responses to trafficking, and attitudes towards Government policy. I also examined how anti-trafficking actors interrelate, including which organisations they collaborate with and their opinions about the practices of other anti-trafficking actors. With this subjectivity in mind, these 'communities' represent what Max Weber (1949) terms 'ideal types', in that they are a conceptual tool for aiding the understanding of anti-trafficking policy and practice. To this end, they are the product of the analytical accentuation of some of the aspects of anti-trafficking politics. As Weber (1949) explains, ideal types do not reflect concrete reality but rather, an attempt to present a precise and coherent version of reality in order to aid understanding of a social phenomenon.

Although I posit that five anti-trafficking 'communities' exists – which differ in their aims, agendas, ideological standpoints and priorities – their

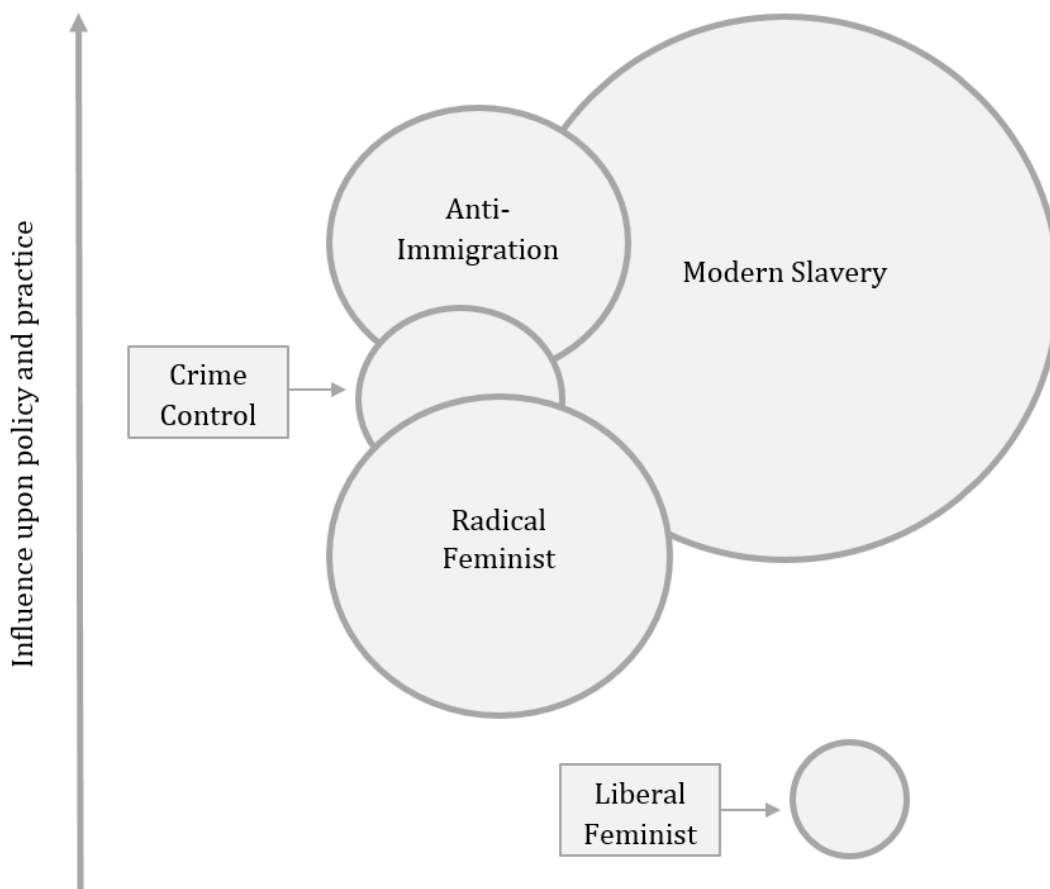
boundaries are to some extent porous. The anti-trafficking ‘communities’ may therefore interlink and reinforce one another, when their interests converge. It could be argued that many of the ‘communities’ I explore here are in fact encompassed within an overarching, ‘humanitarian community’. As Hertzke (2004: 6) asserts, the humanitarian agenda has “linked left and right, secular and Christian around this issue” to create “one of the most significant human rights movements of our time”. Figure 5.1 diagrammatically depicts the intersections between each of the five ‘communities’, and also positions them both in terms of their perceived influence over policy and practice and in relation to their size.³¹ The aim of Figure 5.1 is to provide a simple, diagrammatic overview of the anti-trafficking policy domain in order to introduce the main ‘communities’. As such, this diagram ought not to be read as anything more than an introductory tool. It is the in-depth discussion offered in this chapter that fully explores the politics of ‘anti-trafficking’.

Figure 5.1 is helpful, however, in making a number of general observations from the outset. First, in relation to size, it is the modern slavery ‘community’ that is the largest, with an increasing number of organisations adopting its politics. Although traditionally dominant, the radical feminist ‘community’ has recently declined in size as key organisations have lost their local authority funding. The liberal feminist ‘community’ finds little support within the anti-trafficking policy domain since its ‘membership’ is largely made up of sex worker support projects rather than anti-trafficking NGOs *per se*. Second, the anti-trafficking ‘communities’ have varying levels of influence upon policy and practice. While the modern-slavery ‘community’ may have risen to become the most influential – evidenced in its successful lobbying for the *Modern Slavery Act 2015* – the anti-immigration ‘community’ remains salient in terms of affecting policy. Although it is heavily criticised both in the academic literature and by much of the anti-trafficking voluntary sector, anti-immigration sentiment continues to underpin much of the anti-trafficking response in England and Wales. Third, while many of the ‘communities’ overlap, it is the modern-slavery ‘community’ that interrelate most

³¹ Here, size refers to the number of anti-trafficking actors/organisations/agencies that comprise the ‘community’ and has been estimated using interviewees accounts, alongside my own documentary analysis and observations. I have deliberately avoided offering a numerical estimation of the size of each ‘community’ since these represent ‘ideal types’ and Figure 1 is only intended as a visual aid for the reader.

with other ‘communities’. The liberal feminist ‘community’ is the most discrete. The cross-cutting nature of these ‘communities’ is central to my analysis since I do not intend to portray the anti-trafficking domain as straightforward paradigmatic but rather, shed light on the complex politics anti-trafficking actors engage in.

Figure 5.1: A Diagrammatic Introduction to the Epistemic Communities Active within the Anti-Trafficking Policy Domain



It is important to recognise that these ‘communities’ – and the organisations’ that comprise them – are not static but rather, the epistemes they pursue can change over time. With this in mind, different ‘communities’ may gain prominence over others at different points in time, their power and influence over policy and practice fluctuating. It is also clear that particular anti-trafficking ‘communities’ find support within different arenas. Although as I argue in this chapter that the liberal feminist ‘community’ finds little support within the anti-trafficking policy domain *per se*, its harm reductionist aims are pursued by a growing number of voluntary sector support agencies operating more broadly within the sex

industry. Furthermore, over time, organisations may move from advocating one perspective to advocating another. This was highlighted by one NGO interviewee, who spoke about the way in which organisational politics may ‘mature’ – that is, actors may adopt a new perspective in light of their experience in the sector:

I think I’ve heard it put well and said using the analogy of the toddler (laughs). You get these organisational growths. You do grow up. You do mature ‘cos you’ve had to wrestle with these things over a longer period of time [NGO interviewee, 17].

As this interviewee elucidates, anti-trafficking actors may move from one ‘community’ to another as they gain experience in the policy domain, and/or ‘communities’ themselves may evolve over time, changing their values and actions.

It is also possible for individuals within an organisation to adopt a different episteme to the organisation’s overarching one. One interviewee, for example, worked for an NGO that was vocal in leading calls for a *Modern Slavery Act* – their work central to the modern slavery ‘community’ – yet herself, suggested that conceptualising trafficking as slavery may be problematic:

In that report (It Happens Here), they talk consistently about modern-day slavery... but there is a risk to that... Because if you pretend that actually there is no connection with immigration, there might be a problem in recognising the role played by states in protecting the borders and therefore forcing a lot of migrants to come into the country illegally [NGO interviewee, 19c].

Throughout the interview, she suggested that the modern slavery ‘community’ (inadvertently) diverts attention away from the socio-structural causes of the exploitation of migrant womyn. On a number of occasions, she referred to academic literature critical of the repressive anti-immigration politics of Western states and as such, it appeared that her beliefs were informed more by academic work on migration than the episteme of the organisation that she worked for. This supports Choudry and Kapoor’s (2013: 3) assertion that many NGOs “are themselves sites of considerable internal struggle over politics”. This juxtaposition between individual and organisational politics was, however, relatively uncommon as the vast majority of interviewees adopted their organisations’ overarching beliefs.

5.2 The radical feminist and neo-abolitionist ‘communities’:

‘Prostitution, it just leaves a nasty taste!’

This chapter now explores each ‘community’ in turn. It begins by exploring the radical feminist and/or neo-abolitionist ‘communities’ – theorised in section 2.2.1 – and their influence upon anti-trafficking policy and practice. It has been noted elsewhere that radical feminism and neo-abolitionism have historically exerted great influence within the anti-trafficking policy domain (Doezema, 1998; Hubbard et al., 2008). It is clear that for some anti-trafficking actors, their work continues to be grounded in these ideological assumptions. At the centre of the radical feminist ‘community’s’ work lies the view that prostitution is inherently violent towards, and exploitative of, womyn. One founder of a small NGO, for example, was dismissive of the idea that womyn may choose to sell sex voluntarily. She suggested that all womyn engaged in the sex industry are ‘victims’, drawing upon a link frequently espoused by anti-prostitution advocates – although, rarely evidenced – between prostitution and histories of childhood abuse:

Obviously there is a small – and they are extremely small – minority of individuals who choose to work in the sex trade... My personal take on that is that they are still victims because I’ve spoken with several of them and actually when you dig beneath the surface, something went wrong in their life at some point, something in their childhood. Many women involved in prostitution have come out of an abusive background... And to me you are still a victim because no little girl when she’s 3 or 4 years old, dreams of going to into that industry... It’s not a dream any normal, healthy, whole individual would have [NGO interviewee, 11].

Here the interviewee appears to utilise a model of ‘false consciousness’ to explain why all womyn engaged in the sex industry, even those who consider themselves empowered, can be positioned within a discourse of victimisation. A similar notion underpinned an assertion made by a Detective Chief Inspector [2D], who claimed that “whether they’re doing it of their own volition or not, it’s sex trafficking. They are victims.” Levy (2015) suggests that the concept of ‘false consciousness’, borrowed from Marxist analyses of the working classes, is a common tool employed by radical feminists to explain how exploitation may manifest under the guise of consent. In light of this viewpoint, it is perhaps unsurprising that much of the work that the above NGO interviewee defined as

'anti-trafficking' involved encouraging – seemingly voluntary – sex workers to exit the sex industry.

This concern with 'exiting' womyn from the sex industry was a defining feature of the radical feminist 'community'. While 'initial' exiting is a well-documented practice amongst those adopting a radical feminist perspective on prostitution, interviewees noted that they also engage in, what may be described as, 'secondary' exiting. One NGO interviewee, for example, noted that some womyn have required support to stop selling sex from their trafficking safe-house:

We do have in-house Exiting Prostitution Worker... We have had instances where we know women have continued to work and obviously we have a very strong line on what prostitution is but as a project we support the women and we haven't ended support, ever, to anyone because we've found them to be working... we would work with someone to actually get them to make those options (i.e. to stop sex working) [NGO interviewee, 07].

Although the interviewee emphasised that they do not terminate support if they find a woman in their safe-house to be selling sex, it seemed that much of the support she described was aimed at helping womyn to exit the sex industry. Rather than acknowledge that a woman may make a conscious decision to engage in sex work, the radical feminist anti-trafficking 'community' appears to assume that she has not yet realised she is a 'victim', and requires additional support from them in order to reach this realisation.

As Brooks-Gordon (2006) observes, on the issue of prostitution separatist radical feminists and the religious-Right have found an uneasy alliance. This alliance is not altogether new; the concerns of first wave feminists and Christian abolitionists also aligned around 'white slavery' during the nineteenth century. As such, not all actors within this 'community' are fervently feminist but rather, simply share similar views regarding the immorality of prostitution and the need to eradicate commercial sex. It may thus instead be more accurate to term those who hold this episteme, the neo-abolitionist 'community'. Indeed some police interviewees, for example, did not appear to exhibit particularly feminist views but did nonetheless condemn the sex industry. One ex-police officer, for example, demonstrated a belief that no woman would choose of her own volition to sell sex, when he emphasised the importance of educating clients not to purchase sex:

It's all walks of life going in there, 24/7, and having sex with young girls for money. It makes the hair on the back of my neck stand up just thinking about it. I just think it just leaves a nasty taste in your mouth. I think we need to educate people, *men*, that it's not acceptable to go into these places... I say (to clients) "you know if it was your sister, would you happily say to your sister 'I think that's a great job?'" [Ex-police interviewee, 2B].

As this interviewee demonstrated, distaste of the purchase of sex was a prominent feature of the accounts of the neo-abolitionist 'community', which were also frequently couched in neoconservative morality. Like the neo-abolitionist 'community' more broadly, he expressed a narrow view of the conditions under which sexual relations are acceptable: within the confines of traditional, heterosexual, non-contractual relationships. From this perspective, sexual relations ought not to be bought and sold. This interviewee went on to describe the changing demographic of the UK sex industry, suggesting that while it is now predominantly migrant womyn who sell sex in the UK, few have migrated voluntarily to work in the sex industry:

But I've come across women that have travelled to work in the sex industry in the UK but when you try and pin them down and how they first came to be doing that, very few of them will tell you that there wasn't some form of trafficking in the first instance [Ex-police interviewee, 2B].

As is evidenced in this quotation, those within the neo-abolitionist 'community' often constructed migrant womyn as incapable of exerting their agency, paternalistically positioning them firmly within the victim role. In so doing, they conflated migrant sex work and trafficking, which may serve to justify their intervention into the lives of migrant womyn, a notion I develop in Chapter VII [section 7.2].

Indicative of the neo-abolitionist 'community's' construction of sex workers as 'victims', is that one of its core aims is to lobby for a Sex Purchase Law in England and Wales. This law is based on the 'Swedish Model' of the regulation of prostitution, in which the client is criminalised whilst the sex worker is treated as a victim. To this end, the neo-abolitionist 'community' has found some success through the proposal Mary Honeyball MEP submitted to the European Parliament, as well as in the ongoing Home Affairs Select Committee's consultation process [see: p. 138]. Notwithstanding this support, some interviewees still believed that their anti-prostitution voice is marginalised within the anti-trafficking policy

domain. One NGO interviewee stated, for example, that the more dominant ideology is that of organisations such as the English Collective of Prostitutes – that is, those that advocate for sex workers’ rights:

I think sometimes you get the impression, like with ECP, that that *is* the voice of the women. But that’s the empowered voice. They’re not a very transparent organisation but what we know is we’ve got lots of people that have exited that would see things very differently and whose voice often isn’t heard [NGO interviewee, 17].

Here, the long-standing tension between radical and liberal feminists was apparent. This interviewee emphasised that the liberal feminist voice is in fact ‘louder’ than the radical feminist/neo-abolitionist voice, that it is the ‘empowered’ or “happy hooker” (Bindle, 2015b: unpag.) discourse that is dominant. This claim is, however, widely disputed in much academic literature on the sex industry, which evidences that it is radical feminism that has traditionally subjugated discourse, as well as policy and practice (Hubbard et al., 2008).

While it is perhaps unsurprising that the ‘sex wars’ (Weitzer, 2005) are to some extent present in the anti-trafficking policy domain, it should be noted that in addition to criticising the ‘empowered voice’ of the liberal feminists, the neo-abolitionist ‘community’ also raised concerns about the modern slavery ‘community’. Central to these concerns was the notion that the gendered nature of victimisation is lost when trafficking is constructed as modern-day slavery. For the neo-abolitionist ‘community’ trafficking for sexual exploitation ought to be first and foremost understood as a violence against womyn issue. One NGO interviewee epitomised this view, noting that:

...the problem with a lot of the new organisations is they see trafficking as a slavery issue and they talk about it using slavery terminology and slavery imagery... Few of these organisations understand trafficking or prostitution within the well-established violence against women conversation. I think that’s my problem... when it comes to the whole commercial sexual exploitation side of things, it *is* a gender issue [NGO interviewee, 15].

As this interviewee demonstrates, although on the issue of trafficking there does appear to exist some consensus between radical feminists and Christian neo-abolitionists, there still remains some suspicion from the radical feminist ‘community’ of faith-based organisations. This is particularly the case if the Christian organisation is perceived to adopt a modern slavery episteme. The same interviewee went on to explain that one reason why Christian organisations may

not fully comprehend the gendered nature of trafficking is because they are less sympathetic than feminist organisations to the issues that affect womyn within an inherently patriarchal system:

...a lot of them are Christian organisations and the church isn't renowned for being an equal organisation... as soon as you pitch it using slavery, gender doesn't matter [NGO interviewee, 15].

In so doing, this interviewee drew upon a well-established critique of 'biblical patriarchy'³² to discredit the modern slavery 'community', and imply that it not only fails to incorporate a gender-analysis but also, perpetuates gender inequality.

The radical feminist and broader neo-abolitionist 'communities' appear to have retained some of the power they have traditionally exercised in the anti-trafficking policy domain; a significant number of both NGO and police interviewees indeed appeared to be suggestive of their 'membership'. Yet many other interviewees criticised the anti-prostitution sentiment held so central within these 'communities' and downplayed their influence over anti-trafficking policy and practice. Some, for example, denounced the manner in which these 'communities' use trafficking as a vehicle by which to pursue other political agendas:

[They] have tried to get the payment of sex/prostitution out-lawed... Basically they're using human trafficking in order to get prostitution and selling sex banned [Ex-police interviewee, 2A].

As this ex-police interviewee explained, there was a concern amongst some interviewees that the neo-abolitionist 'community' draws a false causal link between trafficking and prostitution in order to impose upon womyn its understanding of sexual morality. An anti-trafficking CEO expressed similar concerns about the (hidden) agenda of the neo-abolitionists 'community', displaying a particular scepticism of Christian neo-abolitionists:

I had some serious question marks about some of the faith-based organisations in this arena because I think sometimes there's another agenda at work, so it's often wrapped up with the debate about prostitution. They're related but they're different issues... That may cause some antagonism because of the stance that they take on those issues [NGO interviewee, 12].

³² Biblical patriarchy, or Christian patriarchy, is a broad concept used to refer to the set of belief held by some (typical Evangelical) Christians about the superiority of the man and the importance of clear gender roles.

Interviewees' observations that trafficking is utilised as a means to legitimise the criminalisation of sex workers' clients, and/or to pursue the eradication of commercial sex entirely, are also made in existing literature (Anderson and Andrijasevic, 2008; Sanghera, 2012). To this end, my findings support the notion that concerns exist about how the neo-abolitionist perspective may function to control womyn's sexual bodies or as Ditmore (2011: 87) notes, how their agenda is "aimed at the regulation of morality and sexuality" but "hidden beneath a veneer of social concern."

5.3 The liberal feminist 'community':

'I wouldn't call them trafficked!'

Typically constructed as the antithesis to the radical feminist perspective explored above, the liberal feminist position is well-documented in academic literature on the sex industry (Scoular 2004b). As noted in Chapter III [see: section: 2.2.2], liberal feminists have also lobbied to affect domestic and international prostitution policy, and their thinking informs the 'harm reductionist' approaches adopted by many of the support services available to sex workers in England and Wales. Yet there appears to be a very small liberal feminist 'community' present in the anti-trafficking policy domain *per se*, with only a few NGO interviewees exhibiting what I interpreted as liberal feminist beliefs. These interviewees may be positioned on the peripheries of the anti-trafficking policy domain, working for NGOs who supported any woman involved in the sex industry rather than only those labelled as 'victims of trafficking'. In other words, for those in the liberal feminist 'community', anti-trafficking was only a small part of their work. It is perhaps unsurprising therefore that for the most part, this small 'community' of liberal feminists believe that those trafficked into the sex industry represent only a small minority and rather, that most people involved in sex work do so of their own volition. This view was summarised by one service manager, who said that they would:

...have to see more evidence of the people that were just trundling along involved in prostitution and all of a sudden they were being trafficked [NGO interviewee, 04].

In so doing, this interviewee expressed an assumption common amongst the liberal feminist 'community' that although some migrant woman may be forced to

engage in the sex industry and thus ought to be treated as victims, many more engage voluntarily and thus ought to be treated as workers [see: section 2.2.2].

Not only is the small liberal feminist 'community' positioned physically on the fringes of the anti-trafficking policy domain but they are also politically marginal. In the same way that the radical feminist 'community' regarded itself as silenced, the few interviewees that may be understood as liberal feminist noted that they had been actively excluded from steering groups, denied opportunities to funding and silenced in policy debates. These interviewees observed that their argument that migrant sex workers may exercise agency in their decision to migrate to sell sex is often silenced by the neo-abolitionist 'community' in particular, and any evidence they offered in support of this view is largely dismissed by other 'communities'. One service manager indicated, for example, that she had frequently experienced attempts by radical feminists to undermine her authority. The interviewee explained that in one high profile meeting, someone questioned her qualifications and experience:

...in a really, really high-profile public forum at the House of Lords, somebody who's an ally of the anti-trafficking organisations had the cheek to say to me "but what skills and qualifications do you even have to enable you to know whether somebody is vulnerable or not?" I found that such an extraordinarily rude and arrogant and awful thing to say... She asked me that because she doesn't agree with my perspective, my evidence-base around the thousands of people I worked with over the years... She doesn't agree with the fact we're not an 'exiting' service [NGO interviewee, 13].

The interviewee perceived this interaction to be a response to her challenging the 'exiting' mentality of the neo-abolitionist 'community', who she went on to argue have frequently sought to undermine her in an attempt to marginalise her politics and thereby minimise her influence upon the anti-trafficking policy domain.

Perhaps what best distinguishes the liberal feminist anti-trafficking 'community' from any of the others I identify is its appreciation that womyn's experiences of the sex industry are mediated by a range of intersecting and mutually-reinforcing factors. The abovementioned service manager went on to criticise the neo-abolitionist 'community' for placing too much emphasis on preventing trafficking by addressing 'demand' for prostitution. She explained that this preoccupation with blaming the male client has prevented a more useful debate around:

...all of the things which we know to be true: exclusion, social exclusion, poverty, addiction, migration, globalisation, patriarchy, lack of educational opportunities. All the things which those of us who have a social scientist mind have conversations about in terms of inequality. But they [radicals] reduce it to 'it's about demand' [NGO interviewee, 13].

In so doing, she rejected the essentialist notion that the exploitation of womyn in the sex industry can be easily explained through one form of systemic oppression: gender inequality. Instead, she identified the role of 'intragroup differences' (Crenshaw, 1991: 1242), recognising that some womyn experience greater levels of exploitation than others because of non-gendered aspects of their identity. Central to this view is the notion that race, class, sexuality, nationality and other aspects of identity mediate oppression (Ludvig, 2006). As such, this 'community' appears to recognise the limitations of 'imperial feminism' (Mirza, 1997: 9), the sort that radical feminists are criticised for embodying. Indeed, the radical feminist 'community', and the second wave feminist movement more broadly, is criticised for largely assuming that all womyn share similar experiences of patriarchal oppression, regardless of racial, socio-economic, political and cultural differences (Evans, 2015; Wright, 2014). This critique is articulated well by Mirza (1997: 9), who points out, that "ironically it [has] meant than an epistemology that rests on inclusion and equality [i]s itself excluding and unequitable". Instead, the liberal feminist 'community' appears to be aware – at least to a greater extent – of its own privilege.

While undoubtedly small in size *and* in influence, the liberal feminist 'community' embodies a more nuanced ontology than the other 'communities' I identify. It avoids reducing the complex, subjective experiences of migrant womyn to a one-dimension analyses and instead, recognises that "social positions are relational" (Phoenix and Pattermana, 2006: 187). It is perhaps because of the complexity of its understandings that it has only a limited influence within the anti-trafficking policy domain. My findings support the observation made in other policy fields that NGOs require simple and emotive messages, those that the public can understand easily, in order to: attract donor funding, gain public sympathy, and affect policy change (Harper, 2001; Stoll, 2013). The simplistic causal explanations for trafficking offered by the neo-abolitionist 'community' have therefore traditionally held greater appeal than the intersectional analyses of exploitation proffered by the liberal feminist 'community'. One ex-service

manager, who appeared to adopt liberal feminist views, explained that they themselves can be forced to use overly-simplistic storylines in order to appeal to a broad audience:

I wouldn't call them trafficked but I am just using the language that other people would use. You've got to [NGO interviewee, 01].

Some may question then whether the liberal feminist 'community' can actually be understood as a 'community', given its small size and limited influence over the anti-trafficking policy domain. Yet its few members undoubtedly share a similar perspective, core values and understanding of trafficking. Further, its size and influence are in fact much greater when we think about its reach into other – related – policy domains. With an appreciation of the existence of multiple and intersecting forms of oppression, the liberal feminist 'community' in fact sits at the juncture between a whole host of policy domains. After all, the intersecting forms of oppression described above cannot be addressed through policy change in one domain alone.

5.4 The modern slavery 'community':

'A slave, is a slave, is a slave!'

Having explored the nature, scope and role of the 'communities' often described as being engaged in a 'sex wars' (Weitzer, 2007), it is to the modern slavery 'community' that this chapter now turns. In recent years, the language of trafficking has changed: it is now ubiquitously referred to as 'modern-day slavery'. This change, however, represents more than the adoption of new terminology or linguistic slippage. Describing sex trafficking as 'sexual slavery' is in fact not new but rather, it has formed part of sensationalist trafficking discourse for some time. Day (2010) notes that the conflation of prostitution and trafficking, and its labelling as slavery, re-emerged in the 1990s; although, it was certainly evident much earlier in concerns about 'white slavery' in the 19th century (Doezema, 2010). Yet the employment of the slavery metaphor no longer merely exists as a tool used in the headlines of journalists and in neoconservative rhetoric to command public attention – to horrify their audiences – but rather, it now represents a populist ideology in its own right. As such, what we now see is the emergence and proliferation of a 'new' hegemonic modern slavery 'community'. The construction of trafficking as modern slavery, which has for some time

underpinned the work of a small number of NGOs, is increasingly spreading throughout the anti-trafficking policy domain. Moreover, it is gaining salience at a government level, perhaps best epitomised by the introduction of the *Modern Slavery Act 2015* [see: section 6.4.1]. Although the modern slavery ‘community’ borrows some of its underpinning principles from radical feminism, it arguably encompasses a broader range of actors within its borders and has more far-reaching objectives than those of the radical feminist ‘community’. These objectives are potentially more complex than the overarching radical feminist goal of eradicating the sex industry, and are often less transparent. Indeed, while the abolition of ‘modern day slavery’³³ is the explicit objective espoused by those within this ‘community’, I argue that other aims are often sought. These aims are often implicit and thus not always apparent if only read on a superficial level.

One characteristic of many of the actors within this ‘community’ – although certainly not all – is their affiliation towards the religious-Right. The appeal of anti-trafficking for Evangelical Christians was epitomised by one NGO interviewee, who explained that his organisation is compelled by their faith to help victims of trafficking:

We’re a faith-based organisation and we actually believe that there is a God who wants that best for this world and the fact that people are trafficked is not the best for this world. So, of course we’ve got a God that’s going to intervene... and we can make it better [NGO interviewee, 03].

As is evidenced in the quotation above, it appeared that many Christians gravitated towards anti-trafficking work because of their humanitarian attitudes [see: pp. 179-180]. These Evangelical Christian anti-trafficking actors appear to exert a great deal of influence over anti-trafficking practice in England and Wales. One NGO interviewee noted that they have over 120 church support groups across the country that raise public awareness around trafficking, provide donor funding to the organisation, and feed them information about potential cases of trafficking. In this regard, the modern slavery ‘community’ may operate akin to a human trafficking Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, with members of the public not formally trained in surveillance but impassioned to act because of their religious beliefs. This form of ‘backyard abolitionism’ (Shih, 2016) is expanding on a global

³³ The term modern day slavery is used by anti-trafficking actors both interchangeably with and to encompass: trafficking, slavery and slavery-like practices, servitude and forced labour.

scale, with volunteers increasingly moving into communities – not usually their own – and identifying victimhood based upon their moral perceptions and privilege. As Haynes (2014: 40) asserts, this encourages “the public to believe that ‘doing something’ – anything at all – is better than doing nothing, when the opposite may well be true.” The practices of ‘backyard abolitionists’ may put the ‘citizen-turned-investigator’ at risk, as well as the womyn she/he is trying to ‘save’. Furthermore, these practices encourage the public to impose their own values – which may be classed, racialised, and gendered – upon others.

A number of interviewees raised concerns about the faith-based nature of some of the anti-trafficking organisations within the modern slavery ‘community’. One NGO interviewee suggested, for example, that many assume the interest of faith-based anti-trafficking actors is likely to be short-lived and that once another social problem becomes popular, they would turn their attention to it instead:

You know, faith-based charities can often be seen as do-gooders, as people who are interested in something for a year or two and then they’ll flit off and do something else and there’s no substance or whatever and aren’t professional [NGO interviewee, 03].

Other concerns were raised about womyn’s access to family planning, particularly by actors from the two feminist ‘communities’ identified above. One NGO case worker [02] suggested that she had heard of victims of trafficking being refused – or at least dissuaded from – the termination of an unwanted pregnancy that had resulted from sexual abuse. A service manager [13] suggested that Buddhist womyn have been encouraged to pray in a Christian church as part of the 45 day ‘Recovery and Reflection’ period [see: section 6.2.1]. Conversely, actors within the modern slavery ‘community’ emphasised the importance of a faith-based approach, suggesting that it provides a valuable addition to the network of organisations involved in anti-trafficking. One NGO director [22], for example, indicated that faith-based organisations experience unfounded ‘institutional antagonism’ within the voluntary sector, which, as I go on to explore in Chapter VI [section: 6.4], may serve as a barrier to effective partnership working.

Whilst there is some convergence between the modern slavery and neo-abolitionists ‘communities’ – particularly around understandings of morality and sexuality – many modern slavery advocates criticised neo-abolitionists’ disproportionate focus upon sex trafficking over other forms of human trafficking.

With this in mind, some interviewees highlighted the ‘pressing need’ to raise awareness about labour trafficking, in order to shift the political debate away from focusing solely upon womyn, and trafficking’s (assumed) links with prostitution. This concern was epitomised by one CEO, who asserted that the needs of womyn trafficked for sexual exploitation ought not to be prioritised above the needs of men, womyn and transgender people trafficked for other purposes:

...what happens is then you start grading the different types of exploitation and saying “well that’s worse than that” and for (our organisation), a slave is a slave is a slave, with different types of exploitation going on. So I think it’s a dangerous track to go down because what you end up saying is “well this is worse than that.” No it’s a different form of slavery that’s how we would view it. And we need to deal with all different types [NGO interviewee, 12]

As this quotation demonstrates, the modern slavery ‘community’ adopts the belief that exploitation should not be ranked on a hierarchy, with sexual exploitation privileged in terms of its harm. Indeed, much of their concerns centred on how the focus on female sex trafficking has diverted funding and resources away from organisations working with victims of labour trafficking and/or male and transgender people. Another CEO [06] encapsulated this tension when he described the organisations working with victims of labour trafficking as “second-class”, noting that “all the cake has gone to (anti) sexual exploitation” organisations. The modern slavery ‘community’ therefore tends not to focus exclusively on sex trafficking but instead, ensures that all forms of ‘slavery’ are taken seriously by the Government, voluntary sector and the public. Yet in the very act of distinguishing ‘sex trafficking’ from ‘labour trafficking’, the modern slavery ‘community’ reinforces the assumption – which forms the foundation of radical feminism – that sex work is not legitimate labour. If we were to indeed adopt the position that sex work is legitimate labour then trafficking into the sex industry would constitute another form of labour trafficking. To this extent, both the modern slavery and neo-abolitionist ‘communities’ share the core value that the commercial sex industry does not represent legitimate employment.

At the nucleus of the modern slavery ‘community’ rests an analogy drawn between contemporary trafficking and trans-Atlantic slavery. The putative parallels drawn between the two are indeed explored in some of the existing academic literature on trafficking [see: section: 2.1]. Yet, the modern slavery

'community' has gone much further than simply outlining some of the similarities between contemporary trafficking and the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Rather, it had deliberately invoked and cultivated the trans-Atlantic slavery analogy in order to justify and legitimise its modern slavery episteme. In the following sections, I examine how the modern slavery 'community' has utilised the analogy to stimulate action but in so doing, may – perhaps unintentionally – function to diminish the harms and legacy of the trans-Atlantic slave trade [5.4.1]. I also explore how the analogy has been employed by the modern slavery 'community' to construct modern-day abolitionists as saviours and Britain as righteous [5.4.2]. I posit that by doing so, it masks the pivotal role of Western states' in trans-Atlantic slavery and in the creation and maintenance of the conditions which enable and facilitate contemporary trafficking.

5.4.1 Employing the slavery analogy to stimulate action

The analogy between contemporary trafficking and trans-Atlantic slavery may have been cultivated in order to stimulate action from the public, funders, anti-trafficking actors, governments and others. One NGO manager noted, for example, that the slavery analogy is an appealing one both at a policy-making level and at the level of the general public:

I think it's more appealing especially at the Government level and Parliament level. At the opening of the exhibition the Prime Minister clearly stated that it should be called modern-day slavery in this country. It's sort-of more inclusive... it includes *everybody*: children, men and women, as well as different *types* of exploitation. I think it's easier for a lot of people in general to understand slavery rather than trafficking [NGO interviewee, 19b].

As such, the interviewee indicated first that some of the appeal of the concept of 'slavery' rests in its inclusive nature: the way in which it acts as a portmanteau for all forms of trafficking and all categories of victim. Second, the interviewee also suggested that the slavery concept is easier for the public to understand, perhaps because it offers a ready point of reference. If the analogy *is* employed by the modern slavery actor coalition in an attempt to stimulate action, it has had some success. Indeed, the modern slavery 'community's' lobbying for a *Modern Slavery Act* was successful [see: section 6.4.1] and my findings indicate that there has been a growth in the number of NGOs who either explicitly, or often implicitly, adopt a modern slavery episteme. This lends weight to O'Connell Davidson's (2012:

unpag.) assertion that “the fight against the phenomenon presented as the modern equivalent of the transatlantic slave trade has enormous popular appeal”.

Central to the analogy, and to its purpose of stimulating action, is the assertion that contemporary trafficking is worse than its trans-Atlantic antecedent. As Bravo (2007: 210-211) notes, a core hypothesis is that:

...modern trafficking in humans is more widespread and awful, and involves more victims and human degradation, than did the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Indeed, this claim is made in international and domestic policy, the media, NGO publications, and populist and academic writing. To select but one example, the BBC drew upon an unverified statistic generated by Kevin Bales³⁴ et al's. (2009) to claim that:

The estimated number of people in slavery – 27 million – is more than double the total number believed to have been taken from Africa during the transatlantic slave trade [Hogenboom, 2012: unpag.]

Unsurprisingly, given its pervasiveness in policy, populist and academic discourses, this hypothesis was also prevalent in many of the interviews I conducted. One Detective Chief Inspector, for example, noted that there is, or ought to be:

...a realisation that the problem itself right across the globe is far worse. There's a far greater incident of it than what we first thought was the case, and you'll no doubt be aware from the research that you've done that slavery is probably more prevalent now than ever it has been in history [Police interviewee, 2D].

To borrow from Aradau (2004: 256), the modern slavery ‘community’ may therefore be understood as employing a ‘politics of pity’ in order to prompt a response from the public. Indeed, emotions may be powerfully utilised in this manner, by drawing upon the visceral imagery the analogy invokes, to mobilise a strong response.

The claim that ‘slavery is worse now’ may have the harmful – albeit, likely unintentional – consequence of leading to a diminution of trans-Atlantic slavery. By drawing parallels between the trans-Atlantic slave trade and contemporary human trafficking, the modern slavery ‘community’ implies that the nature of movement in each case is similar. This fails to recognise two important issues

³⁴ Kevin Bales is co-founder of the US organisation Free the Slaves and holds the position of Professor of Contemporary Slavery at the Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation, University of Hull.

regarding notions of coercion and agency. First, that the trans-Atlantic slave trade involved the *coerced* movement of African people by Europeans. A failure to uphold the coercive nature of this movement in our understandings of trans-Atlantic slavery functions to diminish the heinous exploitation of African people at the hands of Europe: it prevents recognition of trans-Atlantic slavery as a crime against humanity and for which Britain was a 'world leader' (Understanding Slavery Initiative, 2011). Second, in drawing this parallel, the modern slavery 'community' fails to recognise that those who are often labelled as 'victims' of contemporary trafficking "almost invariably want to move to another region or country" (O'Connell Davidson, 2012: 1). Once again, these 'new abolitionists' ignore the complexities of migration and construct victims of trafficking as lacking any autonomy in their decisions to migrate. As highlighted in chapter VII of this thesis, exploitation in the UK may be viewed as a preferable alternative to the conditions faced in countries of origin [see: p. 210]. From this perspective it is important to recognise that the line between 'slavery' and freedom is in fact difficult to distinguish, as neoliberal society permits the experience of coercion and exploitation in legal work situations (O'Connell Davidson, 2006).

In keeping with Sexton's (2010a: 15) arguments, the modern slavery analogy may be also considered to be another example in which Black suffering has been appropriated as the model for non-Black grievances. For Woods (2013: 130) this is not done in solidarity with Black people but rather, their histories of oppression are 'parasitically consumed' in order to sustain the politicised modern slavery episteme. To this extent, the label 'slavery' is applied in order to appeal to a "generalized sense of right and wrong in the world today" (Brennan, 2014 in Kempadoo, 2015: 11). The analogy drawn between trans-Atlantic slavery and contemporary trafficking reinforces a perception that slavery was a 'self-contained episode' – a moment in history that we have moved on from and although another 'moment' has occurred, we can similarly move on from it. Kirchner (2014, unpag.) makes this point, arguing that:

...the insistence on qualifying the act with a time period makes any particular instance of the crime seem like an anomaly. The term implies that slavery is a thing of the past but that every once in a while, we might unearth an anachronistic and therefore, shocking 'modern-day' instance of it.

Slavery must instead be understood as part of a larger history of colonialism, segregation, apartheid, and racial discrimination. As Quirk (2015) argues, for those campaigning for reparations it is particularly important that we acknowledge that unequal power relations, white privilege and social injustice are part of the legacy of trans-Atlantic slavery that prevail today. As such, it could be argued that the modern slavery 'community' functions to divert attention away from the legacies left by the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

4.5.2 Employing the slavery analogy to position Britain as the righteous

A second function underpinning the utilisation of the trans-Atlantic slavery analogy is the construction of Britain as the righteous. The modern slavery 'community' appeared to portray a version of reality in which slavery has *re-emerged* in recent years under the new guise of trafficking and in so doing, constructed its 'members' as modern-day abolitionists. Urged by David Cameron (2007) – who proclaimed in his speech to commemorate the 2007 bicentenary of the abolition of slavery that “the dedication of William Wilberforce and his colleagues is still needed today” – there is no shortage of modern slavery abolitionists willing to take up Wilberforce's mantle. Indeed, a number of interviewees made reference to Wilberforce, indicating that his values shape their own. One officer from a Force Intelligence Unit, for example, suggested that less emphasis ought to be placed upon 'police priorities' and instead, more consideration given to what is morally right or wrong:

What we always say when we [talk] about police priorities and all this crap is, it was written into the Magna Carta if you look hard enough, that no man should be a slave. And that was in King John's time and it was a priority then. Shed burglary and theft of pedal cycles weren't, so there's something gone wrong in the meantime... For William Wilberforce – you know him? – he said famously... “Once you've been told, you can never again say that you didn't know” and that's all you need to know... It's whatever is right or wrong when it boils down to it [Police interviewee, 2E].

As this quotation demonstrates, the modern slavery 'community' appears to uncritically celebrate the role played by Wilberforce in the abolition of slavery, constructing him as the gold-standard to emulate (Quirk and Lebaron, 2015). In so doing, the modern slavery 'community' assumes a 'mantle of righteousness' by invoking images of Britain's past actions against, and its continued condemnation of, trans-Atlantic slavery (Bravo, 2007: 254). This sense of righteousness is also

observable both in the *Modern Slavery Act 2015* and its surrounding discourses. It is clear that the UK Government, through the *Modern Slavery Act*, seeks to establish itself at the forefront of legislative reform in this field, hoping to become one of the first countries globally to introduce an Act specifically tackling modern slavery (Home Office, 2014b). As Baroness Butler-Sloss, Frank Field MP and Sir John Randall MP (2013: 7) elucidate, the Government wishes to utilise the Act to construct itself (once again) as “a world leader in fighting the insidious curse of slavery.”

By invoking the trans-Atlantic slavery analogy, the modern slavery ‘community’ also perpetuates the notion of the ‘blameless state.’ As Wood (2013: 126) argues, the dominant “discourse on anti-trafficking repackages the time-worn theme of colonialism’s so-called civilizing mission.” To this extent, it constructs the West – the colonisers – once again as the ‘saviours’, ignoring the role it played in the trans-Atlantic slave trade and plays now, in creating and maintaining the conditions which facilitate contemporary trafficking. In the adoption of the Western saviour mantle, the modern slavery ‘community’ often constructs migrant womyn as helpless and passive. This was evidenced in a CEO’s description of an interactive exhibition, which invited the public to experience what it is like to be a ‘modern-day slave’:

Because I wasn’t there, I don’t know the details but I’ve seen pictures of them blind-folding people and leading people. So, they had all this interactive thing and they talked about slavery and being lead, controlled... [NGO interviewee, 08]

This account may indicate that the modern slavery ‘community’ positions victims of trafficking as in need of rescue, in order to legitimise its own adoption of the antithetical position: ‘saviour’. In addition to constructing the West as blameless, the use of the analogy simultaneously implies that non-Western countries are in some way complicit in contemporary trafficking. Bravo (2007: 255) suggests that:

...this use also turns the tables so that the historically victimized, that is, African countries that were the source of trans-Atlantic slaves, become the contemporary victimizers.

Indeed, some NGO interviewees spoke about their efforts in ‘origin countries’, while others highlighted the need for more anti-trafficking prevention programmes in ‘origin countries’. In so doing, they firmly sought to shift the blame away from Britain. Underpinning many of these comments was the notion that Britain has a duty to intervene, to educate, and to show people how they ought to

live in order to avoid becoming a 'victim of trafficking'. In other words, the modern slavery 'community' appears to uncritically assume that the 'right-way' is the 'Western way', and thus imposes the values of 'the West' upon 'the rest'.

It may also be argued that this positioning of Britain as the world-leader in the fight against modern slavery diverts attention away from the government's unwillingness to apologise for the role it played in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. David Cameron's visit to Jamaica in September 2015 was shrouded in controversy when he claimed that the island should "move on" from slavery, refusing to engage in discussions about reparations, despite being pressed by the Jamaican prime minister. On the same visit, Cameron similarly refused to meet campaigners requests for him to personally atone for the wealth his ancestors acquired by owning slaves in the 19th century. Quirk (2015: unpag.) argues that this continuing refusal to meaningfully apologise is symptomatic "of a more general reluctance to directly confront the history and legacies of slavery". Instead of highlighting their regret of the fundamental role Britain played in trans-Atlantic slavery and addressing the legacy it has left, actors within the modern slavery 'community' emphasise their righteous humanitarianism. It appears that this episteme operates in a manner that ignores the role Britain played in establishing the slave system. My research supports Quirk's (2015: unpag.) assertion that a key reason modern-day abolitionists have little interest in considering the complicity of Britain in trans-Atlantic slavery and the legacy it has left may be because their efforts are part of a 'white-saviour industrial complex'. Indeed, as Woods (2014) asserts:

...abolitionists against racial slavery showed us how 'rescue' movements are always self-referential: they aim at the salvation of the rescuer, not the rescued.

A detailed critique of the 'rescue industry' is examined in chapter VI, drawing attention to the way in which the humanitarian work of anti-trafficking actors is ultimately – albeit, perhaps not deliberately – self-interested. In this regard, the trans-Atlantic slavery analogy may be understood to be deliberately invoked to justify contemporary anti-trafficking policy and practices.

With neoconservatism at its core, the modern slavery 'community' not only does little to challenge the socio-structural conditions which enable trafficking but it in fact may function, counter-productively, to *exacerbate* the exploitation of migrant women. In particular, it diverts attention away from the

harmful nature of the UK Government's draconian immigration policies and border control practices. Nandita Sharma (2015: unpag.) makes this point when she contends:

The reasons why it is increasingly difficult and dangerous for people to move safely or live securely in new places are brushed aside while nation states rush to criminalise 'traffickers' and (largely) deport 'victims of trafficking'.

She elucidates how Western states have implemented increasingly restrictive border control policies, rather than enabled movement, in response to the increasing feminisation of migration. In so doing, they have done little to restrict migration but instead, created a legally subordinated social group of cheap, 'disposable' citizens: migrants (Lowman, 2000; Sharma: 2015). As Anderson and Andrijasevic (2008: 144) thus note, "immigration controls produce groups of people that are 'deportable' and hence particularly vulnerable to abuse". To this extent, while advertising itself as a world-leader in eradicating modern slavery, the suffering of migrant womyn remains entirely conscionable and the UK borders remain as impenetrable as before. The *Modern Slavery Act 2015* thus functions to hide the fact that the socio-structural conditions facilitating human trafficking remain unchanged; the Government can be seen to be 'doing something', while in effect, doing very little. Indeed, anti-trafficking, much like humanitarianism more broadly, "acts as a conscience pacifier" (Donini, 2010: 231).

Rather than urging the state to reform its immigration policies and border control practices, the modern slavery paradigm actually obscures their harm. It encourages an assumption that trafficking is unrelated to migration and the broader system of neoliberalism. As O'Connell Davidson (2012: unpag.) notes, the analogy so central to the modern-slavery ideology, between contemporary trafficking and trans-Atlantic slavery:

...depoliticises what is actually a highly political issue, and in doing so, renders invisible the role of the state in constructing the conditions under which some groups become vulnerable to various forms of abuse and exploitation.

My findings therefore support the assertion Anderson and Andrijasevic (2007: 136) make that the moral panic around trafficking may actually be a form of 'anti-politics' – that is, politics is 'smuggled in' under the guise of benevolence. As such, the trans-Atlantic slavery analogy has served to divert attention away from the structural causes of trafficking and moreover, the British state's ongoing role in the proliferation of its systemic causes. To this extent, rather than acknowledging

and redressing the causes of trafficking brought about by neoliberalism, the state continues to focus upon its symptoms. The 'community's' use of the analogy thus functions to detract from the inequalities that exist between: men and women, rich and poor, white and non-white, developed and undeveloped countries, and the state and the individual (Bravo, 2007).

Although I have distinguished here between a modern slavery 'community' and the anti-immigration 'community' – which I explore in the next section of this chapter (5.5) – it is important to note that there is some cross-over. The modern slavery 'community' does indeed do little to challenge the legal subordination of subaltern migrant women and even less to challenge the draconian border policies of the West. Yet I have distinguished the two, here, largely because although they both function to legitimise and justify restrictive immigration policies, their fundamental aims are different. While the modern slavery 'community' does operate to legitimise anti-immigration policies, it may do so – at least, by and large – unintentionally. It does so through inaction. Its fundamental aim is to eradicate trafficking using the slavery analogy as a means to achieve this goal. The anti-immigration 'community', on the other hand, appears to be less interested in ending trafficking: their goal is firmly to limit migration into the UK. It is to the anti-immigration 'community' that this chapter turns next.

5.5 The anti-immigration community:

'And the tax-payers paying!'

Though certainly much smaller in size than the dominant modern slavery 'community', the anti-immigration 'community' remain highly-influential in terms of affecting anti-trafficking policy and practice. It is well-documented in academic literature that state agencies have adopted an approach to trafficking underpinned by anti-immigration sentiment (Jordan, 2002; Schaeffer-Grabel, 2010). Sharma (2015) suggests, for example, that the discourses around anti-trafficking lend themselves readily to anti-immigration arguments – that is, they justify the deportation of victims and ever-more restrictive border control policies. As explored above, Western states have increasingly sought to control the movement of the citizens of countries with less social, economic and political

power. Gibney (2008: 146) posits that there has been a systemic 'deportation turn' in recent years, in which a rise in the use of deportation by Western states can be observed. Figures compiled by The Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford appear to support this observation, demonstrating that between 2004 and 2014 'enforced removals' and 'voluntary departures' from the UK have risen (Blinder, 2015). According to O'Connell Davidson and Howard (2015, unpag.), the reason for the rise in deportation and restrictions upon movement are clear: "freedom to move allows the subordinate a chance to escape from domination, to evade control, or to subvert the social order". To this extent, the UK's immigration policy and practices are designed and implemented in order to maintain the social order. Those with (white) privilege have the *right* to movement, while those deemed 'undesirable' have to 'stay at home'. Often these restrictions upon movement are portrayed by Governments, border control agencies and some NGOs as for womyn's own benefit, for their own protection.

The shift towards ever-increasingly restrictions upon movement is, of course, felt unequally. While those from the global North can largely travel freely, it is those from the global South – the 'Others' – that are deemed a threat to the security of the West. A paradox can be observed in which for some citizens border control has undergone liberalisation, while at the same time the migration of others has been increasingly repressed (van Houtum, 2010). Such is the extent of these discriminatory border practices that Sharma (2005) suggests a regime of 'global apartheid' is in operation, in which the separation of the foreign 'Other' from the national 'citizen' is not only accepted, but understood as being necessary. While Western states have relied heavily upon the flow of migrants for low-waged labour, the categorisation of 'temporary migrant worker' or 'illegal immigrant' is imposed in order to prevent migrants making claims for the same rights as 'citizens' (Sharma, 2005). Border practices may therefore be understood as imperial. Several NGO interviews noted that although the criminalisation of migration is by no means new, it appears to have gained momentum under the Coalition government. One NGO interviewee sought to emphasise that the cuts in funding to services was felt more by refugees and asylum seekers than by the general population. This, she attributed to their complex needs:

I mean, the cuts are effecting everybody but I think for refugees who are traumatised for one reason or another, who don't necessarily speak the language, who have got

culture shock or are finding it difficult to adjust to a new country, don't have qualification or experience of working in this country, and are finding it difficult to transfer their qualifications... the impact of cuts to benefits and to service impacts on refugees a lot more than on the general population [NGO interviewee, 10].

As this interviewee indicates, the impact of cuts in funding to womyn who were both asylum seekers *and* victims of trafficking are thus likely to be felt even greater. The vulnerable position of migrant womyn may indeed be exacerbated further still by the purported recent growth in anti-immigration sentiments, fascism and racism across the UK (Hoyle et al., 2011; Perry, 2015).

Although the anti-immigration episteme is no doubt highly influential, it was not one that was pursued by many interviewees. That is not to say, however, that this 'community' is not present in the anti-trafficking domain but rather, that its 'membership' is made up, by and large, of border control agencies (which were not part of my sample). Indeed, police and NGO interviewees indicated in their descriptions of interactions with border agencies and views about their working culture, that an anti-immigration 'community' is not only present within the anti-trafficking policy domain but also, highly influential. Perhaps aware of some of criticisms highlighted above, most police and NGO interviewees sought to distance themselves from the anti-immigration 'community'. Yet it became clear in the accounts they provided of their interactions with border control agencies that anti-immigration sentiment continues to pervade (immigration) law enforcement agencies. Many NGO interviewees therefore saw a large part of their role as providing guidance to victims of trafficking about immigration issues and also, challenging Competent Authorities' 'Reasonable Grounds' and 'Conclusive Grounds' decisions, and the Home Office's 'Leave to Remain' decisions.³⁵ In this regard, large proportions of the 'communities' outlined earlier in this chapter appeared to operate in conflict with the anti-immigration 'community.' One NGO interviewee emphasised that there is a pressing need to shift the focus of attention away from viewing trafficking as related to immigration to viewing it as a crime of slavery:

But all of those have been around UKBA decisions and that again is because there whole issue is framed within immigration, which is where it shouldn't be... The first and foremost question is 'is this person a victim of crime?' Let's establish that and what the crime is we're dealing with. It's the crime of slavery [NGO interviewee, 12].

³⁵ These processes are examined in Chapter VI [see: p. 141].

As demonstrated in this quotation, a tension around what lens to view trafficking through was evident across the interviews I conducted.

Interviewees, particularly NGO interviewees, offered numerous examples of the (perceived) bad practices of the UK Border Agency (UKBA), who can be understood to embody an anti-immigration episteme. Although I argue earlier in this chapter that the work of much of the modern-slavery 'community' functions to justify draconian border control practice, some of the very same organisations were outwardly critical of UKBA. Practices that were perceived to be explicitly repressive were condemned by NGOs, while more tacit practices – which often had the same or similar outcomes – were not questioned. Much of NGO interviewees' concerns about the anti-immigration 'community' centred on their swift, uninformed deportation of trafficked womyn and asylum seekers. One, for example, told of a case involving the child sexual exploitation of two (assumed to be) Ghanaian girls, who had been subject to Juju ritual. Rather than the girls being referred to Child Protection Services and offered support and guidance on claiming asylum, UKBA intervened and swiftly organised for deportation:

...we had some real concerns which were flagged up by some women in a flat, with young girls who were believed to be 14 or 15 and we didn't know where from but Ghana was mentioned as a potential country. And we reported it to (the Metropolitan Police unit), CO14, and they went to investigate it... UKBA were (then) involved and those girls ended up being deported and my understanding was that they were not even deported to the country that they actually were from. They were deported to another country. And the whole thing was a mess, a massive, massive mess. And CO14 were not happy about it... They were as distraught at us that the fact that UKBA intercepted and decided that because these girls weren't talking, they were gone [NGO interviewee, 13].

As is demonstrated in this quotation, both the police and voluntary sector were often displeased with the expedite deportation of potential victims of trafficking by UKBA, which they explained frequently occurred in cases where the victim was either unwilling or unable – sometimes because of Juju ritual – to explain how they had arrived in the UK.

UKBA's lack of understanding of Juju was also highlighted in two other interviews, both with ex-police officers. One explained that UKBA staff had made little attempt to educate themselves about Juju: the term given to the spiritual beliefs and practices of people from the West African region of Yoruba. As such, it

was claimed that they failed to comprehend the power that a Juju ritual may hold over a person and how it may be used by perpetrators to exploit womyn. Another ex-police officer explained that womyn may not present coherent accounts of their victimisation to law enforcement agencies in the first instance because of their spiritual beliefs:

In every single case that we dealt with the victims were rubbish. They were in the first instance because they were so traumatised and also, with the witch-craft, the Juju, they were frightened of saying something against the Demi Gods because they'd swore an oath. And so in the first instance their stories didn't add up but... We'll manage that, we will present it to the court and explain to the court what sort of trauma they've gone through [Ex-police interviewee, 2B].

In so doing, he explained that Juju ritual may be so powerful that even after a woman has been 'rescued' from trafficking, she may still believe that she must comply with the conditions of her oath. To this end, both of these ex-police officers contended that it is because of UKBA's lack of knowledge of Juju that they disbelieve womyn who are legitimate victims of trafficking. With this in mind, they condemned UKBA's ready deportation of migrant womyn who present inconsistent or incoherent accounts of victimisation.

A few NGO interviewees were particularly critical of the Home Office's deportation practices, which were perceived to be harmful for victims of trafficking. Perhaps the most common concern noted by interviewees was that fear of deportation serves to prevent victims of trafficking from 'coming forward'. This concern is, however, based upon the assumption that all womyn exploited in the sex industry wish to leave it. Rather, as I explore fully in Chapter VI [p. 210], some migrant womyn may weigh up the harms associated with their involvement in the sex industry, with the benefits of working and living in England and Wales and reach decisions to remain in situations that are (to varying degrees) exploitative. One NGO case worker raised a further concern about deportation practices, positing that UKBA was systematically reluctant to recognise womyn as 'victims of trafficking', instead imposing the label of 'illegal immigrant' upon them. She argued that this may be a method to ensure enough deportations are made annually to meet the managerial targets imposed by the Government:

Yeah, it feels like more of a reluctance to recognise women as trafficked and perhaps that's connected to targets around immigration... I mean, there's sort-of action on the *illegal* immigration... Even when people raise something that should be picked up on

as trafficking and they've said things in their screening interview, the immigration interview, that should ring alarm bells around trafficking. But it's being ignored and then you're not getting involved until someone's got removal directions and you might have two days to get them stopped [NGO interviewee, 20].

Her criticisms are consistent with observations made Anderson and Andrijasevic (2008) that labelled as 'illegal migrants', womyn can be justifiably deported. This withholding of the victim label by border agencies may be understood as part of the overarching 'culture of disbelief' I explore in Chapter VI [see: section 7.2.3]. In this extract, however, she also points to a common concern articulated by NGO interviewees that evidence of exploitation is being purposely overlooked in immigration interviews – that is, evidence that could be employed to confirm victim status. Without this victim label, womyn do not receive the support of anti-trafficking NGOs for long periods of time, if at all, and applications for 'Leave to Remain' status face greater barriers. With this in mind, it may be in the interests of the anti-immigration 'community' to repress evidence of victimisation in order to reach their deportation targets.

A few NGO interviewees also recognised that the deportation of trafficked womyn does not address their needs, encouraging them to seek illegitimate and unsafe means of entry back into the UK and/or making them vulnerable to re-trafficking. The founder of a small anti-trafficking NGO noted that deportation may result in the woman being returned to her 'trafficker':

The likelihood is that they're all going to be shipped home anyway, which is the ironic thing because it doesn't really solve anything because they then come back illegally by other means... and actually the conditions that you're sending them home to, you're putting them at risk because the traffickers, they live there and they targeted those poor rural communities in these Eastern European countries or wherever they've come from. Just sending them home, sends them back into a hopeless situation and often a... more dangerous situation [NGO interviewee, 11].

Likewise, an NGO case worker, expressed a similar sentiment:

The places that we worked in got raided by immigration, that didn't obviously help. Women got sent to detention centre, they got sent home and they were brought back again a few months or weeks later still in debt, in no better situation [NGO interviewee, 04].

It does appear, however, that these interviewees adopted – what could be considered – a somewhat simplistic understanding of the trafficking process. By suggesting that the fundamental problem with deportation is that the trafficked

woman is returned to her trafficker, it implies that the *individual* trafficker is the 'problem'. Neither of the extracts above emphasise that deportation does not alter the socio-structural conditions that allow trafficking to occur. Without addressing the broader structural issues, women are deported with the same – or perhaps greater – vulnerabilities and systemic problems they experienced initially.

While many interviewees were vociferous in their critique of the practices of border agencies, it should be reiterated again that many of those adopting other epistemologies did engage in practices that functioned – albeit, largely unintentionally – to justify anti-immigration sentiment and action. Another example of this is evident in attitudes towards 'assisted voluntary return'. Many NGO and police interviewees, who had been openly critical of border control practices, commented on the process of assisted voluntary return as if it were intrinsically better than deportation. They appeared to draw an unhelpful dichotomy between voluntary return and forced removal, and failed to recognise that in effect the very notion of assisted voluntary return is oxymoronic. As Andrijasevic and Walters (2010: 21) observe:

...when migrants make the decision to return under duress or as an alternative to state-enforced expulsions, 'voluntary' seems to designate an absence of viable options rather than a deliberate choice.

Here, they emphasise that the use of the word 'voluntary' is misleading since women's return – often after having spent a great deal of time pursuing an asylum claim – is not of their volition. Rather, return is the only viable option. To this extent, the practices of the anti-trafficking organisation who assist in the process of voluntary return may be considered to overlap with the practices of the anti-immigration 'community'.

5.6 The crime control 'community':

'We get a warrant, we kick the door off, we arrest people!'

The final 'community' observable within the anti-trafficking policy domain is that of crime control. In light of the ever-increasing criminalisation of migration (Gerard and Pickering, 2013), there exists cross-over between the membership of it and the aforementioned anti-immigration 'community' [see: Figure 5.1]. Indeed, with the movement of certain (typically subaltern) people defined as crime, migration is brought under the remit of crime control. The cross-over in concerns

between the crime control and anti-immigration 'communities' were perhaps most observable in some of their joint-working. As one police interviewee noted, the force they work for has invited UKBA along to 'visits' to known indoor sex premises, in order to deal with any immigration issues that may arise:

If we know we're doing a planned visit, we'd always request a UKBA person come with us 'cos we'd find it easier to have them with us at the time [Police interviewee, 20].

In light of this cross-over, the anti-immigration 'community' arguably could be subsumed under the crime control 'community'. Yet here, I have made a distinction between the two since while the former prioritises the act of migration over that of trafficking, the later prioritises the act of trafficking over that of migration. They therefore ultimately have different foci. For the crime control 'community' it is trafficking, more than illegal immigration, that falls within their typical workload. While the two 'communities' may intersect, there remains some within the crime control 'community' that are critical of the anti-immigration agenda. One police interviewee highlighted this when he raised some concerns about the practices of UKBA:

...they appear to me to be more concerned with identifying people who shouldn't be in the country. And any other considerations, i.e. potential victims of trafficking, seem to be a secondary concern [Police interviewee, 2M].

The notion of immigration control standing in conflict with anti-trafficking policy and practice, and the implications this has upon victimhood, are discussed in more detail in chapter VII.

In addition to intersecting with the anti-immigration 'community', the crime control 'community' also intersects – albeit more subtly – with that of the neo-abolitionist and modern-slavery 'communities'. All are concerned with 'rescuing' victims and thus all, to varying degrees, position womyn within a victimising discourse. In part, the manner in which the crime control 'community' intersects with others is indicative of the confusion that existed among police interviewees about what area of policing trafficking should fall under. This view was epitomised by one Detective Sergeant, who indicated:

When we were looking at trafficking, is that a migration issue or was it really a serious and organised crime issue? Was it a prostitution issue? Where does it fit? [Police interviewee, 2R].

Here, the interviewee demonstrates an awareness of a range of narratives through which trafficking can be understood. What distinguished the crime control ‘community’ from all the others, however, is that at its heart lies a concern with law and order, and as such, the welfare of victims is only a secondary concern. Its primary concerns are with identifying cases of trafficking and ensuring that traffickers are ‘brought to justice’ – that is, prosecuted and punished using the most punitive measures available. These strategic approaches are examined in Chapter VI [see: section 6.3].

The crime control ‘community’ has a far wider remit than trafficking and as such, many within it highlighted the lack of police interest in ‘the problem’ of trafficking. On ex-Chief Constable noted that in the late 2000s there was a general culture of disbelief about the existence of a ‘trafficking problem’ and a disinterest in proactively looking for trafficking cases:

...when I was winding things up in 2009, prior to retirement, there was a lot of scepticism and a lot of disinterest about the nature of the problem from some of my colleague Chief Constables... from journalists, politicians [Ex-police interviewee, 2F].

It appears that this culture has to some extent dissipated. The rise of the modern slavery ‘community’ and the continued existence of the neo-abolitionist ‘community’ – both of which have used “unverifiable and/or incredibly elastic” statistics to inflate the magnitude of trafficking (Weitzer, 2007: 455) – have ensured that trafficking has risen up the political agenda. That said, some of the more rural police forces still appeared to have a culture of disbelief and disinterest, with a few of the potential interviews I contacted declining interview because they did not believe trafficking to exist in their police force area.

Several of the police officers I did interview, however, explained that trafficking only ‘does not exist’ in some force areas because police forces are not proactively looking for it. One police officer [2M] within a Force Intelligence Bureau, for example, noted that “there is no doubt that the evidence is out there if you only look for it”. The notion that proactive policing would detect incidents of trafficking was also emphasised by a Vice Liaison Officer:

I think with the best will in the world they’re not aware of it. I wouldn’t sit here and comfortably say we don’t have a problem. I think it’s just we’re not looking for it [Police interviewee, 20].

To this extent, the lack of identified cases of trafficking in some police forces areas may merely reflect police practices. Others noted that police forces may be

unwilling to admit that trafficking occurs in their force area because it would necessitate that resources be re-directed from elsewhere within the force. This reluctance for resources to be redirected towards trafficking, which was widely acknowledged by police officers to not be part of 'core policing', ought to be understood within the context of recent significant cuts to policing budgets (Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, 2012) and the continued imposition of key performance indicators upon the police by the Government (Home Office, 2015). Indeed, the importance of targets for steering police practices were highlighted by one police interviewee:

I think the biggest problem as well is that obvious day-to-day there's targets for everything, you know burglary and stuff like that, and in effect it [trafficking] is not perceived as a crime [Police interviewee, 2].

As this interviewee indicates, it appears that what constitutes 'crime' – that is, an act labelled as illegal and thus deserving of some form of reprimand – is largely determined by the targets imposed upon the police. Cuts in funding to the police services were also a notable concern amongst the crime control 'community' and widely highlighted as a barrier to more (thorough) investigations of potential cases of trafficking. The way in which funding dictates anti-trafficking practice is explored in the following chapter [see: section 6.5].

A draconian approach to policing sex trafficking was often evident in the accounts of interviews from the crime control 'community', which is in keeping with existing critiques of policing the sex industry (Hubbard, 2006). The practice of brothel raiding, though often rebranded as 'harm reduction visits' or 'welfare visits', was omnipresent and, as I argue in Chapter VII, a common feature of an anti-trafficking industry concerned with 'rescuing' womyn from the sex industry. Indeed it appears that it is only the liberal feminist 'community' that systematically condemns these practices, often on the basis that they displace sex workers, and can lead to their criminalisation under brothel restriction laws or their deportation. Although the practice of brothel raiding was widely justified on the basis of it enabling the 'rescue' of trafficked womyn [see: p. 185], one police interviewee sought to distance his police force, and the police service more broadly from the practice of brothel raids:

...in the UK, we used to have the mentality... we used to bust into brothels, say to two or three lasses "Are you trafficked?" "No." "Do you want to go home to your mam?" "Yeah." NFA. That means no further action. That used to happen up and down the

country. That means it's not a proper investigation...You've just got hairy-arsed cops busting the door down...If I get out for a duck at cricket, I want to run home to my mam. It's a natural thing... We're certainly aware it's not going to happen here [Police interviewee, 2E].

Here, he argues that this heavy-handed approach to policing the sex industry was a thing of the past, for his police force, if not more widely. He went on to explain that often these raids were conducted in order to recover assets under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, rather than for the benefit of 'victims of trafficking'.

There's even been a 'let's bust this brothel open because we might get POCA' attitude in the past... up and down the county... but they haven't actually investigated or spent any time to see if anybody's hurt. So we've got a lot of catching up to do [Police interviewee, 2E].

By positioning these practices as something that occurred in the past, the crime control 'community' can absolve itself from the critiques that have been so vociferously thrown at it. Rather than seeing brothel raids as part of a broader, deeply ingrained and heavy-handed police culture, this interviewee appeared to view them as something that had, or could be, stopped in a short period of time. The continued existence of (a rebranded form of) brothel raids was an issue upon which the crime control and liberal feminist 'communities', frequently and intensely, clashed. For this reason, these two 'communities' do not interconnect [see: Figure 5.1].

Although, as discussed in Chapter II [section 2.4.2], trafficking is often understood as an organised crime problem, the crime control 'community' were not unified on this issue. One police interviewee, a Vice Liaison Officer, emphasised the highly organised nature of trafficking when explaining the difficulties that the police face in identifying cases:

We've got to look for it and it isn't easy because these people, you've got to remember, who're working behind this are serious organised criminals [Police interviewee, 2K].

She could not, however, provide any examples from the cases she had worked in which an organised crime group was involved. This *may* indicate that she was drawing more upon populist constructions of trafficking than policing experiences. That said, the organised nature of trafficking was also highlighted in another (joint) interview, which I conducted with two police officers, who drew upon an example of a recent case they had worked on:

Interviewee 2H: From there we found out that there wasn't just the one in Cheltenham paying something like £1500 a say into this bank account but that the same bank account had similar amounts paid into it from banks all over the country. And it was an account we tracked back to China...

Me: So we're talking about quite organised crime?

Interviewee 2G: Oh yeah definitely, it's really organised.... It's running like a business because you've got the different layers of personnel doing different things.

Demonstrating that there was little consensus on the degree to which trafficking represents organised crime, one Detective Inspector explained that the level of organisation involved in cases of trafficking is in fact highly variable:

It varies. We've had investigations where we've had one person who's the trafficker of the victim and then we've had another investigation where we have had a gang – a group of people and that's clearly organised crime... I think it will vary from force to force [Police interviewee, 2L].

In the vast majority of the police interviews I conducted, however, most interviewees were unable to comment upon whether trafficking is perpetrated by what they perceived to be organised criminals. For the vast majority, they had simply not worked enough trafficking cases to be able to comment on the wider trends and, as such, this is an issue indicative of a lack of knowledge amongst police officers about trafficking more generally.

Although largely populated by police, the crime control 'community' is not comprised exclusively of police officers. Rather, a few NGOs cross into its boundaries, particularly those who may be understood as part of the neo-abolitionist 'community'. Some NGOs have taken it upon themselves to engage in their own investigations of trafficking, perhaps inspired by the approach adopted by the International Justice Mission (IJM). An evangelical Christian organisation operating worldwide, IJM is considered to be one of the first to take this approach and has received some criticism for its 'raid and rescue' practices, which are reported to have left sex workers homeless and unemployed (Gira Grant, 2012). These investigative-style NGOs were not, however, welcomed by all within the crime control 'community'. One police interviewee, for example, categorically stated that they would not work with Hope for Justice,³⁶ one of a number of NGOs

³⁶ This is not necessarily to say that Hope for Justice were involved in this research project.

in the UK who engage in its own investigations into potential cases of trafficking.³⁷ While the investigative approach adopted by some NGOs is returned to in Chapter VI [pp. 151-152], it is worth noting here that the tension between the police and investigative NGOs indicates that the crime control 'community' is neither homogenous nor unified. Indeed, while distrust operated between the 'communities' I identify in this chapter, there are also tensions between anti-trafficking actors within each 'community'.

What unites those within the crime control 'community' is, however, a willingness to prioritise the 'hard edge of the law' over preventative measures (Dotteridge, 2014). These preventative measures could include, for example, less restrictive immigration policies, improved working conditions for migrant workers, and decriminalisation of the sex industry. To this extent, and reflective of neoliberalism more broadly, the blame for trafficking is cast firmly upon the deviant *individual* rather than the state. As Finley and Esposito, 2012: 8) observe,

...particularly when it comes to issues pertaining to equality and social justice, neoliberals reject the notion of government as 'the guardian of the public interest' and instead emphasize competition, self-reliance and personal responsibility.

To borrow from C. Wright Mills (1959) all social issues are turned into private troubles under neoliberalism. The solution is thus punishment through the criminal justice system, rather than the 'redistributive reform' of the welfare state (Kotiswaran, 2014: 358). It may be argued, therefore, that repressive Governmental policy and the exploitative practices enabled by neoliberalism are obscured by crime control 'community'. Indeed in effect, it disguises the real 'criminal': it points the finger of blame in the direction of the 'trafficker', rather than at the state.

5.7 Anti-trafficking 'communities' as epistemic communities

Having identified and explored five anti-trafficking 'communities', the final part of this chapter explores the anti-trafficking policy domain through the lens of a policy network approach. A wide range of pluralistic approaches to policy making can be identified under the portmanteau of 'policy networks', yet it is Haas' (1992) 'epistemic communities' that best captures the complex interactions that take

³⁷ The interviewee was unwilling to explain why they would not work with Hfj and, on this occasion, I did not probe any further for fear of losing rapport with the interviewee. Their short and firm reply indicated that they were unwilling to discuss the issue further.

place between anti-trafficking actors in the production and dissemination of knowledge on trafficking. The ‘communities’ I have examined in this chapter are made up of actors who, through their social interactions, generate shared knowledge about what trafficking is and how to best respond to it. These ‘communities’ hold what Merton (1972: 9) terms “contending claims to truth.” This chapter is therefore constituted by, and a constituent of, the view that trafficking holds no existential reality of its own but rather, is socially constructed through the complex social interactions that take place between the network of actors involved in anti-trafficking. Social reality, and so trafficking, is transformable (Antoniades, 2003). While Adler and Haas (1992) emphasise the merits of epistemic communities for theorisation within the discipline of International Relations, here I have responded to Meyer and Molyneux-Hodgson’s (2010) call for a sociological application of epistemic communities in the study of a domestic policy process. Adopting a sociological approach to epistemic communities has meant that an adaptation of sorts is required since, as Zito (2001) notes, epistemic communities have greater application when their criteria are not as strict and their definition not as narrow.

While the literature on epistemic communities and broader policy network approaches was reviewed in Chapter III [see: section 3.4.1], a brief recapitulation is necessary here. Haas (1992: 3) defines epistemic communities as:

...a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area.

In so doing, he points to how a shared understanding of a social problem and the best solution to it, can act to bring together diffuse actors. Yet Haas’ (1992) conception also emphasises how collectives of actors act as purveyors of shared knowledge, in order to influence policy development and implementation within their policy domain. Perhaps what best distinguishes epistemic communities from other policy network approaches – and what makes them most applicable to the anti-trafficking policy domain – is that each community believes that they have the preeminent claim on knowledge (Antoniades, 2003). They believe that their version of knowledge is the truth: the episteme. To this end, each anti-trafficking ‘community’ presents itself as ‘expert’ to the Government, the public, the media and others within their policy domain. Therefore, it is in policy domains where

stakeholders contest heatedly to exert their interests that the epistemic community concept has the greatest utility. With this in mind, Haas' (1992) concept has facilitated an exploration of: how different groups of anti-trafficking actors have developed collective ways of framing trafficking, the advocacy and debates they engage in, their interrelationships with other anti-trafficking 'communities', and how they have influenced policy development and implementation. In so doing, the concept has enabled me to capture the politicised nature of the governance of sex trafficking.

Historically, the radical feminist 'community' appears to have achieved the greatest success in constructing itself as expert. They have been instrumental in encouraging an ubiquitous conflation of trafficking and prostitution and have dominated anti-trafficking discourse, policy and practice for almost 100 years (Doezema, 1998, Hubbard et al., 2008). Yet as demonstrated in this chapter, the modern slavery 'community' has in recent years positioned itself as hegemonic. It has, for example, successfully reframed trafficking in its vision within the *The Modern Slavery Act 2015*, and invoked the trans-Atlantic slavery metaphor to legitimise a modern slavery episteme. In this regard, the modern slavery 'community' has exerted its power within the anti-trafficking policy domain. Indeed, seemingly influenced by Foucault's (1980) conception of the knowledge-power nexus, Haas (1992: 2) asserts:

...control over knowledge and information is an important dimension of power and that the diffusion of new ideas and information can lead to new patterns of behaviour...

In his conception of epistemic communities, Haas' (1992) also identifies four further features: 1) 'a shared set of normative and principled beliefs'; 2) 'shared causal beliefs'; 3) 'shared notions of validity'; and 4) 'a common policy enterprise' (Haas, 1992: 3). It is to each of these features that this chapter now briefly turns, in order to assess their relevance to the 'communities' that I identify as operating within the anti-trafficking policy domain.

It is perhaps in relation to Haas' (1992) first feature of epistemic communities where the anti-trafficking 'communities' find the most common-ground. While each contributes at times blending and at times conflicting knowledge to the anti-trafficking policy domain, it may be argued that they share the fundamental normative belief that human trafficking is wrong. Each

community has formed around the core value-judgment that the sexual exploitation of womyn – however they define it – is too heinous as to be tolerated in society. It is, in effect, this shared normative belief that has stimulated each ‘epistemic community’ to action and brought them together within the anti-trafficking policy domain. It is perhaps also this shared set of normative beliefs which enables the majority of the anti-trafficking ‘communities’ to cross-cut and intersect. In practical terms, this means that anti-trafficking actors may work collaboratively to govern sex trafficking. Indeed, where their interests converge, partnerships may develop, whereby organisations that hold different epistemes come together. These shared normative beliefs therefore provide the common ground upon which the various communities can attempt to engage in joint-working [see: section 6.4].

Most of the ‘communities’ outlined above conform reasonably neatly to Haas’ (1992) second defining feature of epistemic communities – that is, each one prioritises slightly different causal beliefs. The radical feminist ‘community’ prioritises gender inequality, epitomised and perpetuated by prostitution, as the cause of sex trafficking. Male domination and female subordination are considered to manifest grossly in commercial sex, creating an industry which requires a demand for vulnerable womyn. The liberal feminist ‘community’, though small and notably lacking influence upon anti-trafficking policy and practice, attributes the causes of trafficking to a range of intersecting factors. Inadequate laws and worker rights protections thus intersect with gender, race, and global socio-economic disparities to make subaltern migrant womyn (particularly) susceptible to exploitation. The anti-immigration ‘community’ positions as the cause of trafficking into England and Wales permeable state borders, lax border control, and excessive migration from the global South to the global North. Whilst the crime control ‘community’, on the other hand, sees (organised) criminality as the cause of trafficking: the criminal ‘Other’ is thus held responsible for the exploitation of vulnerable victims.

The causal beliefs of the modern slavery ‘community’ are, however, more difficult to identify. Indeed, its reluctance to appear outwardly political serves to obscure its causal beliefs to those outside of it. These difficulties in ascertaining the modern slavery ‘community’s’ causal belief may be in part explained by its large (and ever-increasing) size, which means that there may be less unity in

actors' causal beliefs. As Figure 5.1 depicts [p. 90], its 'membership' overlaps with the radical feminist, law enforcement and anti-immigration 'communities' and as such, members may hold slightly different understandings of the causes of trafficking. Its causal belief structure may also be less-developed than the anti-trafficking 'communities' since it is the most recent 'community' to emerge in this policy domain or, at least, the most recent to emerge to a position in which it can be considered to have influence of note. As a 'new' 'community', it is also likely to have borrowed elements from the other 'communities', perhaps taking on their causal beliefs as its own. Yet this does not mean that the application of Haas' (1992) concept of epistemic communities is redundant. Rather, I advocate a slight modification of his theorising, taking into account that the relative 'size' and 'age' of a community may affect its ability to strictly conform to Haas (1992) four features. From this perspective, 'communities' that have grown at an unprecedented rate within a policy domain may take more time in order to find the homogeneity Haas (1992) requires.

In relation to Haas' (1992: 3) third feature, each of the anti-trafficking 'epistemic communities' appear to have their own "intersubjective, internally defined criteria for weighing and validating knowledge". Since my application of epistemic communities is more sociological, and Haas' (1992) more technocratic, the definition of 'criteria' I employ is broader than Haas' criteria. Each anti-trafficking 'community' largely defines valid knowledge as that which complements their causal belief structure. Haas (1992) argues that epistemic communities trust so resolutely in their causal beliefs that if they were to be confronted with a challenge to their belief structure, they would exit the policy domain. This may not be the case within the anti-trafficking policy domain, however, since when information arises that challenges the causal belief structure of the anti-trafficking 'communities', it is often either ignored or dismissed as an anomaly. When presented with evidence of womyn's bodily autonomy – migrant womyn selling sex of their own volition – the radical feminist community frequently aver that these womyn suffer from 'false consciousness': they hold a distorted image of their own social situation and are victims without knowing it [see: p. 92]. Similarly, the anti-immigration community continually ignores a plethora of evidence that repressive and xenophobic border practices exacerbate, rather than prevent, trafficking. Thus it seems that valid knowledge is highly

subjective and easily dismissed by anti-trafficking actors, should it not fit within their causal belief system.

Finally, I turn to Haas' (1992: 3) fourth defining feature of epistemic communities: a common policy enterprise. Each of the anti-trafficking 'communities' differ in their everyday practices and utilise their professional competencies in different ways to respond to the 'problem' of trafficking, and shape and implement policy. At the risk of being overly-prescriptive – since the work of each 'community' is indeed varied – the radical feminist and modern slavery 'communities' typically prioritise practices that fall under the umbrella of 'victim protection' [see: section 6.2]. This victim protection, as I go on to argue in the following two chapters, involves (selectively) attributing victim status to womyn involved in the sex industry. As such, it is inherently political. It also fulfils a policy-shaping function: both the radical feminist and modern slavery 'communities', to varying degrees, advocate for policy change to eradicate the sex industry. While the liberal feminist 'community' engages in similar types of support work with womyn involved in the commercial sex industry, their policy enterprise is antithetical to the radical feminist 'community'. Liberal feminists tend to refrain from over-using the 'victim' label and instead, use their professional competence to advocate for decriminalisation policies. The anti-immigration and law-enforcement 'communities' direct their professional competencies toward the prosecution of 'offenders' [see: section 6.3]. This, as I go on to argue in the following chapter, exacerbates tensions that exist between the 'communities', as strategic priorities clash in the anti-trafficking policy domain.

Some have questioned the utility of epistemic communities in the broad field of human rights, arguing that they only function in fields that prioritise scientific knowledge (Haas, 2000).³⁸ Yet as Truong and Angeles (2005: 85) posit, an analysis of epistemic communities

...requires a view on epistemology that can address the politics of knowledge in operation in situ, and not only 'professional' knowledge defined as 'science.'

This chapter has demonstrated that knowledge in the field of anti-trafficking is both socially constructed and inherently politicised. Some forms of knowledge gain more traction in the anti-trafficking policy domain than others. Indeed,

³⁸ This reference derives from an interview Harry Kreisler conducted with Ernest Haas, the father of Peter Haas who coined the term, and developed the concept of, epistemic communities.

because 'modern slavery' has risen in prominence to become the hegemonic episteme in England and Wales, knowledge authority is largely deferred to them. With this in mind, it may be argued that the knowledge the modern slavery 'community' purveys has greater influence over anti-trafficking policy development and implementation processes than scientific knowledge. What is considered a 'scientific fact' at one moment in time may be different to another; just as what is considered to be the 'correct' way of understanding and responding to trafficking will change over time, as communities gain and lose influence.

Epistemic communities are useful as an analytical tool for an examination of the politicised processes of governing sex trafficking. The concept encapsulates the socially constructed nature of the 'reality' of trafficking and the notion that the anti-trafficking 'communities' are concerned with using their version of truth establish political influence – key features of epistemic communities, according to Haas (1992). The anti-trafficking epistemic 'communities' I identify are sites of (new) knowledge and (new) ideas both about trafficking and responses to trafficking. Their overarching goal is to ensure that this knowledge is actively circulated outwards beyond the 'community' to society and the Government (Haas, 1992). It is hoped by each 'community' that their beliefs about sex trafficking will become part of the "dominant social discourse and social practice" (Antoniades, 2003: 26). In this respect, the notion of epistemic communities captures the importance of language within the anti-trafficking industry. It recognises that language too is socially constructed, in order to depict the social reality ascribed to by the community in question (Antoniades, 2003). As such, Haas' (1992) framework facilitates an exploration of how the modern slavery 'community' has established modern slavery as the dominant episteme, as well as successfully infusing it within legislation, creating tangible effects upon anti-trafficking policy and practice. Yet the 'communities' I identify are not only interested in establishing political influence over anti-trafficking policy and practice but also, other related policy fields, such as prostitution, immigration, state security and organised crime.

5.8 Closing remarks

Demonstrating the politicised nature of the anti-trafficking policy domain, this chapter has identified five epistemic 'communities', exploring their shared

understandings of trafficking, ways of framing trafficking, interrelationships with other 'communities', and influences upon the policy process. While the radical-liberal feminist 'sex wars' have historically dominated debates in this field, this chapter demonstrates that the modern slavery 'community' has positioned itself as hegemonic. Although it has required modification, Haas' (1992) framework, as an exploratory analytic tool, encapsulate well the socially constructed nature of trafficking and the 'contending claims to truth' (Merton, 1972) that define anti-trafficking policy and practice. As such, it has begun to demonstrate that the anti-trafficking policy domain is fraught with competing understandings of what trafficking is, how it can be best tackled, and its relationship with other social problems. Yet this chapter has also sought to demonstrate that the boundaries between anti-trafficking 'communities' are not strictly demarcated and as such, it speaks to the challenges faced by policy-makers in establishing the best response in policy domains that are characterised by uncertainty (Dunlop, 2013).

While in constructing these 'ideal types' (Weber, 1949) I have identified different anti-trafficking 'communities', there are some noteworthy commonalities between them. Most can be characterised as 'state-centric' in their nature and proposed solutions (Kapur, 2012; Sanghera, 2012) in that they either actively pursue the neoliberal and neoconservative agendas of the UK Government, or lend their support. Perhaps with the exception of the liberal feminist 'community'— whose intersectional approach recognises the role of agency in womyn's movement and decisions to sell sex – the anti-trafficking 'communities' may function to legitimise the systemic oppression of migrant womyn and sex workers. They appear to either directly support practices which make some migrant womyn 'disposable' or at least function to obfuscate these practices behind the guise of noble action. Furthermore, they reinforce moral judgements about what are 'right' and 'wrong' forms of labour. Although they may differ in their construction of trafficking, the radical feminist, modern-slavery, anti-immigration and crime control 'communities' appear to largely agree that sex work does not represent the kind of entrepreneurship states should endorse. In this regard, my findings support Fudge's (2015) assertion that anti-trafficking actors may give legitimacy to the state's mandate to control its borders and the sexual body. While the intentions of anti-trafficking NGOs and the police may be good, good intentions do not negate the harm anti-trafficking policy and practice

cause to subaltern migrant womyn selling sex. In the following chapter I develop the exploration of policy and practice further, examining how anti-trafficking policy manifests in reality through the strategic framework of the '4Ps': prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership.

Chapter VI - From '3Ps' to '4Ps': Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and the Pretence of Partnership?

Trafficking is no longer the concern of a few feminist organisations, scholars and activists (Doezema, 2010) but rather, it has become a political priority across the globe. The number of actors, organisations and agencies involved in the development and implementation of anti-trafficking policy has therefore increased exponentially in the last couple of decades (Foot et al., 2015). In light of this, approaches towards the governance of sex trafficking have taken on a variety of forms as different actors, and 'communities' of actors, bring with them different values, interests and priorities. Yet states around the world often categorise their approaches to anti-trafficking within the strategic framework of the '3Ps': 'prevention', 'protection' and 'prosecution', a framework first introduced and defined in the 2000 *Palermo Protocol*, and subsequently central to the 2005 *Council of Europe Convention*. In UK domestic policy, the '3Ps' featured explicitly in the 2007 *UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking* and its updates in 2008 and 2009, and remain integral to *Human Trafficking: The Government Strategy in 2011*. Not only is anti-trafficking policy and practice often guided by this strategic framework but it also has far-reaching consequences for how migrant sex workers lives are governed.

Despite their ubiquitousness, debate ensues regarding the extent to which the '3Ps' have been taken up by states in equal measure. A prominent concern is that the goal of prosecution is often pursued to the neglect of preventative measures and victim protection (Musto, 2008; Skilbrei, 2012). Therefore, this chapter explores in turn how each strategic approach manifests in the work of the voluntary sector and the police: prevention (6.1), protection (6.2) and prosecution (6.3). In so doing, I demonstrate that these anti-trafficking approaches at times intersect and are therefore not mutually exclusive. This chapter also critically examines interviewees' claims that a fourth strategic approach to the governance of sex trafficking is gaining salience, that of 'partnership'. Whilst a partnership approach to crime control has been

encouraged by UK Governments since the 1980s (Crawford, 1998; Garland, 1996), it is a topic that has been almost entirely overlooked in scholarly work on anti-trafficking policy and practice. The chapter therefore moves on to examine the extent to which anti-trafficking actors engage in partnership working, exploring a key source of contention between interviewees: the *Modern Slavery Act 2015* (6.4). The final section of this chapter examines whether anti-trafficking partnerships are compatible with neoliberal crime control (6.5). In effect then, I address in this chapter both how NGOs and the police respond to trafficking, and how their interrelationships are negotiated and structured through anti-trafficking policy and practice [see: research questions on page 11].

6.1 Prevention:

‘Prevent properly, we wouldn’t need to spend money on victims’

Although the ‘3Ps’ framework first appeared in 2000 in the Palermo Protocol, it has been used in the Trafficking in Persons Report since 2003 to assess states’ commitment to anti-trafficking.³⁹ As the world’s self-appointed ‘moral police force’ (O’Connell Davidson, 2015), the US Government’s employment of the ‘3Ps’ framework imposes these strategic approaches upon the rest of the (particularly Western) world. It seems that Tim Newburn’s (2002: 184) observation that the US engages in the export of ‘made in the USA’ crime control policies is apt in relation to anti-trafficking policy and practice. Yet it is how the ‘3Ps’ are conceptualization in domestic policy, and realised in practice in England and Wales, that are the concern of this chapter. At a domestic level, the UK Action Plan 2007 outlines three key areas for ‘focused attention’ in relation to preventative efforts [see: Figure 6.1]: i) an increased understanding of the problem; ii) deterring demand; and iii) addressing the supply side of trafficking (Home Office, 2007: 20 *emphasis added*). More recently, the 2011 UK Human Trafficking Strategy extends the emphasis on addressing supply, advocating both for prevention through international action in origin counties and stronger border

³⁹ The TIP report is published annually by the US Government and measures states according to three ‘tiers’ “based on the extent of their governments’ efforts to comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking” outlined in Section 108 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act 2000 (US Department of State, 2014: unpag.)

controls (HM Government, 2011: 3). It is to how these three elements of prevention are operationalised in practice that this chapter turns first.

Figure 6.1: Prevention in Policy

Policy Document	Focus of Prevention
UK Action Plan 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an increased <i>understanding</i> of the problem - deterring <i>demand</i> - addressing the <i>supply</i> side of trafficking <p style="text-align: right;">(Home Office, 2007: 20)</p>
UK Human Trafficking Strategy 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prevention through international action in origin countries (i.e. <i>supply</i>) - stronger border controls (i.e. <i>supply</i>) <p style="text-align: right;">(HM Government, 2011: 3)</p>

6.1.1 Increasing understanding of ‘the problem’

It appeared from NGO interviewees’ accounts that awareness raising campaigns represented the main way in which they endeavoured to ‘improve’ understandings of trafficking. Of course, the idea of improving understanding is in and of itself highly-subjective and as such, different anti-trafficking ‘communities’ presented different messages in order to ‘improve’ their audience’s understanding of trafficking. Awareness raising campaigns frequently took the form of public exhibitions and events, which more often than not also had a fund-raising function.⁴⁰ Some NGOs have produced their own highly-emotive awareness raising videos. In an extract from my fieldwork diary, I reflected upon one such example shown at an event organised by a Police Crime Commissioner for police officers and representatives from the voluntary sector:

I was sat in a huge room, maybe 200 people – police and voluntary sector – and [my contact] had got me “the best seat in the house”... But then [NGO] were up and they began with one of ‘those’ videos: so sensationalist, you’d think that it would have no affect... Yet I turned round to see the room was captured; the woman next to me crying.

This campaign video, like many others, was utilised by NGO actors to elicit a visceral reaction from their audience and while ‘improving understanding’ may have been one aim, two other aims simultaneously appeared to be pursued on this

⁴⁰ Due to obligations of anonymity, specific examples of the events held by the NGOs included in this research project are not provided.

occasion. First, the video was shown in order to put forth a particular message, one which embodied an amalgamated neo-abolitionist/crime control episteme: in short, the message was 'save womyn and fight criminals'. Second, it appeared that the video was part of the NGO's broader strategy to secure a £200,000 contract to deliver training to police officers, an aim it was subsequently successful in achieving.

Like media depictions of crime more generally (Chibnall, 2001; Jewkes, 2015), visceral imagery and simplified storylines are integral components of these anti-trafficking campaigns. Yet far from improving understandings of trafficking, these storylines may have harmful consequences for migrant womyn. In the example above, the video functioned to delimit so narrowly the category of 'victim' that it may be the case that womyn exploited in the sex industry would not recognise their victimisation. Migrant womyn may therefore remain in exploitative situations when if a less limited category of 'victim' was presented, womyn may more easily recognise their victimisation and seek assistance from the authorities. Furthermore, as Uy (2011) posits, the sensationalist depictions of 'sexual victimhood' omnipresent in NGOs' awareness raising activities may titillate more than inform. Halttunen's (1995) concept of the 'pornography of pain' may be apt here. The pornographisation of pain is neither limited to anti-trafficking and nor is it new but the concept encapsulates well NGOs' utilisation of violence and suffering to engender an intuitive reaction from their audience. To understand anti-trafficking campaigns simply as a sadistic celebration of pain would, however, be to oversimplify a cultural practice. Rather, it may be the case that the horrors of trafficking are used to justify practices we might otherwise question or even actively oppose (Halttunen, 1995). We may, for example, question whether the surveillance of migrant womyn is too intrusive and restrictions on their movement too great, were our judgement not muddied by the obscenities of pain delivered to us through anti-trafficking prevention campaigns. Yet by placing womyn within a victimising discourse and denying their agency, paternalistic intervention into their lives may seem justified (Agustín, 2007).

For some NGOs, awareness raising campaigns were integral to responsabilising the local community to aid in the prevention of trafficking. Stop

the Traffik,⁴¹ for example, have encouraged students at Universities across England and Wales to establish Active Communities against Trafficking (ACT) groups, which “meet together regularly to look at how they can reduce human trafficking in their area” (Stop the Traffik, 2016b: unpag.) One founder of a neo-abolitionist NGO,⁴² suggested that the public play an important role in the identification of ‘victims of trafficking’:

We work with the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme... because they’ve got 12,000 contacts across the whole district. So we’ve done presentations for them and they’ve sent our email alerts and information... they’re actually the ears and eyes of the community which is where most of the tip-offs come from. People know their streets. They know something is going on that’s a bit different or unusual [NGO interviewee, 11].

This interviewee emphasised the importance of engaging local communities in anti-trafficking, suggesting that traffickers are deterred by the knowledge that vigilant members of the community are ready to identify ‘victims’. The idea that the public ought to play a role in the prevention of trafficking is, however, indicative of a broader shift in crime control in recent years. Goodey (2005) suggests that public-private partnerships, influenced by New Right politics, are increasingly being implemented to prevent crime, in light of growing recognition that the police alone cannot effectively control crime. Initially advocated as part of a broader aim to limit citizens’ dependency upon the welfare state, partnerships now represent part of a broader move from ‘government’ to ‘governance’ (see: section 3.3.2; Rhodes, 1997). To this extent, under a ‘responsibilisation strategy’ (Garland, 1996; 2000), organisations and individuals are steered by the state to respond to crime and disorder in ‘partnership’ with traditional crime control agencies.

There are, however, some problems associated with an approach to anti-trafficking that is based upon responsibilising the public. In advocating the importance of engaging with existing Neighborhood Watch Schemes, or in establishing similar anti-trafficking schemes [see: p. 152], some NGO interviewees implied that trafficking can be prevented in much the same way as low level crime and disorder. This sits in stark contrast with the National Crime Agency’s (2015)

⁴¹ Stop the Traffik did not take part in this research. Information about ACT groups is available on their website [see: Stop the Traffic, 2016].

⁴² One of the stated goals of this NGO is to ‘empower’ womyn to exit the sex industry and they have been vocal in the public domain of their opposition to the sex industry.

assessment of trafficking as a complex crime problem. Yet for some NGO interviewees, the *desire* to prevent trafficking appeared to be held as more important than *professional* knowledge and experience. This may bolster the critique often levelled at the voluntary sector that it lacks professionalism with regard to crime control (Senior et al., 2007). Moreover, some interviewees noted that these practices may place migrant women in positions of risk and/or result in the displacement, detention or deportation of voluntary migrant sex workers. Perhaps in view of these negative consequences, a few NGO interviewees argued that it is more important to improve understanding of trafficking amongst statutory professionals than the public. One suggested, for example, that statutory agencies are considerably more likely to be in a position to identify 'victims' than the public:

98/99% of victims of trafficking aren't found by the public, they're found by statutory agencies [NGO interviewee, 12].

With this in mind, some of the larger anti-trafficking NGOs provided training to statutory agencies, in order to improve their identification of, and response to, victims of trafficking.

6.1.2 Detering demand

In keeping with the aims of the *Action Plan of 2007* and *Human Trafficking Strategy of 2011*, the prevention efforts of anti-trafficking actors also focuses upon deterring the demand for 'victims of trafficking.' This strategic aim was pursued in particular by those from the neo-abolitionist 'community', who interpreted it as being synonymous with tackling the demand for *prostitution*. Indeed, this was one of the many ways in which this 'community' conflated trafficking with prostitution. Support for the 'Swedish Model' – which is understood to be the radical feminist "gold-standard" for addressing demand (Connelly and Sanders, 2016) – was explicitly offered by several NGO and police interviewees. The model, which is based upon the introduction of a Sex Purchase Law, criminalises the client whilst treating the sex worker as a victim. One NGO interviewee, for example, argued that demand for 'victims of trafficking' could only be reduced by implementing legislation which discourages men from purchasing sex:

I'm particularly against legalisation in any form and I think it's right that we [should] have legislation against the users and against the pimps, because they're the ones we need to go after not the women... Sweden's model is quite an interesting one... So

they went for the route cause, [demand], and they didn't dress it up [NGO interviewee, 11].

As in the quotation above, the vilification of clients of sex workers was a common theme in both police and NGO interviewees. Few interviewees regarded clients as 'consumers of services in the sexual leisure industry' and instead adopted the perspective of 'client as exploiter' (Brooks-Gordon, 2010: 155-156). Simultaneously, womyn were typically cast firmly in the victim role, leaving little room for acknowledgment of autonomous decision making sex, as well as obscuring that men and transgender people may also engage in the sex industry with varying degrees of choice.

The neo-abolitionist community's lobbying for the introduction of a Sex Purchase Law in England and Wales has found some success. It received overwhelming support at an EU level in March 2014 prompted by Mary Honeyball's (MEP) proposal to the European Parliament, and the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group for Prostitution and the Global Sex Trade (2014) has endorsed its introduction. Furthermore, it is advocated by MPs from across political parties, including: Caroline Lucas (Green), Harriet Harman (Labour), and Fiona Bruce (Conservative).⁴³ Indeed the Swedish *Sexköpslagen* law, which the Sex Purchase Law emulates, has been effectively marketed (Levy and Jakobsson, 2014), with advocates positing that there has been a 50% decrease in prostitution since the law's inception (Ekberg, 2004). Yet this support is offered despite the wealth of evidence that a law which criminalises clients does not reduce demand but rather, allows exploitative practices to flourish. While clients may once have provided information to the police about any person they suspect may have been trafficked, the Swedish model may act to prevent this practice as clients fear their own criminalisation (Brooks-Gordon, 2010). The displacement of sex workers (Levy and Jakobsson, 2014; Petterson and Tiby, 2003; Scoular, 2004a) and the increase in stigma surrounding sex work (Dodillet and Östergren, 2011) are just some of the damaging effects the 'Swedish Model' is evidenced to bring about. Nonetheless, it is clear that the radical feminist anti-trafficking 'community' has considerable political influence over the framing of this aim of prevention, as demonstrated in the historical conflation of trafficking and prostitution explored

⁴³ I have written a public response to Fiona Bruce, and other advocates of the Sex Purchase Law, published on Politics.co.uk (Connelly, 2016).

in Chapter III [see: section 3.1.2]. Its ability to influence the Government has also been demonstrated recently by the Home Affairs Committee's (2016: unpag.) enquiry into prostitution, which without any mention of alternative forms of regulation, seeks to "assess whether the balance in the burden of criminality should shift to those who pay for sex rather than those who sell it." To this end, it might well be considered inherently biased from the outset and only interested in acquiring certain types of evidence – that is, those which supports a neo-abolitionist perspective on the commercial sex industry.

6.1.3 Addressing the supply side of trafficking

Addressing the 'supply side' of trafficking has largely been operationalised in two ways. First, as recommended in the 2011 *Human Trafficking Strategy*, prevention efforts have focused on action in countries of origin. One NGO interviewee, for example, highlighted efforts in Romania to prevent womyn from entering the sex industry by preemptively offering support from a young age. In a similar way, he also described a project which aimed to prevent young boys from becoming 'pimps':

I'm involved with a project in Romania, which is outstanding... they're involved in trying to stop womyn going into prostitution by catching them at 12 and trying to give them support... and now they're trying to stop boys being pimps by giving them football [NGO interview, 19a].

Risk-focused and early-intervention crime prevention of this sort, however, is widely criticised both on practical as well as ethical grounds. Practically, any form of crime prevention that seeks to predict risk is considered to be inclined toward ineffectiveness due to the high levels of subjectivity involved. Crawford (2009) contends that when applied to the governance of crime, the science of 'prediction' is likely to yield both 'false positives' and 'false negatives.' In the case of anti-trafficking prevention, much of these early-intervention efforts are predicated upon the stereotypes that each 'community' holds. The above example perpetuates some of the gender stereotypes that were prevalent amongst the neo-abolitionist 'community', whilst the modern slavery 'community' often propagated the stereotype of the powerless Black body through their targeted activities in countries such as Nigeria. It appeared from interviewees' accounts that trafficking prevention was oft-utilised to justify intervention into the lives of

subaltern womyn, supporting criticisms of risk-focused crime prevention more generally that it is both intrusive and reductive (Case and Hines, 2010).

The second way in which the aim of preventing the supply of 'victims of trafficking' has been operationalised is through stronger border control, as recommended in the 2011 *Human Trafficking Strategy*. Article 11 of the *Palermo Protocol* requires states to strengthen their borders and the UK Government has obliged, perhaps fearful of the social order being subverted (O'Connell Davidson, 2015). In addition to Border Force controls, the Government has removed the rights of migrants, declared them 'unwanted', and systematically subjected them to destitution, detention and deportation (Williams, 2015: unpag.). While border control falls more under the remit of the Border Force, the anti-immigration 'community' and its intersecting epistemes can be understood as playing a supporting role since, as examined in the preceding chapter [see: section 5.5], they have perpetuated an underlying sentiment of migrants as undesirable. The view that migrants undermine the British economy, for example, was demonstrated in one interview with a director of an anti-trafficking NGO:

I'm very conscious that we have no evaluation of the cost... to reintegrate them into a strange society... Isn't there an advantage to them going back to their own countries? [NGO interviewee, 22]

Anti-immigration sentiments of this nature are likely to justify the implementation of draconian border policies and encourage intolerant public attitudes towards migrants (Haynes, 2004; Gallagher, 2002), all the while doing little to prevent the supply of 'victims of trafficking'. One NGO director explained that global economic imbalances push womyn into pursuing risky migratory practices, which can lead to them becoming 'victims of trafficking':

Well you've got global economic imbalance. So if you're living in poverty, you're going to do everything to try and get out of that and you'll take risks [NGO interviewee, 03].

In so doing, this interviewee resisted the anti-immigration discourse and instead, pointed to the way in which systemic inequalities heighten migrant womyn's risk of victimisation. This supports observations made elsewhere by scholars such as Zimmerman et al., (2006) and Schierup et al., (2006) that without meaningfully addressing the complex and intersecting socio-structural 'causes' of trafficking, womyn will continue to seek out illegal mechanisms of entry into the UK and in so doing, heighten their risk of exploitation.

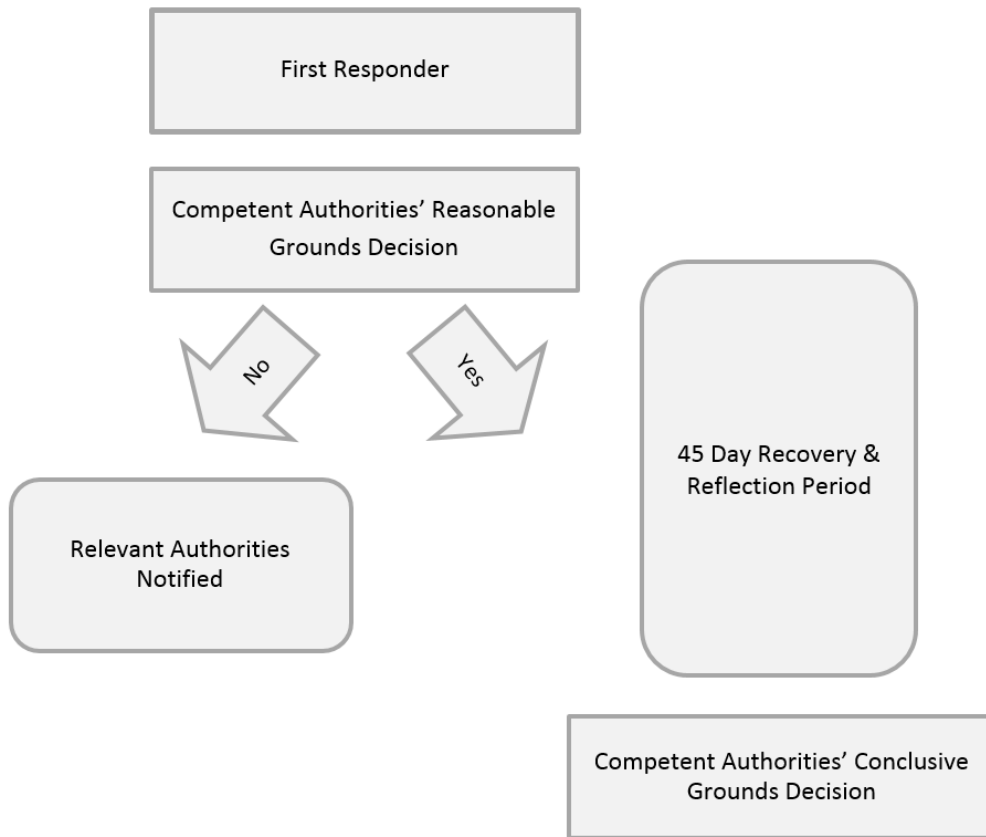
It is clear, then, that the three key areas for ‘focused attention’ set forth in the 2007 *UK Action Plan* and 2011 *Human Trafficking Strategy* offer scope for anti-trafficking actors to engage in a variety of activities under the auspice of ‘prevention’. With few exceptions, police interviewees were unconcerned with the prevention of trafficking. This is perhaps indicative of a broader shift in policing priorities following Government cuts to the police budget. Indeed, as the West Yorkshire Police Federation chairman Nick Smart noted at a meeting with MPs in 2015, funding cuts are likely to divert resources away from ‘proactive’ policing towards ‘reactive’ policing (West Yorkshire Police Federation, 2015). By and large then, it is the neo-abolitionist and anti-immigration ‘communities’ that most prioritise prevention, perhaps since under the guise of preventing trafficking, anti-prostitution policies and draconian immigration control can be pursued. That is not to say, however, that all members of these anti-trafficking ‘communities’ engaged in prevention. One NGO interviewee [20] from a vocal radical feminist organisation denounced the overuse of (limited) resources for “radio jingles” and scaremongering poster campaigns, and instead suggested that funding would be better invested in “actual concrete provisions” that support victims of trafficking i.e. victim protection. This demonstrates, once again, that although various anti-trafficking ‘communities’ may be observable, the orientations of their ‘members’ are far from homogenous.

6.2 Protection:

‘Restore first, think about helping the police later!’

The second ‘P’, ‘protection’, was described in the 2007 *Action Plan* as being “central” to the UK Government’s response to tackling human trafficking (Home Office, 2007: 10). It remained key in the 2011 *Human Trafficking Strategy*, which focused on improving the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) contract provision for identifying and supporting victims. Before I explore interviewees’ experiences of victim protection, a brief explanation is necessary of the Government’s official provisions for victims of trafficking [see: Figure 6.2]. Established by the Government in 2009, the NRM is variously referred to as “a framework” (NCA, 2016) and “a process” (Home Office, 2014b) by which people who claim to be victims of trafficking are referred, assessed and offer support if their claim is upheld.

Figure 6.2: National Referral Mechanism Process



As Figure 6.2 depicts, a range of ‘First Responders’⁴⁴ – including some NGOs and all police forces across England and Wales – may refer potential victims into the NRM. Once referred into the system, one of two ‘Competent Authorities’ will assess their claim to victimhood. This tends to be the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC), unless the claim is made as part of an asylum claim, in which case it will be assessed by the Home Office Visas and Immigration (UKVI). A ‘Reasonable Grounds’ decision is then made. At this point the case manager does not need to *prove* that the individual is a victim but should have reasonable grounds to *believe* that they are. If a positive ‘Reasonable Grounds’ decision is made, the victim is entitled to a 45 day ‘Recovery and Reflection’ period in which they receive support through the Salvation Army contract. During this period, the ‘Competent Authority’ will continue to assess the potential victim’s case before

⁴⁴ A full list of ‘First Responders’ is available on the National Crime Agency website and is updated periodically.

making a ‘Conclusive Grounds’ decision. A positive ‘Conclusive Grounds’ decision is only granted to those who are “more likely than not” a victim of trafficking (NCA, 2016). Contrary to popular misunderstanding, this positive decision does not automatically entitle the victim to a residency permit, although they may be able to apply for ‘Indefinite Leave to Remain’ status.

6.2.1 Protection during the ‘Recovery and Reflection’ period

The strategic aim of ‘protection’ was prioritised by most NGO interviewees since support for victims of trafficking in England and Wales is mainly provided within the voluntary sector, by actors from across the range of anti-trafficking ‘communities’ identified in the preceding chapter. Some NGOs received funding from the MoJ under the trafficking contract with the Salvation Army and its sub-contractors,⁴⁵ whilst other NGOs received their income through various other charitable means. As Dottridge (2014) observes, however, we have very little insight into how finances are actually allocated and spent on anti-trafficking. What we do know is that the MoJ funds a 45 day ‘Recovery and Reflection’ period for those who receive a positive ‘Reasonable Grounds’ decision by the ‘Competent Authorities’. Many NGO interviewees raised concerns about the integral role that UKVI (formerly, UKBA) play in these assessments of victim status. Indeed, as both trafficking and asylum case holders, some interviewees suggested that UKVI demonstrate an inability to separate the two:

I think you’ve got a built-in inherent problem which is what are the UKBA [now UKVI] tasked for? It is about immigration, either stopping people coming in illegally or turfing people out who are here illegally. So you create immediate conflict of interest [NGO interviewee, 12].

As demonstrated in this quotation, several NGO interviewees raised concerns that assessing a persons’ victim status and assessing their asylum case represents a conflict of interest. From this perspective, accepting a woman’s claim to trafficking victimhood conflicts with the UKVI’s interests of minimising migration into the UK. Itself assessed against how many undocumented migrants it successfully removes from the UK (Jones, 2013), it may not be in the interests of UKVI to grant

⁴⁵ In April 2011 the Salvation Army won the six million pound Ministry of Justice contract from the Poppy Project. Its ‘sub-contractors’ are: Ashiana, BAWSO, BCHA, City Hearts, Hestia, Midland Heart, Migrant Helpline and Unseen.

residency permits on the grounds of trafficking. The implications of this for victimhood are discussed in detail in Chapter VII of this thesis [see: section 7.2.2]

Reflecting a position in which victim protection was prioritised, many NGO interviewees raised concerns that the 45 day 'Recovery and Reflection' period provides too little time for womyn to receive the support they require in order to recover adequately. One NGO interviewee, for example, epitomised this view when noting:

It's too short and when it's too short the question is, what happens to them at the end? [NGO interviewee, 19b].

This interviewee explained that the complex problems many victims face cannot be addressed by NGOs in 45 days and as such, further planned rehabilitation was a pressing need. This was a view shared by an NGO director, who also emphasised that the complex needs of victims necessitate longer-term support provisions:

If you think of all these things we've been talking about like: stress, shame, lack of confidence, lack of trust, fear, anxiety, they're probably not going to get the full story on day one. So, it's a repeated process and we'll repeat it after a week and after a month. We certainly find that in the vast majority of cases we don't have the full picture until people have been with us several weeks [NGO interviewee, 06].

The severe and compounding needs of victims of trafficking identified by this interviewee are also highlighted by research which has explored the relationship between human trafficking and physical, sexual and mental health (Hossain et al., 2010; Oram et al., 2012). NGO interviewees often noted that victims are unlikely to divulge initially all the details of their victimisation until trust has been established. The importance of trust in the treatment of trauma is also well-documented (Clawson et al., 2008). In addition, some interviewees noted that on a practical level 45 days was not long enough to support victims adequately since the support they require may involve applications for national insurance numbers and local authority housing, and involve liaising with embassies, all of which were noted as lengthy processes.

Few were willing, however, to recommend a specified time period for 'Recovery and Reflection'. Instead, most acknowledged that the needs of each woman should be treated on an individual basis since they vary considerably. This supports the work of Hossain et al., (2010: 2446) who found that the risk to mental health is greater the longer a woman is exposed to 'trafficking', which in turn impacts on the length of time she requires in "post-trafficking care". The

nature and extent of exploitation, social context and personal histories were noted by interviewees as combining with the aforementioned external factors to determine the amount of time each woman required for victim support. It was a common view held amongst NGO interviewees that victims of trafficking are not a homogenous group and therefore require different types, levels and lengths of protection. One interviewee explained that the length of time deemed to be appropriate is likely to vary depending on the priorities of the organisation or agency:

...again recognising different agendas, you can understand that somewhere there has to be a judgement [about the length of time] and a limit set... So, 45 days does sort-of work in most cases. I would certainly be happier with 90 days but then again, we come from a perspective of victim care, we don't have these other agenda's around immigration, cost, finance and so on [NGO interviewee, 06].

Here the interviewee recognised that as an NGO actor who prioritised victim protection over the other two 'Ps' (prevention and prosecution), he would prefer that victims receive 90 days of funded support. At the same time, however, he acknowledged that those who prioritise differently are likely to hold a different opinion on this issue. He indicated that those from the anti-immigration 'community' would not share his view on this matter since, as mentioned above, victim protection and border restrictions are constructed as representing conflicting interests. As such, this suggests a connection exists between an anti-trafficking actor's episteme and the aim that they prioritise.

6.2.1 Protection beyond the 'Recovery and Reflection' period

Most anti-trafficking NGOs only offered short-term protection to victims of trafficking; although, the length of time that provisions were provided depended upon whether the NGO was bound by the MoJ contract. To this extent, MoJ sub-contractors could only support women for their 45 day 'Recovery and Reflection' period and for a further 10 hours thereafter 'in the community'. One MoJ sub-contractor noted that a tension exists in this regard between contractual-obligation and the desire to provide the highest level of support possible to victims of trafficking:

When you care for people, it's quite hard to just say 'ok well you're on your own now' and so, there is some contact with them [beyond the contracted time] but it's always been a real tension for us because we're not supposed to [NGO interviewee, 08].

In theory, NGOs operating outside of the MoJ contract exercised more discretion in the length of time support provisions were available to victims; although, funding constraints inevitably dictated that in practice their protection was also usually short-term. Almost all NGOs interviewees noted then that their ability to achieve the aim of ‘protection’ was hindered by a prominent gap in victim provisions in the UK, namely ‘move-on’ support. This ‘gap’ in victim provisions is also noted in ‘expert’ reports such as those produced by GRETA (2012) and the Centre for Social Justice (2013).⁴⁶

One NGO interviewee pointed out that more discretion was granted in the pursuit of the aim of ‘protection’ prior to the Government ratifying the *European Convention* in 2008 [see: section 3.1.2], when the MoJ contract was held by the Poppy Project rather than the Salvation Army. She noted that a benefit of this was that the length of time victims were supported was dependent upon their needs, rather than the minimum standards set forth in the Convention:

The change that I think we saw really was actually when we signed up to the Convention, which has then sort-of coincided more with the Coalition, there was this kind-of attitude of ‘this is what we’ve signed up to do now, so we will do the minimum of what’s required’ in a way (laughter). That’s what it felt like with the whole 45 days things... There was a real shift in attitude. ‘We don’t care’. ‘We don’t care if this person’s got support needs’. ‘We’re not obligation to provide for them’ [NGO interviewee, 20].

Her observation that the UK government introduced only the *minimum* standard it was obligated to by the Convention is, however, not entirely accurate since a 30 day ‘Recovery and Reflection’ period is in fact the minimum obligation for signatory states. Yet the shift she noted in the attitude of the Government, which coincided with the move from a New Labour to a Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition, was one also highlighted in another NGO interview:

So, this government... it has no appetite to redress anything legislatively. If we ended up with a Labour government again, I don’t know what they’d do. I hate this government more than I can possibly tell you. I think they’re the most despicable bunch of posh boys ever but because they don’t want to spend any money on anything, they leave us alone. The other lot were meddlers, terrible, terrible, terrible meddlers... in terms of the sex working agenda, they were a disaster for us [NGO interviewee, 13].

⁴⁶ The Centre for Social Justice was established by Ian Duncan-Smith in 2004 as an independent think tank.

This interviewee noted that the New Labour government, spearheaded by feminist MPs such as Harriet Harman,⁴⁷ were much more concerned with the regulation of the sex industry than their Coalition successors. Yet what is also clear here is that while the first NGO interviewee [20] saw this shift in attitude as negatively impacting upon victim protection, the second [13] welcomed the shift. This demonstrates, once again, that while anti-trafficking NGO actors may prioritise the aim of protection over the other two 'Ps', their epistemes may remain different. Indeed, as part of the radical feminist and liberal feminist 'communities' respectively, the opinions of the two NGO interviewees discussed here are almost antithetical: one views the Government's change in attitude in a negative light, whilst the other views it favourably.

Interviewees employed a range of unusual analogies to make the point that 'move-on' support is required beyond the MoJ-funded 45 day period to adequately address the strategic aim of 'protection'. One NGO manager, for example, utilised a medical analogy in order to demonstrate that while short-term support is important, longer-term care ought to be funded thereafter by other agencies, to ensure that victims of trafficking recover fully:

I said to someone it's like if there's a car accident, you're not thinking long term care initially, you're thinking stabilisation. So we're the medics that have *just* arrived on the scene. They're not thinking 'what's going to happen in three months?' They're thinking 'I need to stabilise this person right now, someone else will think about that' [NGO interviewee, 08].

Using a different analogy, this time of car sales, a similar view was espoused by another NGO interviewee:

Anyway, the problem is when womyn come out of the 45 days, that's when their lives start being a problem and we have no after-care service. You wouldn't buy a new car if there was no after-sales! [NGO interviewee, 22]

While trans-Atlantic slavery was certainly the most prevalent analogy utilised to frame understandings of contemporary trafficking [see: section 5.4.1], the above and other analogies were often deployed as heuristic devices by interviewees. It may have been the case that interviewees were attempting to frame trafficking – something they considered to be a new or complex issue – within an established framework of understanding in the hope that this would be easier for me (or

⁴⁷ Harriet Harman has continued to vociferously call for the introduction of a Sex Purchase Law, only recently condemning Jeremy Corbyn (via Twitter) for lending his support to a decriminalisation model.

whomever their audience may be) to comprehend. It seemed that they believed it easier to explain trafficking in relation to things for which the public already had an established reference point.

Embedded within some NGO interviewees' concerns that the 45 day 'Recovery and Reflection' period is inadequate appeared to be the inherent assumption that 'victims of trafficking' lack the capacity for independent living. One interviewee, for example, questioned the judgment of one woman who became pregnant soon after her 45 day support period with another NGO had ended:

I mean one that worried me most was a Chinese girl who really shouldn't have been taken out [of support], getting pregnant. In fact, it's been a successful pregnancy I'm told, and the man involved is a teacher and is very supportive. That's marvellous but god it's quite irresponsible if you think about it. She was in a container for 2 months from China on the sea and then a brothel for 5 years. How does she know how to handle things? [NGO interviewee, 19a].

This interviewee emphasised not only that 45 days of support was not long enough but that it was in fact "irresponsible" of the NGO to discontinue support at 45 days. In so doing, he implied that the woman in question was incapable of autonomous decision making. This construction of women as a passive, helpless victims conforms to traditional gender stereotypes (Davies, 2007), which are observable within much of the anti-trafficking policy domain (Andrijasevic, 2007). The assumed passivity of victims of trafficking is a theme that is developed extensively in the following chapter.

To address the lacuna in 'move-on' support, some NGOs have established 'sister' projects that work with women 'in the community' following the conclusion of their 'Recovery and Reflection' period. These projects provide extended support around: immigration claims; challenging legal cases; housing; education, training and employment. While several interviewees worked for NGOs that offered this type of support, there remain to date few services offering 'move-on' support in England and Wales. Without funding from the Government, NGOs have had to secure their own funding outside of the MoJ contract for 'move-on' provisions. One NGO interviewee explained that this gap in victim protection results from how funding has been allocated, rather than because there is no demand for it:

...there isn't [much 'move-on' support] and that's the biggest gap and part of it is a funding issue and who's going to pay for long term care... We're trying to get funding for it... it's all volunteers at the moment but we'd love to possibly replicate that as well in other places because obviously it's a need everywhere [NGO interviewee, 08].

On the contrary, interviewees from the NGOs that offered 'move-on' support were keen to evidence the need for their provisions. In order to demonstrate the importance of 'move on' provision, one case worker drew upon an example which compared the experiences of two victims she had worked with: one had received 'move-on' support and the other had only received 45 days of initial support:

Two women left the safe house at the same time and at that point we only had space for one [referral]... we had to take the one who had higher level needs... Now the one that got support, she was only in interim accommodation for 4 weeks and then she was assigned a permanent house, moved in, got settled... But the woman who didn't receive support, she wasn't assigned a permanent house and she developed serious alcohol problems and it was only when she got a case worker that she then managed to get permanent housing, got herself alcohol support services, got into college to do English and stuff, and her confidence has started to be built. So for me anyway, it was just a stark contrast and a good example of the difference between what happens when somebody leaves *without* support and when somebody leaves *with* support [NGO interviewee, 18].

A complex dynamic is thus at play in that NGOs have sought to fill a notable gap in victim protection exposed by a minimal welfare state yet in so doing, they inherently operate to disguise the limits of provision. Indeed, there may be less incentive for the Government to address this void in victim protection since some NGOs have been willing to address it themselves.

A few NGO interviewees did recognise that while longer-term support may be desirable, in some cases it has the potential to hinder recovery. From this perspective, there was a concern that victims could become overly-dependent upon the support of NGOs if they remained clients for too long. As such, interviewees noted that a balance must be struck between supporting womyn to 'move-on' and encouraging them to develop their own 'communities of support'. Therefore, the importance of empowering womyn to become independent and fully integrated members of society was highlighted by a few NGO interviews. One, for example, noted:

...case workers work with them as well to help them develop independent skills. So part of what we do when we go through supervision is look at 'ok, what have we done

recently to help them to gain more power or control over their life?' [NGO interviewee, 18].

A few interviewees appeared to recognise, therefore, that their prolonged involvement in the lives of victims of trafficking could result in a 'learned helplessness' (Seligman, 1992), in which inescapable external elements of control bring about feelings of powerlessness and the desire to 'give up'. From this perspective, one case worker raised concerns that claims of asylum can take a great deal of time to be processed by the Home Office:

We're really trying to get them ready to actually live independently. They're meant to be with us for a year but because immigration is taking *so* long to come through [its longer]. One of our womyn's been with us for 4 years [NGO interviewee, 14].

With this in mind, delays to immigration claims may have the damaging consequence of hindering victims' independence. To this extent, victims may become 'institutionalised' within NGOs and as such, fail to reintegrate within society. At first glance this appeared to represent an attempt by some interviewees to resist the victimising discourse so common in anti-trafficking. It reflected some resolve to ensure that victims become, what Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2003: 67) call, 'active' resettles: those that proactively engage in positive ways of dealing with their own acculturation. Yet in effect, these assertions of the importance of empowering womyn still begin from a position in which the woman is cast as 'victim'. In so doing, these interviewees appeared not to view the 'victim' label as something that may be externally imposed upon a voluntary migrant sex worker. Therefore, while they may now endeavour to restore her individual autonomy, it could be argued that they were in fact complicit in its initial denial.

Generally speaking, it was evident that the majority of NGO interviewees prioritised 'protection' over 'prevention' and 'prosecution' and as such, some noted that their aims sit in conflict with the 'prosecution' focus of the police. Some interviewees indicated that victims can in fact become a site upon which this inter-organisational conflict plays out. This conflict appeared to center around the roles that migrant womyn were cast in: NGO interviewees viewed womyn as 'victims' who require support, while police viewed them more as 'witnesses'. As one NGO interviewee explained, the different construction of the role of 'victims of trafficking' was largely the product of different organisational priorities:

We say that she needs to do her period of counselling, first be *restored* and then she'll make a decision about whether she will help [the police]. But you might have a crass

police force who doesn't know any better saying 'I need her evidence and I need it now or they [the trafficker(s)] are going to leave the country' [NGO interviewee, 06].

As this interviewee indicated, defined as 'victims' migrant womyn enable the voluntary sectors to pursue its primary aim, protection; defined as 'witnesses' womyn are better able to assist the police in their primary aim, prosecution. Therefore, it was clear that the 45 day 'Recovery and Reflection' period was understood as fundamentally different for NGO and police interviewees. While NGOs believed that its purpose was to aid the *recovery* of victims, the police considered it to be primarily for victims to *reflect* upon whether they were willing to act as witnesses in a court of law, if the opportunity were to arise.

That is not to say that the aims of NGOs and the police inevitably conflict. The '3Ps' are not mutually-exclusive but rather, in the pursuit of one, another may be achieved. This was exemplified by the above-mentioned NGO interviewee, who went on to explain that victim care may also involve opportunities for involvement in prosecution cases:

Well our agenda is purely about victim care and while we see that holistically, it might also include: getting revenge, getting satisfaction, getting justice and so on but it's ultimately about restoring an individual from that broken, vulnerable condition to be in a better place [NGO interviewee, 06].

From this perspective, the opportunity to act as a witness in criminal proceedings may aid the police in the pursuit of prosecution but also, aid the victims' recovery. The idea that victim participation in criminal justice proceedings aids recovery finds support in academic research, both in terms of therapeutic benefits and in reparation for victims (Hoyle, 2002; Wemmer, 2014). These benefits to the victim are, of course, dependent upon a positive experience within the criminal justice system. As Wemmer (2014) contends, the rehabilitative benefits for victims are brought about best in criminal prosecutions that not only afford to the ambitions of 'procedural' justice but also interactional and distributive justice. That is to say, care ought to be taken throughout the prosecution process to ensure that victims are treated with respect and the outcomes are fair. As such, the aims of protection and prosecution may, in some ways, be understood as mutually constitutive.

6.3 Prosecution:

‘The defense will rip them to shreds!’

The third strategic aim employed by anti-trafficking actors to respond to sex trafficking is that of ‘prosecution’. It is typically used in a broad sense not only to refer to actual criminal prosecution but also, to encapsulate the whole process leading up to and in securing a prosecution. My research findings support the observation Skilbrei (2012) makes, in a Norwegian context, that the goal of prosecution is prioritised by police over those of prevention and protection. In this regard, police practices are in keeping with the obligations set forth in the Palermo Protocol, which critics suggest prioritises criminal justice over human rights principles (Bhabha, 2015; Smith, 2011). Yet my findings show that ‘prosecution’ is also a priority for some NGO interviewees. One founder of an anti-trafficking NGO, for example, posited that while there is plenty of support for victims of trafficking, not enough attention is paid to convicting traffickers:

So all the people in [an anti-trafficking forum]... they’re dealing with victims. I think that’s been dealt with and *over* dealt with. We are appalling at nailing traffickers [NGO interviewee, 19a].

As mentioned in chapter V [c.f. p.122], some anti-trafficking organisations have therefore developed their own ‘investigative arms,’ from which they investigate reports of trafficking, and identify and rescue victims. In this sense, they appear to be shifting away from the traditional role of the voluntary sector – which is founded upon victim protection and prevention through awareness raising – and towards conducting their own surveillance activities. This may be understood as an example of mission creep as NGOs expand beyond their traditional remit, and is perhaps also indicative of a lack of faith in the capabilities of the police to identify and ‘rescue’ victims.

The involvement of some NGOs in the aim of ‘prosecution’ might lead one to believe that it would offer common ground for the voluntary sector and the police, and this was indeed implied by one interviewee:

We work with the police to ensure, as far as we can, that traffickers are brought to justice [NGO interviewee 03].

Yet, in the most part, it would seem common ground has not be found. Rather, the investigative practices of NGOs attracted criticism from some police interviewees, who suggested that ‘investigative NGOs’ put both themselves and womyn

involved in the sex industry at risk. From this perspective, traffickers may abuse victims if they believe they have sought help from the authorities, or they may move victims 'further underground' in order to avoid detection. One police interviewee noted that NGOs may also jeopardise covert police investigations by drawing attention to outside surveillance. To this extent, NGOs were understood to lack the skill required to conduct trafficking investigations. Another prominent concern about the investigative work of NGOs was in relation to due process safeguards. As one police interviewee explained, 'traffickers' may avoid prosecutions on "a technicality" if the NGO has not followed evidence collection protocols. Yet in addition to these 'practical' problems, it was also clear that some police interviewees saw this as part of a broader agenda to widen the remit of the voluntary sector. One police interviewee explained:

...we, the police, are here to enforce the law... I would like to see us do that more rather than giving it to voluntary people to do our work because then we've got control and we can make sure that it's done correctly...It should be the police [Police interviewee, 2]].

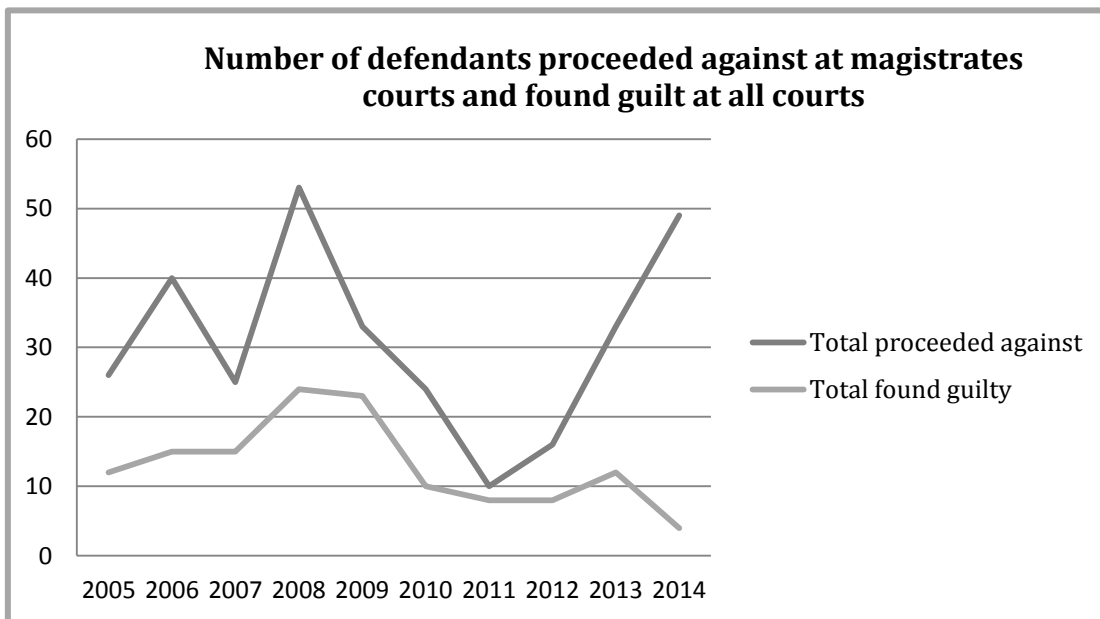
It seemed then that some police interviewees interpreted the practice of 'investigative NGOs' as encroaching upon police remit and as such, perhaps regarded them as some sort of threat. Indeed, as Crawford (1998) notes, when the success of the police is measured in managerialistic terms, competition and distrust are more likely to be fostered.

6.3.1 Barriers to securing convictions for trafficking

Police and NGO interviewees did appear to agree, however, that there is an insufficient number of prosecutions and even fewer convictions in sex trafficking cases, leading one NGO interviewee [03] to denounce the UK's "appalling track-record of prosecuting traffickers." Yet as The Anti-Slavery Monitoring Group (2013: 38) note, statistics documenting the actual numbers of prosecutions and convictions for sex trafficking offences are both "confusing" and "potentially misleading". This is largely the consequence of statistics being compiled both by the MoJ which collects data on rates of prosecution and conviction when trafficking is the principle offence, and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) which collects data on cases where trafficking is charged among other offences, even if the final conviction is not for trafficking. The low numbers of actual

prosecutions and convictions for sex trafficking offences are depicted in Figure 6.3, which I compiled using data collected by the MoJ (2015). A number of trends can be drawn from this graph. First, the number of defendants proceeded against for sex trafficking offences varies greatly from year to year: the greatest number of defendant were prosecuted in 2008 (n = 53), whilst the fewest were prosecuted in 2011 (n = 10). Second, available statistics shows that the numbers of defendants found guilty have been consistently low since 2005; ranging from a high of 23 convictions in 2009 to a low of 4 convictions in 2014. Third, while the numbers of prosecutions appear to be rising in the past few years, the numbers of convictions appear to be declining and as such, the disparity between the two is growing. This indicates, therefore, that the success rate in translating a prosecution into a conviction is worsening; in 2014 it was only 8%, down from 36% the previous year (MoJ, 2015).

Figure 6.3: Number of Defendants Proceeded Against at Magistrate Court Compared to those Found Guilty at all Courts



Source: graph created using Ministry of Justice (2015) data

Interviewees noted significant difficulties both in bringing ‘traffickers’ to court under sex trafficking legislation and in securing a successful conviction. First, it was noted by both NGO and police interviewees that it is particularly difficult to secure testimonies from victims in sex trafficking cases, without which,

convictions are more difficult to secure. Almost all interviewees acknowledged that there are a multitude of reasons why victims are not always willing to appear in a court of law. A common observation – consistent with the findings of other academic research (Gallagher and Holmes, 2008) – was that victims’ reluctance may be based upon fear of reprisal. In a similar vein, interviewees noted that victims may not engage with the police for fear that their families may be harmed by trafficking networks:

...these people are under a great deal of risk, particularly if they’ve got families at risk back home in Eastern European countries [Police interviewee, 2N].

Others noted that the lack of trust victims have in the criminal justice system acts as a barrier to their engagement. As one ex-police interviewee noted, for example, negative experiences of the police in countries of origin may deter victims from engaging with the police in the UK:

They assumed that the police in this country were going to be just like their previous experiences of the police back home, so they wouldn’t speak out. They were too scared to [Ex-police interviewee 2A].

It may also be the case that some migrant womyn do not wish to act as witnesses because they in fact sold sex of their own volition and thus, do not wish to aid in the prosecution of the person so labelled their ‘trafficker.’ They may instead feel emotionally indebted to the person that has aided their migration. The complexity of the relationship between the ‘victim’ and the ‘offender’ is expounded in Chapter VII [pp. 208-209].

Other times, victims may not be deemed neither by the police nor the CPS to be suitable to provide a testimony and instead, their involvement may be considered to jeopardise the likely success of the case or potentially damage their own wellbeing. This was epitomised by one NGO interviewee, who noted:

It depends really on how the police and the CPS see things. Sometimes, bearing in mind that the victim can be very vulnerable, very shaky and very reluctant, the prosecution will not feature testimony from that individual because they know that a defence counsel will rip them to shreds and not only will that break down the case but it will also do further damage to the witness [NGO interviewee, 06].

The importance of ensuring that witnesses are ‘credible’ was frequently highlighted by police interviewees and considered integral in the pursuit of the strategic aim of ‘prosecution’. Police interviewees noted that they must present the CPS with victim testimonies that are “believable” and will withstand cross-

examination in a court of law. Victim credibility assessments are not, however, unique to trafficking cases since as Stanko (1981) posits, they are fundamental in charging decisions more broadly. Frohmann (1991) explains that they are, however, applied particularly rigorously in cases involving claims of a sexual nature. In the case of trafficking, credibility appeared to be measured in quite arbitrary ways and women that did not fit the 'ideal' victim stereotype (Christie, 1986) appeared to be deemed unsuitable witnesses. These stereotypes and the factors which mediate victimhood are explored in detail in section 7.3. It is worth briefly noting here, however, that perhaps the main criteria used by police to assess victim credibility was consistency in their account: one police interviewee explained that "whatever is said in that first interview has to be the truth" [Police interviewee, 2C]. This criteria caused frustration amongst some NGO interviewees, who claimed that the police fail to comprehend that the trauma brought about by victimisation can affect memory recall, and thus account for inconsistencies in victims' accounts.

Even if a victim was considered by the police to be 'credible' enough, it was clear that the aim of 'prosecution' was only sought in cases that were perceived to be 'clear-cut'. Many interviewees noted that juries are unlikely to understand the complex nature of trafficking cases, particularly the blurred lines between consent and coercion [section 7.4]. With this in mind, prosecution may not be pursued when the 'victim' has displayed elements of choice either in her decision to migrate or her decision to sell sex. In fact, interviewees noted that oftentimes in cases where the woman has displayed elements of choice, she found it difficult to even attain victim status at all; the barriers to acquiring victim status are explored in detail in Chapter VII [section: 7.3]. Further, convictions do not tend to be pursued in cases where the victim has also perpetrated an offence, even if it was under the duress of their trafficker or interlinked with their victimisation. Many interviewees noted that some victims of trafficking are complicit in the victimisation of other victims of trafficking, exploiting women beneath them in hierarchies of power. By refusing to prosecute in these complex cases, the CPS may produce a misleading picture of human trafficking and compound the damaging stereotypes that pervade populist understandings. It may distort the nature and extent of human trafficking and perpetuates the idea that trafficking involves no agency or consent: criteria few victims may meet.

6.3.2. Using 'related' legislation in trafficking cases

One particularly controversial issue that emerged in relation to the pursuit of 'prosecution' was the use of 'related' legislation in trafficking cases. One ex-police interviewee explained that prosecuting sex trafficking cases is potentially more difficult than other types of trafficking since they require both a human trafficking *and* a sexual offence charge. He went on to suggest that the Metropolitan Police specialist human trafficking unit has, until recently, routinely dropped the human trafficking element in exchange for a guilty plea for a sexual offence charge:

What was happening up until very recently, I think maybe that's changing now, I hope it is... but SCD9, or SC&09 as they're called now, would charge with human trafficking, go to court, and then accept a plea of guilt on a controlling prostitution charge. Controlling prostitution carries a maximum sentence of 7 years. Human trafficking is a maximum sentence of 14 year. So if I give you that option of pleading guilty to a much lesser offence, you're going to take that [Ex-police interviewee 2B].

According to interviewees, there are a number of reasons why lesser charges are accepted in human trafficking cases. First, it may be that convictions for other offences are often 'easier' to secure than convictions for trafficking offences. Second, it may be a lack of knowledge and confidence in human trafficking clauses, with the CPS being more confident in applying more familiar legislation. Third, interviewees noted that CPS case workers are under extreme pressure and have large caseloads. In light of this, one police interviewee explained that they will look to strike a deal if the trafficker pleads guilty: "[I]f somebody wants to plead guilty, for them that's heaven [Police interviewee 2D].

For some interviewees, the utilisation of 'related' legislation was not considered problematic. They explained that it mattered little what legislation was used to convict the 'trafficker', provided that the desired outcome was achieved. The primary desired outcome for the majority of these interviewees – most of whom may be understood as part of the crime control 'community' [see: section 5.6] – was that the trafficker receive a lengthy custodial sentence. Yet as one police interviewee noted in his description of a conviction he had sought following Operation Pentameter,⁴⁸ other outcomes are also important:

...we were looking at five to ten years quite easily with the money laundering [charge], which is potentially half of what they would have got for trafficking... as

⁴⁸ Operation Pentameter was a nation-wide policing operation against trafficking, conducted in 2006.

long as we can actually get them for a fairly substantial offence that will cause a good level of disruption, custody, and take some of the assets that they're making and try to act as a deterrent, we're quite happy with that [Police interviewee, 2H].

What was clear from this and some other accounts of prosecution was that the *means* to achieving the outcomes were considered to be relatively unimportant, provided that punitive outcomes were in some way *achieved*. As such, police interviewees noted a plethora of existing offences could be applied in cases of trafficking, such as: rape, sexual assault, false imprisonment, kidnapping, money laundering, brothel keeping and procuring. They were happy to use these offences if they offered a better chance of ensuring that the offender was imprisoned and his assets taken, his organisation was disrupted or displaced, and that others potential criminals were deterred.

Recognising the financial burden of bring trafficking cases to court, other police interviewees noted that it may be beneficial to apply 'related' legislation. In light of the barriers to prosecution and conviction outlined above, interviewees posited that trafficking cases are both time and resource intensive. One police interviewee suggested, for example, that more resources are required to gather sufficient evidence to charge for trafficking than to charge for brothel management:

It's very intensive to gather sufficient evidence and then you might not still be able to piece together sufficiently the evidence to prove a pattern of behaviour or what's happening. So that's why most forces will opt for the management of brothels because on some kind of ordinary warrant, they'd probably be able to gather enough evidence [Police interviewee, 2G].

Similarly, another police officer noted the difficulties he had experienced in justifying investigation costs for trafficking cases:

You've got to be accountable: why is an investigation costing £10,000, when you could... prosecute for something else and it cost £2,000? [Police interviewee, 2R]

In light of further cuts to the police budget, confirmed by the Home Secretary Theresa May in a speech at the Superintendent's Association Annual Conference (2015), it seems likely that police officers will increasingly be asked to justify spending on human trafficking investigations and to consider charging for other 'related' offences. With this in mind, the rate of prosecution and conviction for trafficking offences is unlikely to improve.

Other interviewees, however, raised concerns about the use of 'related' legislation in cases of trafficking, demonstrating another point of contention within the anti-trafficking policy domain. Many of these were NGO interviewees who prioritised 'protection' but two police interviewees were also particularly scathing of this approach. This once again demonstrates that police officers are not homogenous in their approaches to anti-trafficking. It is perhaps also noteworthy that these two police interviewees were retired and as such, may be understood as having gravitated towards the peripheries of the crime control 'community', at its intersection with other anti-trafficking 'communities.' One suggested, for example, that when a trafficker is convicted of 'related' offences rather than trafficking *per se*, it sends a message to the victim that their victimisation has not been believed or taken seriously:

And to me what that says to the victim is 'I've convicted somebody of prostituting you, so therefore you are a prostitute.' That is not the same as saying: 'I've convicted somebody of trafficking you, so therefore you are a survivor of trafficking' [Ex-police interviewee 2B].

Here, he suggests that the validation of victim status is important in aiding the rehabilitation of victims. While the importance of criminal prosecution for instilling a sense of recognition in victims is rarely acknowledged in the literature on trafficking, it does find support in Wemmer's (2014) work on victims of crimes against humanity. The ex-police interviewee also noted that validation is not only important for the victim but also, for the victim's family in the country of origin. He explained that without victim status, families may be under pressure from the wider community to shun the woman due to the pervasive stigma surrounding prostitution. To this extent, victim status serves as 'evidence' to the community that the woman was 'innocent', that she was coerced into selling sex. Furthermore, on a more practical level, several interviewees noted that the lack of a trafficking conviction may also prevent victims recovering assets in compensation.

Some interviewees also problematised the way in which the application of 'related' legislation may distort representations of trafficking. Without prosecuting for trafficking, the nature and prevalence of the problem may not be accurately represented in statistics, which in turn may reduce their deterrent threat in that it suggests to offenders a low risk of prosecution. Further, concerns

about the consequences of ‘a distorted picture’ of trafficking also appeared to revolve around another issue: the political repercussion. Some of the interviewees who had experienced external pressure to justify the existence of their anti-trafficking organisation or police unit indicated that conviction statistics were politically important. As such, it was these interviewees who appeared to be particularly opposed to the utilisation of ‘related’ legislation. This view was articulated by one ex-police officer, for example, who noted:

We [The anonymous police unit] never let them [the CPS] accept a plea of guilty, even though they were trying to really pressurize us into it. I would never let it happen because it’s not what we were there for. We were there to prosecute human traffickers! [Ex-police interviewee 2B].

Here he made an allusion to experiences of needing to justify the purpose of the police unit. To this extent, it appeared that he had felt it necessary to use prosecution as a way in which to demonstrate not only that trafficking was a problem in the force area but also, that his unit was competent in tackling it. Another ex-police interviewee similarly noted that he had experienced difficulties in convincing the Home Office and SOCA⁴⁹ that Nigerian human trafficking was a problem in England and Wales because he did not have the prosecution statistics to support his claims:

I was trying to tell people that Nigerian human trafficking was a major problem but the Home Office and SOCA’s reaction was ‘well you say that but there’s no prosecutions. So if there’s no prosecutions, there’s no problem.’ Oh my god. So I said ‘I will give you a prosecution’ [Ex-police interviewee, 2A].

This indicates that despite the fact that it has become almost axiomatic for researchers to acknowledge the limitations of crime statistics in showing the true picture of crime and criminal justice, they continue to have high political currency within criminal justice institutions.

In light of the problems associated with pursuing the third ‘P’, interviewees made recommendations about how to improve the response to the strategic aim of ‘prosecution’. Through their recommendations, police interviewees tended to imply that external factors were accountable for poor rates of prosecution. Some suggested that the strategic aim of prosecution would be achieved more effectively if they were given more resources, or if dedicated human trafficking

⁴⁹ The Serious Organised Crime Agency existed from 2006 to 2013, when it was preceded by the current National Crime Agency.

teams were introduced in police forces across England and Wales. By and far the most common recommendation interviewees made was for the police and the CPS to be better trained to understand trafficking. This view was epitomised by an NGO director who noted that oftentimes victims of traffickers are not recognised as ‘victims’ by the police, which means that they are not treated in the same manner as other victims of crime:

If you’re removing it from this nefarious fog where nobody is quite sure what it is and say (instead) ‘this is a victim of crime’ then you have a much more standardised response, like we do with other victims of crime [NGO interviewee 12].

By improving police officers understanding of trafficking, interviewees suggested that it would bring about improved police-victim relations, more standardisation across England and Wales and in turn, more traffickers brought before the criminal courts. Some recommendations were, however, sites of a great deal of contention between anti-trafficking actors. As such, some of the key points of contention – the barriers to partnership working – are examined in the next section of this chapter.

6.4 Partnership:

‘Well, it’s time to add a fourth!’

In much the same way as the anti-trafficking ‘communities’ expounded in the preceding chapter crosscut, the ‘3Ps’ outlined above do not represent entirely discrete approaches to the governance of sex trafficking. Rather, it is clear that in the active pursuit of one strategic aim, anti-trafficking actors may fulfil another; the mutually constitutive nature of the ‘3Ps’ has been a theme reflected upon throughout the discussion thus far. One might be forgiven therefore for thinking that these sites of common ground – the coming together of aims – would cultivate a collaborative ethos. After all, we are operating in an era defined by agencification: a style of governing that requires formal and informal interaction amongst an ever-increasing plurality of actors from across the public, private and voluntary sectors (Bevir, 2011; Colebatch, 2002; Rhodes, 1997; Torfing, 2012). Formalised under the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* (Wincup, 2013), a ‘partnership’ approach to crime control is commonplace in England and Wales. Anti-trafficking actors certainly promulgated this rhetoric of ‘partnerships’, ‘multi-agency’ approaches and ‘joined-up’ working but in practice, their at-times competing

epistemes and different approaches to governance ultimately serve as barriers to the realisation of these practices. This section therefore explores the extent to which a fourth 'P', partnership, exists amongst anti-trafficking actors and the key sources of contention.

The notion that there are four, instead of three, strategic approaches to anti-trafficking has gained political currency globally in recent years. In a speech given at the release of the 9th Trafficking in Persons report the U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, stated that:

In recent years we've pursued a comprehensive approach reflected by the three Ps: prosecution, protection, and prevention. Well, it's time to add a fourth: partnership [Clinton, 2009].

While this speech was written and delivered in the US context, its relevance is global. After all, as the 'self-appointed' overseers of global anti-trafficking, what the US considers to be important developments in anti-trafficking policy and practice has a bearing upon the rest of the world (O'Connell Davidson, 2015). The existence of a fourth 'P' was in fact acknowledged implicitly in Article 35 of the 2005 European Convention and later explicitly in a newsletter published by Council of Europe (2009), which perhaps have a greater direct bearing upon anti-trafficking policy and practice in England and Wales.

During the course of my fieldwork, the importance of 'partnership working' was highlighted at every opportunity by anti-trafficking actors: in interviews, at practitioner conferences and forums, and in anti-trafficking literature and policy guidance. Reflective of a horizontal approach to the policy process (Colebatch, 2002), a police interviewee epitomised the view so many others articulated, when he described the relationships between anti-trafficking actors using the metaphor of a jigsaw. He suggested that if one:

...puts the jigsaw together, it makes a fantastic picture. If you take away one of the pieces, or two, or three of the pieces of the jigsaw then you can't see the picture. And that's what it needs. It needs joined-up thinking [Police interviewee, 2R].

This metaphor is a helpful one since it conveys that the complexities of trafficking require a range of separate 'pieces' – that is, organisations or individuals – to fit together neatly in order to reach an effective and holistic solution. Indeed, the majority of interviewees implied awareness that changes in the way society is structured, brought about by neoliberal globalisation (Torfing, 2012), has created a social problem in trafficking that requires a multi-faceted response. This view

was also articulated by a founder of a project specifically set up to coordinate a network of anti-trafficking actors in one region of England:

Me: Why do you think that the issue of trafficking in particular requires this multi-agency, collaborative approach?

Interviewee: I think it's because of the complex nature of the crime... What do you do? How do you gather enough evidence to *stop* the people who are trafficking? So you've got the prevention/prosecution side. And then you've got this victim, who's a victim of multiple crime sustained over a *long* period of time with *severe* trauma [NGO interviewee, 16].

In so doing, this interviewee indicated that the complex nature of trafficking requires a complex response based upon a consolidation of the '3Ps' expounded above, which in turn requires that agencies work together. She reaffirmed the idea that since anti-trafficking 'communities' prioritise the '3Ps' in different ways, a comprehensive response to trafficking would demand a coming-together of anti-trafficking actors. To this end, a significant number of strategic and advisory partnerships have been established in recent years, bringing together both statutory and non-statutory organisations on the issue of sex trafficking.⁵⁰

On a few occasions and in a couple of localities, it appeared that police and NGOs had been able to develop meaningful partnerships. This was highlighted by one NGO director, who noted that although the priorities of the police may differ to his own, this did not make them adversaries:

And basically, over the years some very, very good working protocols have come up based on mutual respect, I think... that respect is built on recognising that each side does have constraints and each side has different agendas but they are not necessary conflicting or opposing agendas. They can be harmonious... the police will say 'good victim care, good victim evidence, good convictions'... And we would say 'actually yeah, in terms of restoring individuals cooperating with the police, getting prosecution, a sense of restorative justice, a sense of closure and compensation is a good thing' [NGO interviewee, 06].

Although he did emphasise that his relationship with the police was built upon a mutual respect that not everyone involved in anti-trafficking shares, the important observation is made again that the '3Ps' can be mutually reinforcing. The principles of victim protection prioritised by much of the voluntary sector and those of prosecution prioritised by the police are not, in his view, incompatible.

⁵⁰ For a list of formal anti-trafficking partnerships in the UK, see: <http://www.humantraffickingfoundation.org/national-network-coordinators-forum> [Accessed: 31.05.16.]

He went on to explain that ‘informal rules’ had developed as part of this partnership working such that: the police know not to visit safe houses in uniform; the police use officers of the same gender to interview victims of trafficking; NGO case workers are permitted to accompany victims in interviews; and long interviews take place in specialist police ‘suites’. These tacit rules, he contended, demonstrate an appreciation from both parties (the NGO and the police) of each of their roles as well as the constraints that shape them.

Yet underlying in his description of these “very, very good working protocols” was the idea that effective partnerships are typically based more upon compatible personalities than anything else. He explained that his organisation’s successful multi-agency working with the police was the product of:

...my staff getting along with their staff and me getting on with individual officers and building my networks [NGO interviewee, 06].

Other interviewees indicated, however, that there was more to effective partnerships than compatible personalities. Indeed, as examined in the preceding chapter, shared – or at least compatible – understandings of trafficking brings anti-trafficking actors together. The importance of compatible epistemes was evident in the account of one NGO interviewee, who explained that collaborative working with the specialist units in the Metropolitan Police – first CO14 and then the Human Trafficking Team (HTT) – altered drastically as personnel changed. While this was in part attributed to the incoming Detective Inspector being a ‘careerist police officer’, implicit in the interviewee’s account was that her episteme had come under attack:

They had a great guy in post at the time who was just fabulous and... they behaved, at that point, really very well. They gave us advice. We were able to talk things through with them, but the shift came when in about 2008/9. CO14 *became* the anti-trafficking unit and we got this very, very ambitious new senior Detective Inspector, who brought with him a very, very different approach. Almost, I think, he was tacitly saying that CO14 had let a lot of things slip under the carpet, which I don’t think that was the case at all [NGO interviewee, 13].

Vociferous in her liberal feminist views, the interviewee indicated that the episteme held by CO14 complemented her own and the HTT’s did not. Indeed, while both CO14 and the HTT can be understood as operating within the crime control ‘community’ [see: section 5.6], the interviewee implied that HTT’s approach intersected with a neo-abolitionist episteme [see: section 5.2], one that

sees all prostitution as akin to trafficking. As explained in the previous chapter, this episteme sits in stark contract with a liberal feminist one which understands sex work as legitimate labour. Indeed, this change in the episteme of the Metropolitan Police was also noted by one ex-police interviewee, who explained that while CO14 was a clubs and vice unit and thus unconcerned with locating ‘victims of trafficking’, HTT was a dedicated trafficking unit and therefore relied upon finding victims to justify its existence. It is therefore likely that the breakdown in partnership working is, at least in large part, the consequence of clashing liberal feminist and neo-abolitionist epistememes.

While as demonstrated in Chapter V shared understandings of trafficking can function to unite anti-trafficking actors, they also compound the differential prioritisation of the ‘3Ps’ by the police and NGOs to make inter-organisational partnerships problematic. It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that interviewees were unable to offer many concrete examples of effective partnership working. It became clear over the course of fieldwork that although interviewees recognised in rhetoric the importance of partnership working, significant barriers existed to its realisation. It was therefore important that I headed Duke’s (2002) advice to move beyond ‘the official line’ in interviews with ‘elites’,⁵¹ in order to generate accounts of reality rather than rhetoric. While this is undoubtedly important in all interviews with those in positions of power and influence, it is particularly important in policy areas that are fraught with contention (Connelly and Wicker, 2013). It is to one example of contention – a key battleground – that this chapter now turns.

6.4.1 A key battleground: The Modern Slavery Act

The UK Government claims that the *Modern Slavery Act* – which received royal assent on 26 March 2015 – reflects its determination to lead the world in the global fight against trafficking (Home Office, 2014c). Yet the Act also represented the source of contention most evident in interviews with NGOs and the police, contention that was fostered by the long drafting process of the Act. Indeed, the ‘pre-legislative scrutiny’ process and the multiple ‘readings’ in the House of Commons and again in the House of Lords, provided great scope for anti-

⁵¹ I problematise the concept of ‘elites’ on p. 72.

trafficking actors to lobby for amendments to the Bill before its enactment. During the course of my fieldwork, it was apparent that support for a Modern Slavery Act was gradually gaining momentum, reaching its peak as I concluded my interviews in early-2014. This coincided with representatives from numerous NGOs being invited to give evidence to the Draft Modern Slavery Bill Joint Committee between January and March 2014. One of the key driving forces behind the Act appeared to be the perceived need to consolidate legislation, as evidenced in the following extract from an interview with an ex-police officer:

The [current] legislation is splattered all over the place and bolted-on to other acts...
So [if] it's all under one piece of legislation, it will make it easier to put into practice
and for people to get to know it [Ex-police interviewee, 2A].

In many ways, these discussions were similar to, or linked with, broader discussions about the use of 'related' legislation to prosecute trafficking, with the Act advocated as a solution to the associated problems explored earlier in this chapter [see: section 6.3.2]. Yet what appeared to be the main reason for the modern slavery 'community' pushing so determinately for the Act was that it was regarded as a challenge to the Government's perceived bias towards prioritising sex trafficking over other forms of trafficking. The preoccupation with sex in debates on trafficking has been highlighted in scholarly work elsewhere (Chuang, 2010). My findings thus support Robinson's (2015) observation that advocates used the Act as a vehicle for reframing trafficking debates, away from the traditional focus on the morality of prostitution and towards the exploitation of labour in all industries.

In many ways, the modern slavery 'community' sought to avoid some of the traditional contention invoked when trafficking, and its relationship with prostitution, is debated. The reframing of trafficking as labour exploitation sought to avoid a 'sex wars' (Weitzer, 2007), in that it attempted to bypass the issue of the morality of commercial sex. A few NGO interviewees were adamant, for example, that the debate preceding the Act must avoid, at all costs, being hijacked by the neo-abolitionist 'community.' One service manager [13] argued that the issues of slavery and labour servitude were "too important to be contaminated" by debates about the morality of prostitution. The marginalisation of neo-abolitionists' voices was indeed noticeable in the interviews I conducted with some of the most vocal neo-abolitionist NGOs noting that they had been excluded

from much of the evidence gathering process. One, for example, explained that his organisation was routinely excluded from the domains in which much of the lobbying for the Act operated:

I was so disgusted by the whole process... To me it's fascinating, you've got the Human Trafficking Foundation with all the groups that they've pulled together. None would even consider inviting us along [NGO interviewee, 17].

Yet despite the exclusion of the neo-abolitionist 'community', the move to reframe the trafficking debate by bringing to attention labour exploitation did not pass by uncontested; not all interviewees were even convinced that the new legislation was necessary. Those that had been excluded in key debates leading up to the Act were often scathing of its potential, and vociferous in the view that it was used by the modern slavery 'community' to push forward their political agenda. It seemed that the neo-abolitionist 'community' were fearful that the Act could mean that understandings of trafficking would lose their gender dimension. One case worker, for example, emphasised that too often these sorts of debates are male-dominated and as such, the idea that trafficking is a gendered crime is lost:

Because it's not a political, male-activist dominated reason; it's a gender reason [NGO interviewee, 02].

Neo-abolitionist's concern with the reframing of the debate may also have been inherently linked to worries about losing their funding to the organisation that offered support to 'victims' of all forms of trafficking.

Even the modern slavery 'community' was left dissatisfied by earlier drafts of the Modern Slavery Bill, with many publishing public statements, writing open letters or commenting in new sources condemning the Bill.⁵² Perhaps unsurprisingly given NGOs' prioritisation of the strategic aim of 'protection', some NGOs condemned the Bill for focusing too heavily upon the prosecution of offenders, with little real consideration of victims (Robinson and Falconer, 2013). Amongst a range of other concerns was that the Bill ignored the extraterritorial nature of trafficking, which had the potential to leave overseas domestic workers vulnerable (Anti-Slavery International, 2015). Yet the momentum built by the modern slavery 'community' for a Modern Slavery Act accelerated rapidly once it was endorsed by Theresa May in November 2013. Some commentators have questioned the motives of Theresa May for championing the Act. Robinson (2015:

⁵² At this point I had 'left the field' but can draw upon statements published in public forums to explore the continued contention surrounding the Act.

131), for example, posits that May's 'anti-slavery crusade' was integral to the Conservative Party's electoral success since it enable them to soften the edges of an otherwise anti-immigration manifesto. This should be understood within the broader context of David Cameron's (2005) rebranding of the Party as 'compassionate Conservatives.' It might equally have been the case that May's adoption of the mantle of Wilberforce was a political move to enhance her profile, perhaps in time for the next Conservative leadership battle (O'Connell Davidson, 2013).

As part of these debates, many interviewees recommended that a National Commissioner be established in England, in emulation of Wales, where an Anti-Human Trafficking Coordinator was appointed in March 2011. Interviewees who supported the introduction of a Commissioner lauded the standardisation one would bring to anti-trafficking policy and practice in England and Wales and the improvements one may instigate to front-line training. It appeared that there was a widespread desire for some 'top-down' leadership, which was perceived to be particularly important because of the politicised nature of anti-trafficking. One CEO of an anti-trafficking NGO suggested, for example, that the Commissioner could play an important mediator role in conflicts:

...how do you tackle this problem? It has to be collaborative working... The only way we can do this is to work together but there is that silo mentality and that lack of leadership. So the solution for me is to have an Independent Commissioner, who can bring things together [NGO interviewee, 12].

In this way, it was assumed that the Commissioner could play the role of an 'ombudsman' – that is, he could solve disputes that happen between anti-trafficking actors. NGO interviewees' desire for this form of top-down leadership is, however, somewhat surprising since it is the very shift away from this type of governance and towards 'horizontal' models [see: section 3.4] that has enabled voluntary sector involvement in anti-trafficking. As such, this could be understood as alluding to the limitations of horizontal models of governance or perhaps more so, reaffirming Colebatch's (2002) assertions that vertical and horizontal dimensions can co-exist and can be complementary.

Unsurprisingly, not all NGO and police interviewees supported the introduction of a Commissioner. Underpinning many of these concerns was the notion that anti-trafficking policy and practice ought to be informed from the

'bottom-up', rather than imposed from the 'top-down.' One of the spearheads of those lobbying for the *Modern Slavery Act* was in fact himself critical of the Commissioner role, noting that it adds an unnecessary additional layer of bureaucracy:

Yes there's always a lot of support for something new.... [But] it's not going to take off because it's a body which is bureaucratic. It's official. It's public-funded. Its job is to criticise government, so no government wants to set that up [NGO interviewee, 19a].

He suggested that the Government would be unwilling to appoint a Commissioner whose job would be, in effect, to critique Government practices. Despite these criticisms, an Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner was appointed by Theresa May as a monitoring body of the Home Office. The appointment of Kevin Hyland, former head of the Metropolitan Police HTT, did little to quell critics. Just some of the key criticisms directed by NGOs at Hyland have been: his alleged £95,000 a year salary (Hawkes, 2014); policing background; affiliation with the Christian church; and lack of independence from the Government (Robinson and Falconer, 2013).

In summation, the tension that exists between the police and NGOs, particularly in their differential prioritisation of the '4Ps', has thus far been the central theme to this chapter. Yet the example of the *Modern Slavery Act 2015* demonstrates well that heated contention not only exists inter-sector but also intra-sector. The voluntary sector may indeed be largely united in its prioritisation of 'protection' but disagreement endures about how victims can be best protected. To reiterate the point here, one NGO explained:

There are quite a few American organisations turning up now and offering to sort things out for us. It's interesting, one of them has come over and it's said 'oh well, what we're going to do is going to work in partnership' and they've been round talking to everyone. And in a conversation their CEO said to me 'we've been round now and I have never met such a bunch of bitchy organisations in all my life' ... and I said 'welcome to the sector' [NGO interviewee, 06].

What is clear is that in this example, as well as the multitude of other sites of contention with the anti-trafficking policy domain, is that considerable barriers exist in practice to realising the fourth 'P': partnership. While many anti-trafficking actors noted that a partnership approach to governing sex trafficking

is of great importance, the dogmatic pursuit of divergent interests, politics and priorities means that in reality a silo-mentality prevails.

6.5 Anti-trafficking partnerships and neoliberalism:

'Trafficking: A bag of money with angel-wings attached!'

Having explored some of the barriers that exist to effective and meaningful partnership working, this chapter now turns to theorising why it is that collaboration amongst anti-trafficking actors is likely to remain problematic. According to Rittel and Weber (1973: 160), some societal problems are inherently 'wicked'. They explain that they use the term wicked:

...in a meaning akin to that of "malignant" (in contrast to "benign") or "vicious" (like a circle) or "tricky" (like a leprechaun) or "aggressive" (like a lion, in contrast to the docility of a lamb).

While science has offered successful solutions to a range of 'tame' problems – that is those that can be easily defined and upon which stakeholders can agree – other, 'wicked', problems remain (Rittel and Webber, 1973). Trafficking can be understood in this manner since it aligns with many of the characteristics Rittel and Webber (1973) ascribe to wicked problems. There are, for example, no unambiguous answers to the problem of trafficking since there are no established criteria upon which anti-trafficking measures can be judged. Rather, with myriad actors involved in anti-trafficking, and a range of competing epistemes present, judgements will vary considerably. Furthermore, trafficking's 'wickedness' can be understood as a symptom of other (related) problems (Rittel and Webber, 1973). Dependent upon one's episteme, it may be understood as a symptom of: patriarchy manifest in male demand for sex or patriarchy manifest in the suppression of female sexuality; unrestricted migration or repressive border control practices; organised crime, global wealth inequalities or neocolonialism. The causal explanation for trafficking remains contested, and is wholly dependent upon the ideological standpoint from which the problem is approached. Operating within an environment fraught with contestation, it seems likely that anti-trafficking partnerships will remain a thorny issue in practice. As Rittel and Webber (1973: 160) assert, "plurality of objectives held by pluralities of politics makes it impossible to pursue unitary aims."

Yet it may also be argued that the contested nature of anti-trafficking is exacerbated under neoliberalism. While the involvement of the voluntary sector is integral to the neoliberal vision of civic society or at least the rhetoric surrounding it (Maguire, 2012), neoliberalism has enabled competition and a concern with efficiency to become driving principles within the anti-trafficking policy domain. My intention here is not then to rehash the debate explored elsewhere about whether the voluntary sector should be involved in tendering for public (particularly criminal justice) service contracts (including: Cabinet Office, 2010; Kendall and Knapp, 2000). Instead, I adopt the position that regardless of the advantages and disadvantages of their involvement, policy has undoubtedly led us in the direction of a mixed economy of service provision (Hucklesby and Corcoran, 2016). Indeed, partnership working, localism and civic responsibility underpin the neoliberal philosophies of Thatcherism, New Labour's managerialism, and latterly the Conservatives' 'Big Society' (Morgan, 2012). Yet these values pose a threat to the voluntary sector: its increasing financial dependence upon the state through local authority funding (Morgan, 2012) sits paradoxically with cuts to voluntary sector services. This exacerbates the tension that exists amongst anti-trafficking NGOs, as competition for limited resources creates an environment not of trust, reciprocity and cooperation but rather, suspicion, uncertainty and oftentimes fierce rivalry. It is therefore to funding, as the ultimate barrier to anti-trafficking partners, that this chapter finally turns.

In response to the retreating welfare state, it is the voluntary sector that has attempted to plug gaps in support provision (Harvey, 2005). This has indeed been its traditional role (Hucklesby and Corcoran, 2016) but it appears all the more visible in light of cuts to public spending instigated by the Coalition Government (2010-2015) and continued by the Conservative Government (2015-). This point was summarised by one NGO interviewee:

The gaps end up being plugged by the NGOs, basically. That's how people are being kept away from perhaps the most vulnerable situations [NGO interviewee, 20].

In so doing, she indicated that the services offered by anti-trafficking NGOs provide support to 'victims of trafficking' that would not be available otherwise. Yet these services are offered in the wider context of cuts in public spending (Woodhouse, 2015), which have impacted anti-trafficking NGOs. With only a small number of anti-trafficking NGOs receiving funding under the MoJ contract [see:

footnote 45], most are increasingly reliant upon local authority and privately sourced funding. In light of the increasing scarcity of funding for NGOs, some have – it what appears to be a somewhat paradoxical move – employed new staff as ‘Funding Officers’ whose role it is to source appropriate funding. While it is almost impossible to develop an accurate assessment of funding arrangements in relation to anti-trafficking (Sharapov, 2014), what is clear is that the allocation of funds is contentious.

One example of the highly contested nature of funding allocation was observable in debates about the MoJ anti-trafficking contract, which The Salvation Army secured after a call for tender in December 2010. The previous (and first) allocation of Government funding went to the Poppy Project, part of ‘Eaves for Women’: a feminist charity based in London, vociferous in its anti-prostitution stance. A few NGO interviewees noted that the Salvation Army were able to secure the contract by offering services at a lower cost than the Poppy Project, thus expressing concern that economic efficiency had been prioritised over quality of provision. With this in mind, some argued that the quality of victim provision would likely deteriorate, though no one could confirm that this had occurred in practice. From this perspective, a concern with cost efficiency was considered by some to underpin the MoJ’s decision, supporting Baines (2010) assertion that the encouragement of competition through neoliberal policies can lead NGOs to undercut others and from time-to-time, themselves. Other service manager, however, celebrated the move away from the Poppy Project to the Salvation Army, suggesting that it would bring about a shift in the way resources were used:

...we had Eaves who had got the NRM contract, which was worth a huge amount of money... what percentage of that NRM money was used in terms of their lobbying, and their anti-prostitution activity, and their media, and their other fund-raising? A lot of it was used. I mean one of the things, whatever we think about The Salvation Army, they’ve got their own money. They send tub-thumpers out every week. The money going into the services is going *into* the services [NGO interviewee, 13].

This interviewee appeared confident that the Salvation Army would prioritise victim provision, while Poppy had, in her view, spent too much of the MoJ’s funding on promoting their own radical feminist messages. This demonstrated a broader concern evident amongst interviewees about how finances are utilised in anti-trafficking, with victim protection deemed more important than advocacy.

Concern with how funding is allocated was perhaps a consequence of the

perceived lack of funding available for anti-trafficking. The view that there is insufficient resources available to support victims of trafficking was widespread amongst NGO interviewees. Yet despite the perception often espoused by NGO interviewees and scholars such as Skilbrei (2012) that greater priority is given to prosecution than protection, police interviewees also felt that they were not given enough resources for their anti-trafficking work. One police officer indicated that they are unable to investigate cases of trafficking properly, and that other cases do not come to their attention, due to a lack of funding allocated to policing this crime type:

I think it would be good... just to be able to have the resources to at least investigate those properly because I think a lot of them are missed because we don't have the resources and we don't have the time [Police interviewee, 2P].

The (perceived) scarcity of resources appeared to compound ideological rivalries and tensions over how to prioritise the three strategic aims, such that partnership working was extremely difficult. The below extract from an interview with a NGO CEO demonstrates well the additional barrier to collaboration posed by competition for limited funds:

Me: So, the other anti-trafficking organisations, do you think they share a similar aim of being collaborative-
Interviewee: (overlapping) No!
Me: Why do you think that that is? What barriers are present?
Interviewee: Money. Everyone's chasing a very small pot [NGO interviewee, 12].

It seems that reductions in state funding, combined with the move towards a mixed economy of service provision, may have functioned to create a hyper-competitive anti-trafficking policy domain.

If it is the case that limited resources and cuts to public spending are the ultimate barriers to anti-trafficking partnerships as some interviewees suggested, it goes to say then that those organisations whose funding is more secure are better able to work in partnership, since the competitive element is in some part removed. One NGO interviewee explained that MoJ sub-contractors have been able to work together successfully, which she attributed to a more secure funding stream:

There's a lot of helping each other again... especially if we're underneath the contact because it's not like you're vying for funding or anything like that. You're all in this together [NGO interviewee, 08].

This interviewee therefore points to collaboration between sub-contractors, which the MoJ contract, at least to some extent, obligates. This collaboration is, however, in the formal sense, with victims referred into the NRM assigned by the Salvation Army to a sub-contractor for their case management and safe housing.

The hyper-competitiveness of the anti-trafficking policy domain compels NGOs to adopt practices that will enhance their appeal to funders. One of the key ways in which this is done is by exaggerating the prevalence of trafficking or by using questionable statistics. One ex-police interviewee, for example, suggested that the government may feel obliged to provide funding to NGOs if the statistics create visceral shock:

Part of it is that if it's a huge number, governments are forced to put money toward it. So if I can inflate that number to make it a shocking number, then the government will be forced to do something about it [Ex-police interviewee, 2B]

Another ex-police interviewee explained that the exaggeration of statistics can, however, damage the credibility of the organisation:

I remember in debates leading up to the Olympics [some anti-trafficking actors] going 'oh x amount of womyn are going to be trafficked into the UK etc. etc.' And other people going 'well no, those figures are way out of proportion. So therefore you're making the whole thing up.' So therefore they lost any credibility. But they have to distort the figures to ensure they get the funding 'cos the trouble is they're also in competition with other groups [Ex-police interviewee, 2A]

As this interviewee alludes, this practice of exaggeration, brought about by the imposition of heightened competition under neoliberalism, not only impacts upon the credibility of anti-trafficking NGOs but also, the credibility of trafficking as a social issue and as a concept. Attempts to draw attention to the problem of trafficking using tactics of sensationalism may, counterproductively, result in its ready dismissal as a myth. Indeed, at various points during the course of this thesis I had to remind myself not to dismiss 'trafficking' as a lie; it seems all too easy to become desensitised to anti-trafficking actors' embellished claims.

Another controversial practice that appears to have been brought about because of funding pressures is the need to identify more 'victims of trafficking'. It seems that NGOs, and specialist trafficking policing units and personnel, are under increasing pressure to justify their existence. One manager of a support service, for example, noted that she has experienced external pressure to re-orientate her service provision in light of funding priorities:

I was being told by my drug and alcohol commissioner: “you need to start working more with trafficked people”. “But we haven’t got any trafficked people” ... “But you need to start finding them!” And I actually know services that actually caved into that sort of pressure... and believe me, *believe* me, if I’d of been seeing hordes of trafficking victims do you not think I’d have been on a bloody soapbox, waving a flag, shouting “give me money!” ... What I couldn’t do, was completely re-orientate my service to something that wasn’t happening. [NGO interviewee, 13].

In so doing, she implied that the need to comply with the expectations of (potential) funders could lead to the fabrication of victimhood, a practice explored in the following chapter [section: 7.2.3]. A similar observation was made by another NGO interviewee who explained that because funding is easier to acquire to support victims of trafficking than to support voluntary sex workers, her organisation had adopted a deliberately broad definition of trafficking in order to attract funding:

Another thing was we wanted to do more work with womyn in the sex industry and there was no money for them. No one cared about supporting them... So for us, really one of the reasons why we wanted a really broad definition [of trafficking] was that it was an opportunity to work with some of those womyn who are often in extremely dangerous situations [NGO interviewee, 01].

By employing a ‘broad’ definition of trafficking – one that she openly admitted conflated trafficking with prostitution – the interviewee suggested that she we be able to circumvent binary attitudes of the ‘whore’ (the sex worker) and the ‘Madonna’ (the victim of trafficking) (Sanders et al., 2009). It seems then that a key part of anti-trafficking actors’ considerations about acquiring funding was the construction of ‘needy subjects’ (Timmer, 2010: 264) since these needy subjects are what are required in order to appease funders.

Anti-trafficking actors are therefore faced with a double bind, in which their core aim is often the elimination of trafficking yet the existence of their organisation is dependent upon a continuous supply of victims. This has evidently lead some to engage in practices that represent ‘mission creep’: their work deviates from their stated mission. According to Finley and Esposito (2012: 11), this practice is common amongst voluntary sector organisations across different policy domains. A similar assertion is made by Timmer (2010: 265):

NGOs are dependent on external entities and thus must often act in ways that are counter to their states goals and ideals. NGOs cannot be sustained if they disregard

or fail to adapt to reigning hegemonic discourse emerging from funding and governmental agencies

To this extent, the practices of some anti-trafficking actors are shaped by a neoliberal system that promotes efficiency, competition and target setting. This has no doubt generated a hyper-competitive environment, which has promoted an ethos of territoriality (Guilloud and Cordery, 2007). These findings complement existing theorising around the 'Non-profit Industrial Complex' (INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, 2007; Samimi, 2010), a concept used to describe a system which compels non-profits to focus their attention on securing and maintaining funding, rather than realising their aim(s) of support, humanitarianism or social justice (Samimi, 2010). As such, it seems that the principles of competition and cost-efficiency – key elements of a broader neoliberal philosophy – may serve as barriers to the strategic aim of partnership working in the governance of sex trafficking.

6.6 Closing remarks

The strategic framework of the '3Ps' – prevention, protection and prosecution – has underpinned international and domestic policy since the beginning of the 21st Century and has no doubt shaped the governance of sex trafficking in England and Wales. Yet it is clear that NGO and police actors prioritise these aims differently. My findings thus support the observation scholars have made elsewhere that Western states tend to prioritise prosecution over other strategic aims (Musto, 2008; Skilbrei, 2012). Yet my findings also make clear that NGOs, almost by default, have taken up the role of victim protection: the retreating welfare state has left a notable gap in victim provisions, which the voluntary sector has partly filled. This differential prioritisation of aims compounds the contention that exists as a consequence of the competing epistemic communities examined in the preceding chapter, and functions as a barrier to partnership working. It may be argued, therefore, that while collaboration may be required in order to effectively govern trafficking (Friesendorf, 2007), the recent addition of a fourth approach to governance (partnership) – the fourth 'P' – has not yet been realised in practice.

In this chapter I have demonstrated that trafficking is best understood a 'wicked problem' and to this end, my work complements the large body of scholarly work on crime partnerships that reflects on the barriers to effective

working (Wincup, 2013). Ultimately, it seems that the principles promoted under neoliberalism generate pressures amongst anti-trafficking actors, which in turn promotes fragmentation and splintering amongst anti-trafficking actors. Indeed, the hyper-competitiveness that is fostered by managerialist policies undermines the principles that are integral to anti-trafficking partnerships. While partnerships between and amongst state and non-state actors are fundamental to neoliberal policy governance, paradoxically the contestation caused by neoliberal policies prevents the fulfilment of effective anti-trafficking partnership working in reality. The thesis thus far has demonstrated how a silo-mentality is prevalent within the anti-trafficking policy domain. Yet the following chapter examines how a victimising discourse based upon 'rescuing' womyn from the sex industry has, to some extent, operated to unite anti-trafficking actors.

Chapter VII – Blurred Lines: Constructions of Victimhood in a Rescue Industry

This chapter critically-examines how NGOs and the police construct victimhood within the context of anti-trafficking and how ‘victims of trafficking’ are *produced* in the pursuit of a range of political agendas. Having outlined the various anti-trafficking ‘communities’ in chapter V, and how anti-trafficking policy translates into practice in chapter VI, this chapter is concerned with how anti-trafficking actors combine to form a ‘rescue industry’. It explores how and why the rescue industry attributes ‘ideal victim’ status (Christie, 1986) to some migrant womyn and not others and as such, is founded upon the notion that victim status is not simply determined by the subjectivities of the victimised but rather, is a label attached to particular people by others (Quinney, 2008). A central concern throughout the chapter is the blurred line that exists between care and control. To this extent, the chapter examines anti-trafficking policy and practice as a form of power, expounding how the rescue industry exerts control by determining who – by virtue of their victim status – deserves protection and support. As Agustín (2007: 8) notes:

...social helpers consistently deny the agency of large numbers of working-class migrants, in a range of theoretical and practical moves whose object is management and control... The journeys of women who work in the sex industry are treated as involuntary in a victimising discourse known as trafficking.

It is this ‘victimising discourse’ to which Agustín refers – and which is both constituted by and a constituent of the rescue industry – that functions to guide how anti-trafficking actors view and treat migrant womyn involved in the sex industry. Within this in mind, this chapter adopts a critical approach to the social construction of victimhood.

This chapter begins by exploring what it is that unites the majority of anti-trafficking actors, despite their divergent epistememes and strategic priorities – that is, their shared desire to ‘rescue’ migrant womyn from the sex industry (7.1). The chapter introduces the idea that the rescue industry treads a fine line between care and control, before offering new empirical evidence to support the well-documented observation that voluntary migrant sex work and sex trafficking are conflated in order to justify Western political agendas (7.2). In light of this, the

chapter moves on to analyse why victim status is more readily conferred upon some womyn than others, addressing factors such as: socio-economic status; nationality and race; and victims' perceived complicity in their exploitation (7.3). The following section looks beyond the ubiquitous bifurcation of choice and coercion found in much literature on the sex industry, to recognise the blurred line between voluntary migrant sex work and forced sex labour (7.4). Finally, the chapter returns to question whether the rescue industry acts entirely altruistically in its 'rescue' practices or if its actions are in fact geared towards maintaining the socio-political power of 'the West' over 'the rest' (7.5). Central to this chapter is the notion that conceptualisations of trafficking appear too readily to accept that 'victims of trafficking' exist independent of our thinking, or at least gloss over the idea that victims may be *produced* by people in positions of relative power. As such, I contend that victimhood is not an objective experience; it involves the making of political judgments (Anderson, 2013; Quinney, 2008). The construction of victimhood should not then be understood in isolation from the epistemes explored in Chapter V.

7.1 Rescue, inc.: The expansion of the rescue industry

This section begins from the starting point that although a range of 'communities' make up the diverse network of organisations involved in anti-trafficking, almost all can be positioned within what Agustín (2007) has termed the 'rescue industry'. Actors within this industry form an infrastructure designed around 'raid', 'rescue', and 'rehabilitation' (Dutta, 2016) in its various forms, including: advocacy, safe-housing, support with mental and physical health, and immigration and legal advice. While the practices of anti-trafficking actors are therefore heterogeneous and their priorities differ [see: Chapter VI], their collective concerns have given way to the development of an industry founded upon the desire to 'rescue' womyn from the perceived horrors of the commercial sex industry. From this perspective, the rescue industry refers to a group of social actors who see themselves as working to improve the lives of victims of trafficking and as such, "they consciously spend time thinking about how people ought to live and how to achieve that vision" (Agustín, 2007: 4). In this regard, the rescue industry can be understood both as an umbrella term to refer to the organisations who engage in the 'rescue' of 'victims of trafficking' and in the broader sense, as the discourse

that underpins anti-trafficking as a field of intervention. My intention is not, however, to homogenise anti-trafficking actors under the banner of the rescue industry and to this extent, I try also to present the voices of those who do not conform to its practices.

To date, many have been unwilling to offer a critical account of the voluntary sector – that is, those traditionally understood as ‘social helpers’ (Agustín, 2007) – since as DeChanie (2005) elucidates, the notion that it is ‘inherently good’ is both pervasive and enduring. The normative assumption of ‘goodness’ (Mercer, 2002) and concerns about the potential for research to be used to justify further ‘austerity measures’, function to reinforce scholarly reluctance to criticise the ideologies and actions of ‘social helpers.’ Much of the optimism about the voluntary sector has centred on an idealised image of NGOs as sitting outside and beyond politics and profit (Fisher, 1997). As this thesis has endeavoured to show thus far, anti-trafficking actors are however far from apolitical and instead, embody a range of ideological and political interests which are structured and negotiated within a policy domain characterised by contention. Perhaps in light of the growing belief that NGOs are losing their ability to act independent of the state (Benson and Hedge, 2009), a body of critical literature has emerged in recent years which raises concerns about the co-optation of the voluntary sector into the state apparatus of crime control (Maguire, 2012; Hucklesby and Corcoran, 2015; Silvestri, 2009). With this in mind, I adopt a critical approach to understanding the rescue industry, exploring the extent to which its practices are both mediated by, and an extension of, Western hegemony.

Just as it may be overly-simplistic to assume that the rescue industry is ‘inherently good’, one should neither understand it to be ‘inherently bad.’ As expounded in the previous chapter, anti-trafficking NGOs have played an important role in plugging gaps in victim services exposed by “post-welfare state modernization” (Corcoran, 2011: 34) and to this end, the rescue industry may open routes of support that would be unavailable otherwise. Womyn officially labelled ‘victims of trafficking’ through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) are, for example, entitled to 45 days of support from the Salvation Army and their sub-contractors, whilst those who receive a negative Reasonable Grounds decision or do not wish to enter the NRM at all, may still be able to access victim

provisions through the NGOs not bound by the MoJ contract. To this extent, it is incontrovertible that through the application of victim status, the rescue industry play an important role in offering valuable support to disadvantaged womyn and those exploited in the sex industry. Many interviewees emphasised that it is benevolence – a well-intentioned aspiration to improve the lives of ‘victims’ – that defines their work. As one CEO explained, it was their “heart for justice, heart for people” [NGO interviewee, 08] that inspired their anti-trafficking work. Anti-trafficking work was therefore constructed by many interviewees as part of their avowed mission for social good. With this in mind, I do not dismiss blithely the help that the rescue industry offers. Yet as Friedman (1962:3) contends:

[T]his coin has two sides. The power to do good is also the power to harm... and more important, what one man regards as good, another may regard as harm.

Help may therefore become a hindrance both for migrant womyn and for systemic change and as such, this chapter will go on to demonstrate that the actions of the rescue industry may be neither entirely beneficial to migrant womyn nor entirely altruistic. This chapter therefore examines the complex dynamic that operates between care and social control.

The saviour mentality embodied by the rescue industry is by no means new since it was a prominent feature of Victorian reformers’ concerns around ‘white slavery’ in the late 19th century (Doezema, 2010). Yet it seems that the rescue industry has proliferated in recent years, or at least there has been an observable increase in the number of anti- trafficking NGOs, specialist police units, and other anti-trafficking actors that engage in rescue practices. Some interviewees, who had either worked in the voluntary sector for a long period of time or in some cases had themselves worked in the sex industry, commented that they had seen a mushrooming of anti-trafficking NGOs in recent years. This growth of the rescue industry was noted by one NGO interviewee, who also eluded to tension that exists between old and new organisations:

...people like ECPAT, Anti-Slavery, some of the older organisations have had to realise “hang on a minute there’s about 15 different organisations that’s cropped up around us”. And that’s just the start! I’m sure they’re hugely frustrated with that [NGO interviewee, 17].

He explained that the rapid increase in anti-trafficking actors has compounded the pressures organisations have experienced in securing funding in recent years [see: section 6.5], to foster conflict between ‘existing’ and ‘emerging’ actors. Some

interviewees attributed the growth of the rescue industry to an actual growth in trafficking, whilst others acknowledged that it was more a product of funding allocation, policy priorities, and the widespread construction of trafficking as a political 'hot topic'.

Figure 7.1 offers a visual representation of the increasing pace at which anti-trafficking organisations have established themselves in England and Wales, demonstrating: i) the years in which the NGOs that participated in this project were established;⁵³ ii) the years in which key policing initiative or units were established; iii) and the years in which key transnational, regional and domestic policies were introduced in England and Wales. It is clear then that the introduction of NGOs gained pace from 2005 onwards. This followed the introduction of two key pieces of domestic legislation: the *Sexual Offences Act 2003* and the *Asylum and Immigration Act 2004* [see: pp. 48-49]. A cluster of organisations were also established in the wake of the UK signing the *European Convention on Trafficking* in 2007 and Operation Pentameter II which took place the same year.⁵⁴ One NGO interviewee noted how the issue of trafficking has risen in prominence at certain points in time, recalling one occasion she suggested:

It was also just after Pentameter, so your man Tim Brain [ACPO Lead for Prostitution] had raised the specter of this huge amount of trafficking in Cheltenham and Gloucester and there was all this issue going on and Eaves were big-ing up their work. And of course the media suddenly went [shouts] "Oh cha-ching this is interesting: sex slaves" [NGO interviewee, 13].

The anti-trafficking NGOs and specialist police units that did not take part in this research are not, however, plotted onto this timeline since it is unclear exactly which organisations engage in anti-trafficking policy and practice given that it is used as a vehicle through which to pursue a variety of political agendas [see Chapter V]. Nonetheless, Figure 7.1 is helpful in terms of showing a general upward trend in the number of anti-trafficking actors over time.

More recently, a number of trafficking 'consultants' have also emerged as part of the rescue industry, and operate independently of both law enforcement

⁵³ Ethical issues concerning anonymity have been carefully considered here. Each of the NGOs listed here gave permission on informed consent forms for their organisation to be listed as having participated in this research project. Those that did not grant this element of consent have been omitted from Figure 1.

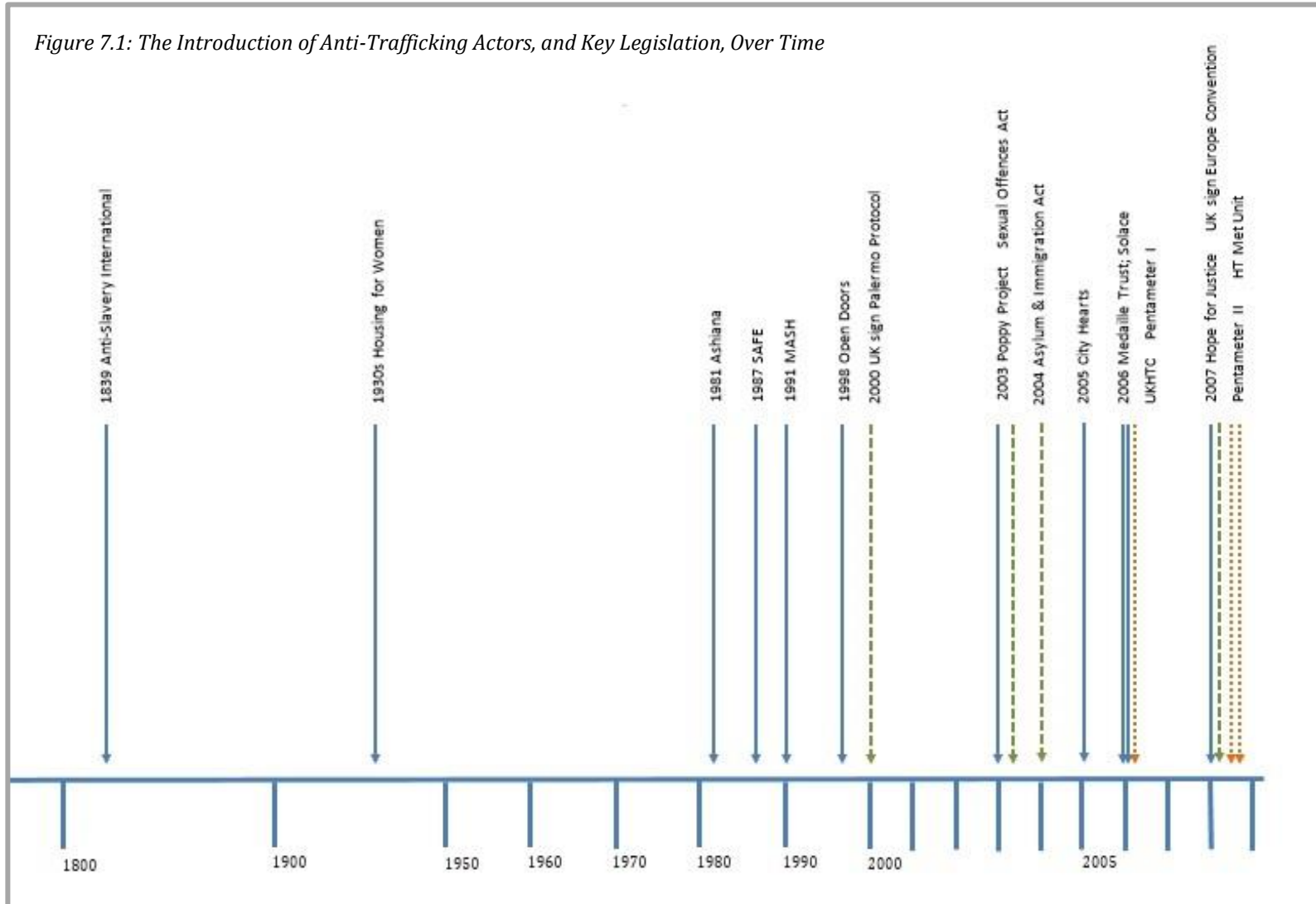
⁵⁴ Operation Pentameter II was a UK-wide policing operation launched in October 2007 with the strategic aim of carrying out the objectives set forth in the UK Action Plan 2007.

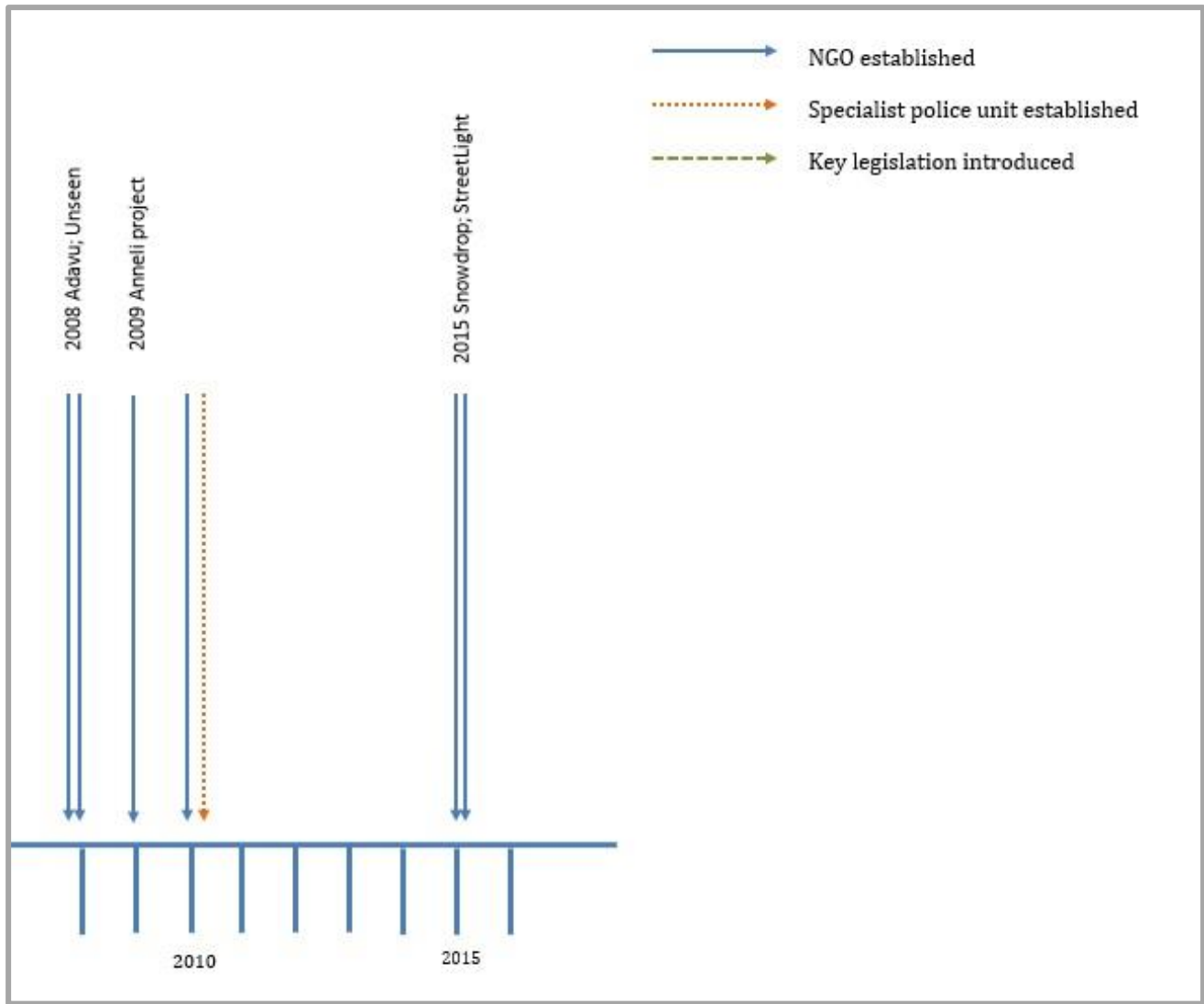
agencies and NGOs. The 'Slave Detective', 'ATC: Anti-Trafficking Consultants', 'Specialist Policing Consultancy Ltd' and 'Nick Kinsella' are just some examples.⁵⁵ Interviewees explained that the role of these private consultants was primarily as 'trainers', in that they use their 'expertise' to teach front-line practitioners such as the police, lawyers, and NGOs. In addition, trafficking consultants also write reports for victims who are appealing deportation orders from the Home Office and/or are being prosecuted for crimes that were committed as a result of them being trafficked.⁵⁶ To this extent, the term 'rescue *industry*' is particularly apt; a growing number of actors are profiting financially from their anti-trafficking work.

⁵⁵ Examples of anti-trafficking consultants have been drawn from information available in the public domain. Consultants were not included in my research sample.

⁵⁶ These crime usually relate to immigration or prostitution offences.

Figure 7.1: The Introduction of Anti-Trafficking Actors, and Key Legislation, Over Time





One way that ‘rescue’ practices manifested within the rescue industry was through ‘welfare visits’. Although the desire to rescue and rehabilitate victims of trafficking was reflected *explicitly* in some NGOs’ mission statements, more often than not a saviour mentality manifested *implicitly* through the practice of ‘welfare visits’. Both NGO and police interviewees emphasised the importance of these visits, recounting experiences of ‘partnership’ working to gain entry to known indoor sex venues in order to ‘save’ ‘victims of trafficking.’ Welfare visits therefore represented an example of how a relationship that was traditionally adversarial was circumvented by the overarching desire to ‘rescue’ womyn – that is, their interests converged as police ‘raids’ and NGO ‘outreach’ became conflated. Yet there appeared to be little discernible difference between the descriptions interviewees offered of welfare visits and the critical accounts of traditional brothel raids offered elsewhere (English Collective of Prostitutes, 2014). After completing one police interview, I was (unexpectedly) invited to attend a ‘pre-welfare visit meeting’ alongside police officers and womyn from a Catholic charity I knew to be unequivocally opposed to prostitution.⁵⁷ I return here to reflections from my fieldwork diary, initially offered on p. 84, of that experience:

I must admit I was relieved when they asked me to leave the room so that they could discuss the (confidential) practicalities of their ‘welfare visit’ – sounds better than ‘brothel visit’, I suppose. I was growing increasingly uncomfortable with how they were assuming all non-British women working in the known brothels in the area were trafficked, and unsure about whether to voice my concern. But I hope they could sense my scepticism. I left feeling really uneasy, particularly about the sense of righteousness so obviously pervading the group. I can’t help but think I’ve just been privy to a meeting that would potentially result in the detention and deportation of some migrant women.... I can’t help but think that any non-British woman in those brothels will struggle to be seen as *anything* other than ‘trafficking victim’.

The undertone of righteousness I observed from participants of this meeting, was a common feature of interviewees’ accounts of welfare visits and other similar practices. It was again present, for example, in Greater Manchester Police’s live Twitter updates (#MSHT) of their ‘Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Patrol’ on 10 March 2016.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ The charity’s website makes clear its episteme when it states that their aim is to help womyn “affected by prostitution”, indicating their view that womyn have little or no choice to sell sex.

⁵⁸ GMP’s Tweets about this patrol under ‘#MSHT’ have been compiled and are available at: <https://storify.com/gmpolice/modern-slavery-human-trafficking-patrol> [Accessed: 24.05.16.]

7.2. Conflating trafficking with migrant sex work

It is widely recognised that anti-trafficking actors frequently conflate sex trafficking and voluntary migrant sex work (Chuang, 2010; Cusick et al., 2009; Jordan, 2002; O'Neill, 2010) and this practice is endemic within the rescue industry. This conflation has its roots in 19th century abolitionist's concerns about young white girls kidnapped and sold into sex slavery by the racial Other (Doezema, 2010; Mahdavi, 2014; Walkowitz, 1992). While the 'third wave' of feminism sought to disentangle prostitution and sex trafficking, 'second wave' radical feminists have nonetheless capitalized on the discursive slippage between the two. They have, until recently, successfully positioned themselves as having the authoritative claim to knowledge; a knowledge that centralises this conflation. It might be assumed then that the pluralisation of the anti-trafficking domain – reflected in the existence of a range of competing anti-trafficking 'communities' [see Chapter V] – would have prompted the dissipation of the historical conflation between trafficking and sex work. Yet this has not been the case since, as I go on to argue here, the conflation of trafficking and sex work enables the pursuit of a range of organisational agendas.

Although the *Palermo Protocol* was initially considered to represent an attempt at alleviating some of the historical disputation around the definition of trafficking, it appears in actuality to have done very little to suppress trafficking's consistent conflation with the issues of immigration and prostitution. The UK Threat Assessment of Organised Crime compiled by the Serious Organised Crime Agency (2010: 42), for example, somewhat uncritically classifies human trafficking as 'organised immigration crime', whilst radical feminist advocates habitually construct prostitution as the root cause of the global trade in human traffic. This functions to both/either position irregular migrants as 'victims' and thus deny their bodily autonomy (Agustín, 2003), and/or construct victims of trafficking as illegal aliens who represent a threat to national security (Gallagher, 2002). In other words, the quotidian conflation of migrancy, trafficking and prostitution in anti-trafficking policy and practice (Chapkis, 2003) serves both to facilitate *and* deny victim status. It is to this dual purpose, and to how the conflation of trafficking and migrant sex work operates to influence how the rescue industry constructs victimhood, that this chapter now turns.

7.2.1 Overuse of the victim label

When asked about their experiences of working with victims of trafficking, many police and NGO interviewees appeared instead to recount examples of working with womyn who sounded, at least to me,⁵⁹ like voluntary migrant sex workers – that is, the narrative of victimisation seemed inappropriate. Interviewee’s conflation of trafficking and migrant sex work manifested in a whole range of different ways but perhaps most notably, in some of the statistics interviewees offered to articulate a rise in trafficking. One NGO CEO, for example, utilised (unsubstantiated) statistics to attribute an increase in EU womyn involved in the sex industry to a rise in trafficking:

There was one statistic that I heard that there used to be, a few years back, 80% UK and now its 80% EU, as far as prostitutes in brothels... It came through someone in government that said that. I’m not sure where they got that statistic... I don’t think there’s that many more Eastern Europeans that suddenly are wanting to come into this. That says there’s a high level of trafficking in there somewhere [NGO interviewee, 08].

As in the quotation above, it was often unclear whether interviewees intentionally constructed migrant sex workers as victims of trafficking. For some, it seemed that they thought that migrant sex workers were genuine victims of trafficking because they were not involved in the sex industry by choice. For others, however, it appeared that they were aware that the womyn they were labelling as ‘victim’ were in fact voluntarily selling sex but they imposed the victim label regardless:

Whether they’re doing it of their own volition or not, it’s sex trafficking. They are victims [Police interviewee, 2D].

This demonstrated an assumption, widespread within the rescue industry, that commercial sex was not an industry that migrant womyn would choose. This claim underpins radical feminist scholarly work (including, Barry, 1995; Dworkin, 1988; MacKinnon, 2007; Jeffreys, 2008), is fundamental to the neo-abolitionist anti-trafficking ‘community’ [see: section 5.2], and intersects with the framing of contemporary trafficking as modern slavery [see: section 5.4]. In so doing, the rescue industry largely ignored intersectional/non-Western/liberal feminist claims that the prospect of improved socio-economic status through flexible labour (Agustín, 2007), as well as a range of other ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors (Hoyle

⁵⁹ I am cautious to use rigid distinctions here between victims and sex workers since, as I go on to explain in section 7.4, the distinction between the two is unclear, the line blurred.

et al, 2011), mean that often migrant sex workers make conscious decisions to travel to work in thriving sex industries (Doezema, 2002).

The construction of voluntary migrant sex workers as ‘victims of trafficking’ – that is, the over-use of the victim label – may be understood as serving two seemingly dichotomous functions: care and control. First, victim status may facilitate routes into support services for migrant sex workers who may, by virtue of their undocumented immigration status and the criminalisation of the UK sex industry, be in positions of vulnerability. The victim label serves to affirm vulnerability, which in turn may act as a ‘gateway to assistance’ through formal routes (Brown, 2014). Without the victim label, access to MoJ support would not be possible. Yet to borrow again from Brown (2004), the ‘victim’ label may simultaneously operate to ‘legitimise social control’. It was clear from interviewees’ accounts that care was conditional – that is, womyn were required to submit to control in order to receive care.

Reflecting the complex interplay between care and control in the rescue industry, two NGO interviewees and one police interviewee spoke about how they perceived womyn’s bodily autonomy and self-determination to be restricted by the practices of some anti-trafficking actors. Concerns were raised about some repressive ‘safe-house rules’ which included the confiscation of mobile phones and restrictions on communication with people outside of the safe-houses. One manager of a support service indicated that victim care may be conditional upon their acceptance of the NGO’s episteme. They explained that some safe-houses impose their anti-prostitution episteme upon ‘victims of trafficking’, whilst others impose their Christian religion upon womyn:

We had a couple of occasions where we had women who’d gone into [a leading anti-trafficking NGO safe house] and then basically left: ‘well they were bloody rubbish. We don’t have any money. Couldn’t sell sex’ because part of their rules are you’re not allowed to be a prostitute. ‘I had no freedom. I couldn’t speak to anybody I wanted to speak to.’ So the help was conditional... I know a couple of faith-based organisations that want the sex workers to pray with them and that can’t be right. If you’re Buddhist why would you want to pray with a bunch of nuns? It’s a bit insulting [NGO interviewee, 13].

While this interviewee highlighted the conditionality of support, this is not to say that social support outside of the anti-trafficking policy domain is ever entirely unconditional. Indeed, the notion of ‘no rights without responsibilities’ was

central to the reforms of the New Labour Government (Giddens, 1998) and the ‘principle of conditionality’ (Dwyer, 2004) has continued to underpin subsequent Governments’ approaches to welfare and justice reforms. To this extent, the care of ‘victims of trafficking’ is underpinned by a neoconservative philosophy which also seeks to control or modify behaviour (Harrison and Sanders, 2014).

7.2.2. Underuse of the victim label

Although the ‘victim’ label was frequently conferred upon voluntary migrant sex workers (i.e. ‘overused’), interviewees also indicated that some womyn struggle to acquire victim status and instead were treated as immigration offenders – that is, the victim label was also, somewhat paradoxically, underused. Interviewees’ accounts indicate that law enforcement agencies routinely engage in practices in which the objective is to discredit victims’ claims. It seems that border control agencies, and to a slightly lesser extent the police, employ two techniques in order to discredit the victim. First, many NGO interviewees condemned the authorities for trying to discover, and in some cases encourage, discrepancies in victims’ accounts. Critics of these practices explained that UKVI, UKHTC and the police often subject migrant womyn to intense and repeat questioning. Some police interviewees justified these practices on the basis that they must ensure that the victim will make a ‘good witness’ if the case went to a court of law [see p. 155]. Yet NGO interviewees explained that this practice did not take into account that inconsistencies in victim’s accounts could be brought about by the effects of trauma, fear of reprisal, and misapprehensions of police corruption based upon experiences in countries of origin. They also suggested that repeated questioning may confuse victims or even elicit details that were previously forgotten:

I mean, even one woman that I supported during an asylum interview she gave a response to a question, then realised the question wasn’t exactly what she thought it was, corrected her answer... And she still got criticised for this because she changed her answer [NGO interviewee, 18].

Truman’s (2009: 296) notion of the ‘manufacture of discrepancies’ is pertinent here since it appeared that some anti-trafficking actors were keen to seize upon discrepancies in womyn’s accounts as a means to legitimise their disbelief in claims to victimhood. This is consistent with the authorities handling of sexual assault cases: Holmstrom and Burgess (1983) found, for example, that a ‘consistent

testimony' was one measure of a 'good witness.' In this regard, my findings support Elizabeth Stanko's (1981) observation that victim credibility has no independent existence but rather, is constructed and produced through the interactions that take place between the victim and law enforcement agencies. To this end, the credibility of trafficking victimhood can be understood to be socially constructed by those in positions of power.

A second technique employed by the authorities – and even some NGOs – in an attempt to question the credibility of victims' claims was to assume ulterior motives for claiming victimisation. Several interviewees indicated that there had been either a real or perceived increase in fabricated claims to victimhood. One noted, for example, that non-EU migrant womyn are becoming aware that their chances of gaining immigration status in the UK are increased if they claim to be a victim of trafficking:

We see false victims through. We didn't have them when we began but we're getting them now because the word is out and so we do see people which for want of a better word, have false asylum claims [NGO interviewee, 06].

It appeared that some groups of womyn were, however, more likely to be disbelieved than others. As explored in more detail later in this chapter [see: section 7.3.2], the claims of Nigerian womyn were particularly likely to be viewed with suspicion. Another NGO interviewee explained that anti-trafficking actors ought to be particularly aware that womyn who have previously experienced trafficking may subsequently claim false victimhood in order to receive a second 'Recovery and Reflection' period:

...and what came about was that she had been a victim of trafficking the first time around and she'd then been sent home... And then essentially, she just came back to the UK and claimed she'd been re-trafficked and I don't really think she had been. I think she was using previous knowledge to try and get that help a second time [NGO interviewee, 18].

From this perspective, the first experience of victimisation facilitates a second claim. While the "revolving door syndrome" is widely-used to explain re-offending (Wahidin, 2013: 196), it seems it may also be apt here.

Not only did interviewees indicate that some anti-trafficking actors (particularly the police and border agencies) underuse the victim label but that they also construct womyn claiming victimhood as 'offenders.' One ex-police interviewee explained that the distinction between victim and offender is often

not clear-cut in cases of trafficking since the person claiming victimhood may have themselves been exploited but may also be guilty of exploiting other womyn:

...so suddenly you go from victim care to dealing with an offender, and then when you come out of the interview you still think are they an offender or aren't they? Because they may well be exploiting people, but they used to say that they're not being exploited themselves [Ex-police interviewee, 2J].

Interviewees explained that they were aware of womyn who fit the *Palermo Protocol* definition of trafficking having been charged for offences such as: illegal entry, false documents, illegal working, controlling prostitution for gain and brothel keeping. This practice occurred despite Article 26 of the *European Convention* having a 'non-punishment provision' that stipulates that victims should be protected from prosecution for crimes which they may have been compelled by others to commit. One police interviewee [2C] epitomised the practice of viewing victims of trafficking as immigration offenders when she explained that migrant womyn often use trafficking as "an excuse to get out of criminality."

Other interviewees, particularly NGOs, were however critical of this manifestation of the 'victim'/'immigration offender' conflation. Some explained that they had recently started entering immigration centres and prisons in order to identify victims of trafficking who had been detained as immigration offenders:

So the Outreach Team was doing quite a lot of work in detention centres, particularly Yarl's Wood, where either women *had* told the authorities that they'd been trafficked and it just hadn't been picked up on and it had been ignored, *or* they started disclosing once they were in detention. And sometimes not until the point where they'd been given removal directions. [NGO interviewee, 20].

An ex-police interviewee indicated that the construction of victims of trafficking as 'illegal immigrants' was a widespread practice amongst the police and border control agencies:

But I came across a *number* of victims who were arrested for false passports... Well basically the main thing is that attitudes towards the victims has got to change, especially from police officers... Just because they're a sex worker, doesn't mean that they're a criminal... From the UKBA and other people in places of decision, should change their attitudes because that's what is hindering the identification of victims [Ex-police interviewee, 2A].

This interviewee therefore posited that the general attitudes of law enforcement agencies must change in order to prevent the underuse of the victim label. The

endemic practice of criminalising ‘victims of trafficking’ can be therefore understood as part of a broader ‘cop culture’; a culture in which ‘suspicion’ is a common, and constant, attitude. (Cockcroft, 2013; Loftus, 2009; Reiner, 2000). According to Cicourel (1995: 66), the police develop “theories about individuals and groups, morality and immorality, good and bad people.” Since suspicion is widely seen to be the occupational culture of operational police officers, many have engaged in the systematic stereotyping of migrant womyn as a threat.

7.2.3 Culture of disbelief vs. a culture of belief

My findings indicate therefore that a paradoxical situation operates in which, victim status is both over-applied and under-applied. In some instance, the agency of voluntary migrant sex workers is denied, whilst in others the victimisation of migrant womyn is denied. It seems that this paradox can be understood in relation to two enduring, and antithetical, cultures: a culture of disbelief and a culture of belief. These two cultures were captured – albeit, crudely – by one police interviewee, who explained that they frequently conflict with the manager of a local NGO over the credibility of victims’ claims:

And I say, ‘we will fall out over this because I’m the cynical cop; you’re the gullible charity worker’ [Police interviewee, 2C].

As the term ‘culture’ implies, these beliefs are pervasive throughout organisations rather than confined to the level of the individual. To this extent, they should be viewed as intersecting with the competing epistemes outlined in Chapter V. Reference to a ‘culture of disbelief’ has been documented elsewhere in literature relating to the trafficking of both adults and children (Home Affairs Committee, 2009; Pearce, 2013), and to asylum applications (Refugee Council, 2011; Souter, 2011; Stepnitz, 2012). There has, to date, been no empirical exploration of the notion of an antithetic ‘culture of belief.’ Before I look at each culture in turn, it is worth noting a couple of caveats. These cultures are not all-encompassing: anti-trafficking actors cannot be straightforwardly identified as being part of one culture or the other. In this regard, it may be helpful to regard them as two ends of a spectrum. Furthermore, like many typologies these cultures should be regarded as little more than part of a theoretical framework guiding understandings of victimhood. They do not, when viewed in isolation, entirely explain why victim status may be over- and under-utilised.

It appeared to be, almost exclusively, the police and border control agencies that engaged in the systematic disbelieving of migrant womyn's accounts of victimisation. One NGO interviewee encapsulated the general sentiment underpinning the culture of disbelief, when he criticised UKBA (now UKVI):

...you see it in the UK Border Agency, it's like 'well actually I don't believe a word of what your client is saying. I don't think she's been trafficked at all. I think she's made the whole lot up, just to stay in the country.' So you can get these [attitudes] and of course the Border Agency will have agendas about removal, restricting immigration and so on [NGO interviewee, 06].

A police interviewee may also be understood as epitomising this culture of disbelief when she noted, with frustration:

I feel like standing up and saying 'I've got a victim who comes in lying through their teeth' but I wouldn't dream of saying that. Well you would be lynched, wouldn't you? [Police interviewee, 2C].

The culture of disbelief, therefore, is best understood in relation to the anti-immigration and crime control epistemes that some anti-trafficking actors adopt. By constructing the 'victim' as an 'offender' the police and border agencies can be seen to fulfil their overarching aims – that is, the control of crime and the protection of borders respectively. It seems likely therefore that this culture may be both constituted by and a constituent of the xenophobic practices and systemic racism widely observed in existing literature on trafficking and its conflation with migration (Jordan, 2002; Kapur, 2012; Sharma, 2005). The police's predisposition to racial stereotyping has indeed been widely observed since Stuart Hall et al's. (1978) seminal work. Yet the culture of disbelief also cannot be considered separately to funding provision. One ex-police interviewee suggested that the financial implications of victimhood lead to enduring attitudes of disbelief or at least, a reluctance to apply the victim label.

For every victim that comes into the government that's going to cost them a lot of money. It's going to cost money to investigate. It's going to cost money to support and it's going to cost money to prosecute. So everything that goes into that is going to cost the government money, and so it is in their interest to make the number of victims less [Ex-police interviewee, 2B].

The reluctance to grant victim status to some womyn – particularly those considered not to be 'ideal' victims– is a theme that will be developed in the following section of this chapter [7.3].

In contrast to this culture of disbelief, it also appeared that there was a

culture of belief in operation, particularly amongst anti-trafficking NGOs. As explained by one NGO interviewee, this culture meant that some anti-trafficking actors unquestionably accept claims to victimhood and readily apply the victim label:

They are totally uncritical to the point that they're such fools sometimes. You go: "I can't work with you because you're such idiots, because you are so unquestioning and so uncritical... Just because you're fuckwits and have been given the run around and now no longer know what to do with them, don't pass them onto us. You know this person is so-not a genuine, bona fide victim" [NGO interviewee, 13].

This culture of belief to which this interviewee alludes is widespread within the 'rescue industry' (Agustín, 2007), which relies upon a steady stream of victims in order to justify its existence. From this perspective, anti-trafficking actors are concerned with the perpetuation of their being, the continuation of their organization, and as such, those working within the rescue industry in order to 'eliminate' trafficking may in fact *produce* more victims. Of course, the rescue industry fosters a culture of belief through the essentialising of (subaltern) migrant womyn as a helpless monolith requiring Western intervention. The victimising discourse so central to this culture of belief is particularly utilised by those from the neo-abolitionist and modern slavery 'communities' outlined in chapter V. This theme is also developed in the remainder of this chapter.

7.3 Influences upon victim status

It is clear that within the rescue industry, victimhood is more readily conferred upon some womyn than others. This section therefore explores some of the main factors which guide how NGO and police interviewees constructed victimhood, including: socio-economic status (7.3.1); nationality and race (7.3.2); and womyn's perceived complicity in their victimisation (7.3.3). In the interest of presenting a linear argument I will discuss each factor in turn; although, I endeavour to demonstrate how these factors intersect to mediate oppression. In so doing, I examine why some womyn constitute the 'ideal' victim of trafficking, whilst others face significant barriers to being recognised as legitimate victims. As such, I draw upon the eminent work of Nils Christie (1986: 18), who defines the 'ideal victim' as:

...a person or a category of individuals who – when hit by crime – most readily are given the complete and legitimate status of being a victim

Despite the wide appeal of Christie's (1986) concept, it has only been briefly discussed in relation to trafficking by Hoyle et al (2011) and Milivojevic and Pickering (2013). Although applied more comprehensively by O'Brien (2013), this is only in relation to depictions of victimhood in anti-trafficking media campaigns. Here, my analysis fits within broader understandings of victim status as a socially construct (Quinney, 2008; Walklate, 2006). Indeed, my findings support Uy's (2011: 204) assertion that "race, class and gender often play a large part in the construction of the 'sympathetic' or 'perfect' victim." The following quotation from a police officer from a Force Intelligence Bureau epitomises the concern of this section:

And what this country has been guilty of... is that we're all looking for Snow White that's trafficked by a big bad wolf, and if it's not we kind of don't believe them...You can be trafficked in other ways than what you see in films with Liam Neeson! [Police interviewee, 2E].

Therefore, I argue that the rescue industry is instrumental in conferring victim status upon some migrant womyn, whilst withholding it from others. The consequence of this is that victim provisions are only available to those that fit the 'ideal' victim stereotype, leaving other migrant womyn exploited within the sex industry without support.

7.3.1 Socio-economic status

One of the ways in which victim status was mediated by the rescue industry was in relation to socio-economic status. An assumption prevalent amongst interviewees was that 'victims' almost invariably have histories of poverty and limited education. Interviewees frequently commented upon the way in which these 'push' factors encourage womyn to engage in risky practices in order to migrate to the UK, leaving them vulnerable to trafficking. One CEO of an anti-trafficking NGO, for example, observed the perceived relationship between unemployment and victimisation:

For a lot of [victims] they came to this country for work or the pull was to find employment in order to earn finances and send them back. So there are economic issues at play in all that. And we know that individuals are far more resilient and less likely to fall into exploitative situations if they're in paid employment [NGO interviewee, 12].

In this and other similar accounts, trafficking was understood to result often from womyn's attempts at economic betterment. In this regard, interviewees' accounts reflect womyn's disproportional representation amongst the world's poor (Kornblum, 2012) and the notion that processes of globalisation have facilitated their migration for labour purposes (Rijken, 2003). Yet while many interviewees understood the 'feminisation of poverty' as a driving force behind migration [see: section 2.5.1], few recognised the sex industry as a legitimate labour market into which womyn can migrate. This sits in contrast with Nick Mai's (2009) finding that for many migrant sex workers, the sex industry offers a more rewarding and less exploitative alternative to other non-sexual forms of informal labour.

Other interviewees imposed socio-economic status onto the omnipresent choice-coercion binary which underpins the liberal-radical feminist divide. One NGO interviewee, for example, drew a distinction between 'un-trained' and 'professional' womyn in their levels of bodily autonomy. He suggested that womyn who are "not well-trained" have limited choice in their engagement in the sex industry and therefore have "a terrible way of life". On the other hand, the interviewee used the example of a woman who is both an accountant and sex worker, to demonstrate that some womyn do chose to sell sex voluntarily:

They can't see that they can do anything else, it's terrible. Some of them can't probably do anything else because they're not well-trained... A terrible way of life. Although, I met an Accountant in Milton Keynes, while the three children were at school, she indeed indulges in a little sex in order to make both ends meet. That was entirely a choice for her and she looks at this as a profession. Accountancy and prostitution, unusual, but that's a matter for her [NGO interviewee, 19a].

This supports observations made by Anderson and O'Connell Davidson (2003) that socio-economically deprived womyn, who often lack formal skills, are excluded from *formal* labour markets. Instead, they are relegated to *informal* markets in which, devoid of state protection, they are exposed to exploitative conditions. Yet Vijayarasa (2015) accuses those who draw a causal link between socio-economic status and trafficking of lacking nuance. From this perspective, this quotation reflects an overly-deterministic assumption that while 'the poor' are incapable of self-determination, womyn of higher socio-economic status are more in control of their own sexuality. My findings therefore support the work of Chuang (2010), who similarly observed that when choice is straightforwardly

equated with wealth and coercion with poverty, the notion is lost that there exists a continuum of agency in the sex industry.

Although constructions of victimhood on the basis of socio-economic status may be in part the product of the middle classes' greater ability to "professionalize" sexual labour (Bernstein, 2007: 480), it may equally be viewed as reflective of the paternalistic, neocolonial attitudes present within the rescue industry. Neocolonial sentiments and white supremacist structures no doubt have the effect of restricting the movement and social mobility of subaltern womyn (hooks, 1989) and as such, the lived realities of their poverty ought not to be downplayed. Yet while Mohanty (1998: 333) cautions against the construction of the "third world woman as a singular monolithic subject," the rescue industry habitually engaged in practices of homogenisation. Indeed, it routinely essentialises 'victims of trafficking' as poor and uneducated, and therefore intrinsically naïve. Constructed in this manner, the rescue industry's imposed intervention into the lives of migrant womyn is more easily justified. It seems then that Kempadoo (2015b: 15) may be right to note that anti-trafficking actors are "convinced of their own righteousness in saving poor people." This is evidenced in the above quotation from my research, for when sex is sold by a woman of perceived higher socio-economic status it is "a matter for her(self)". Conversely, when sex is sold by the poor non-Western 'Other',⁶⁰ it is a matter for the West to intervene in, for the woman's 'own protection.' This conforms to broader notions of subaltern womyn requiring 'rescue' by the Western saviour (Kempadoo, 1998).

The 'ideal' victim of trafficking, then, is the poor non-Westerner; the woman with 'so little' that she is easily duped by the false promises of her trafficker and so perpetually unprivileged that any agency is negated. The application of victim status in relation to perceived socio-economic status may therefore have two harmful consequences. First, it leads to victim status being over-endowed upon the non-Western migrant woman. This functions to limit her bodily autonomy and justifies imperialist intervention. Constructed as 'victims of trafficking' rather than voluntary migrants, their deportation can be legitimised under the noble guise of protection. Second, it may serve to over-emphasise the agency of 'middle class' womyn and thus create barriers to claiming victimhood.

⁶⁰ Since within the simplistic discourses which guide victimhood in the rescue industry, poverty and the 'non-West' go hand in hand.

Indeed, while womyn of higher socio-economic status are better equipped to professionalise their sexual labour (Bernstein, 2007), policies which criminalise the sex industry may leave all sex workers vulnerable to exploitation (Sanders et al., 2009). As such, the ‘ideal victim’ as the poor woman fails to acknowledge the blurred lines between choice and coercion [see: section 7.4].

7.3.2 Nationality and race

It is also evident that nationality and race are factors that are considered by the rescue industry in their decisions about whether to grant victim status. A common viewpoint expressed by police interviewees was that British womyn working in the sex industry sell sex voluntarily, whilst ‘foreign’ womyn are likely to have been trafficked. When describing their involvement in one national police operation, one police interviewee noted that they did not raid brothels in which only British-national sex workers were known to sell sex. Instead, the brothels occupied by ‘foreign’ womyn were targeted:

When we were doing the intelligence collection, if it was a localised brothel that we thought was one that was being run by [anonymous city] people with people that domiciled normally in [anonymous city] and went there to work each day, we didn’t touch that as part of this [operation] [Police interviewee, 2G].

As this interviewee indicated, it appeared to be common practice amongst the police to target raids on brothels known to be occupied by migrant womyn, whilst concurrently ‘turning a blind eye’ to sex venues known to inhabit British-national sex workers. It seemed that the majority of police interviewees assumed that some, or all, of the migrant womyn involved in the sex industry had been trafficked. This provides further evidence that migrant sex work and trafficking are frequently conflated in anti-trafficking practices, an observation made elsewhere in literature on the sex industry (including, Kempadoo, 2005; Levy and Jakobsson, 2014; Liu, 2011; O’Neill, 2010).

While concern about trafficking in the late nineteenth century focused almost exclusively upon white British womyn as victims (Walkowitz, 1992), it seems that contemporary ‘rescuers’ consider the victim category to be more racially and ethnically diverse. O’Brien et al., (2013) note, for example, that contemporary anti-trafficking actors focus largely on Asian, African and Eastern European womyn. Interestingly, there was little consensus amongst my

interviewees as to the most prevalent countries of origin for victims. The quotation below from one NGO interviewee captures the perceived heterogeneity that exists in the nationality of 'victims', as well as indicating that a shift has occurred over time:

And a lot were from Ukraine, Russia, Moldova, Albania, Romania as well and then, we saw a *lot* of Lithuanian women when the EU expanded. Lithuanian in particular, out of all the countries that joined in the sort-of A8, we did have other women from the Czech Republic, Poland, Latvia and other countries.... And also, women from Thailand... Then we started seeing more women coming from Nigerian and some other African countries [NGO interviewee, 20].

Yet despite a plethora of countries of origin being listed by interviewees, most can be understood as 'non-Western' in the sense that they operate outside of the hegemonic Western power structure. Indeed, a dichotomy was observable within interviewees' accounts in which the Western woman was regarded as liberated – her sexual agency more readily accepted – while the non-Western woman was regarded as oppressed. In this regard, while the British-national sex worker was understood to have (more) capacity to choose to sell sex, the migrant woman was firmly positioned as a "victimized subject" (Kapur, 2001: 870). Positioned in this manner, the agency of migrant women is once again denied and instead, they are constructed as incapable of bodily autonomy.

Although the rescue industry may be understood to essentialise the non-Western woman as the perpetual victim, it was the woman of colour who was the 'ideal' victim for many interviewees. While rescuers have shifted their attention from focusing exclusively on white women, the debates I observed remained highly racialised. It seemed that the growing influence of the modern slavery 'community' may have "revived fantasies about Africa as the West's 'Other'" (Andersson, 2014: 8). The employment of the analogy between trans-Atlantic slavery and contemporary trafficking by some interviewees reinforced the idea of the 'white saviour' and the 'third world' victim, and thus as Kapur (2012) observes, reproduces the divide between the 'first' and 'third' worlds. Interviewees often constructed the 'third world' woman as a powerless and victimised monolith, as epitomised in the following extract from an NGO interview:

...they mostly have only black women just because it tends to be like that. Nigeria, Ghana, the Congo and there's one other, I don't know... But the point about these

girls is they've got nothing.... and mostly these black girls of course, all they need is education [NGO interviewee, 19a].

To this extent, my observations of the rescue industry support the work of Doezema (2001), who contends that a dichotomy has been constructed between the 'voluntary' Western sex worker and the 'victimised third world prostitute'. Yet the rescue industry's desire to 'help' the 'third world' victim of trafficking could arguably be understood to be just as much about exerting control as it is about a desire to help. As bell hooks (1989) explains, white supremacy does not always manifest in the hatred of the racial Other but is as likely to manifest in the desire to help the racial Other. From this perspective, the rescue industry may be understood as constructing non-Western migrant womyn as in need of Western intervention (Kempadoo, 2015b): this intervention is considered not only justified but also, commendable. The positioning of the subaltern woman as the 'damaged other' (Doezema: 2001) enables the West to reaffirm its position as the powerful saviour (hooks, 2000). To this end, the 'ideal' victim status applied to subaltern migrant womyn aids the rescue industry's in its care and its control.

Not all non-Western womyn are, however, considered 'ideal' victims. Some NGO interviewees pointed out that Nigerian womyn in particular have historically found it more difficult than other womyn to gain victim status from the authorities. One explained that because 'victims of trafficking' were traditionally from Eastern European countries, law enforcement agencies have largely disbelieved the latest 'wave' of victims from Nigeria:

Yeah and the reaction from law enforcement and the authorities in general was very different... [There was] a real sort-of disbelief amongst law enforcement. They'd say stuff like "oh you know we've got these Nigerian girls, they're lying to us, telling us lies" because... (Nigerian) women didn't always say that much and sometimes that was to do with Juju... And so they're quite often dismissed, quite often seen as immigration offenders or seen as trying to remain in the UK, and some of that (attitude) actually still prevails I think in the treatment of women coming forward as victims of trafficking. Whereas perhaps someone from Ukraine might be more likely to be identified, at that time, as a victim of trafficking because trafficked women were always Eastern European [NGO key informant 20].

As this quotation demonstrates, it seems that Nigerian womyn are more likely to be understood as 'illegal' immigrants and false victims [see: p. 190], who have voluntarily sought to migrate to England and Wales. To this extent, the rescue industry tends not to consider them worthy victims. This attitude may be

understood as being reflective of broader neocolonial sentiments, in which Africa is constructed by the West as uncivilised and poverty-ridden (Said, 1993). In view of this, it seems the rescue industry views Nigerian womyn as ‘illegal immigrants’ who are desperate to migrate to England and Wales, the antithesis of Africa: civilised and prosperous.

Some interviewees speculated about why the authorities are unwilling to grant victim status to Nigerian womyn. Some suggested that it was because law enforcement agencies’ lack an understanding of the psychological control of Juju ritual, as noted in Chapter V [see p. 114]. Yet a few interviewees argued that the denial of victim status to Nigerian womyn – and instead, the application of offender status – was the product of institutional racism within law enforcement institutions. One NGO interviewee recounted an example of a Nigerian woman she had worked with, who had been disbelieved by the police on multiple occasions:

...it’s down to the police how they treated them or didn’t believe them. One of my lady’s she asked for help 3 times. She said “you’ve got to help me” and they didn’t... I shouldn’t but I am going to say it - Is there still that racism there as well? [NGO interviewee, 14].

A similar sentiment was expressed by an ex-police interviewee; although, his observation of institutional racism was directed at UKVI: the Home Office department responsible for visas and immigration and also for assessing non-EU nationals’ victim claims through the NRM [see p. 141 for overview of the NRM process]:

Actually the bias is even worse, you could even say institutionally racial: “oh Nigerians, well we’ll send them back then” [Ex-police interviewee, 2A]

The claim of institutional racism made by these interviewees also finds some quantitative support in statistics compiled by the Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group,⁶¹ which show that in 2013 over 80% of EU and EEA nationals referred into the NRM – and therefore assessed by the UK Human Trafficking Centre – received positive identification decisions. In comparison, less than 20% of ‘third country’ nationals, assessed by UKVI, received positive identification decisions (Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group, 2013). Of course, this does not ‘prove’ that UKVI are institutionally racist since as Tate (2016) posits, it is often difficult to identify racism’s invisible touch. Yet this may indicate that attitudes towards the ‘racial

⁶¹ The Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group was established in 2008 to monitor the Governments implementation of the EU Convention. It is comprised of 12 UK-based anti-trafficking NGOs.

Other' have changed little since the turn of the 20th century since interviewees continue to frame Black womyn involved in the sex industry as 'inferior', 'hypersexual' and a 'threat to white communities' (Blair, 2010).

7.3.3 Womyn's perceived complicity in their victimisation

It is also clear that victimhood is mediated by the extent to which the rescue industry perceives a woman to be complicit in her own exploitation or, to adopt the vocabulary of early victimologists, the extent to which she has precipitated her own victimisation (Wolfgang, 1957). The 'ideal' victim is one that is perceived to be entirely innocent, since integral to Christie's (1986) conceptualisation of ideal victimhood is the notion of blamelessness. The ideal 'victim of trafficking' will have demonstrated no choice, or at least very little choice, in her decision to enter the UK – that is, her movement will have been forced. At the same time, she will also have demonstrated little or no choice in her decision to sell sex: her involvement in the sex industry is through coercion. Some NGO interviewees appeared keen to demonstrate victims' blamelessness by listing their compounding 'vulnerabilities'. This is epitomised in the following quotation taken from an interviewee with a CEO of an NGO:

...there is almost always an underlying vulnerability to that person that leads you to believe 'well you can see why the traffickers picked on her because there is a vulnerability there.' It might be an incredible level of naivety but it's likely to be some mild learning disabilities, mental health, alcohol substance misuse, backgrounds of poverty and deprivation [NGO interviewee, 06].

My findings thus support Cheng and Kim's (2014) claim that within a neoliberal society, womyn are considered deserving of protection from human rights abuse only if they are forced into prostitution. Those who have sold sex of their own volition are only deserving of penalisation. This conforms to the well-established binary of the Madonna and the Whore (Sanders et al., 2009).

Many NGOs did appear to recognise that few womyn fit this 'ideal' victim stereotype, yet continued to promulgate this image in order to secure from the authorities, victim status for the womyn they wished to support. It seemed that the more NGO interviewees perceived the authorities to disbelieve victims, the more they would unquestionably believe womyn's claims to victimhood [see: section 7.2.3]. Some interviewees also noted the importance of 'innocent' victims

and simplistic storylines for sustaining sources of funding and for raising awareness amongst the public:

As I said, it can be quite simplified and it can be like 'let's find the worst story that we can, and get to the saving and rescuing women bit and don't worry about the complications that happen after that', which is what's needed to get the public's attention and especially from the press on the Right [NGO interviewee, 20].

From this perspective, the vulnerable 'Madonna' serves a purpose of evoking empathy from the public, where the 'whore' could not. As such, not all organisations employing the ideal innocent victim narrative uncritically accepted that it was a true representation of migrant womyn's experiences in the sex industry. Rather as Timmer (2010: 265) notes, NGOs may often find themselves confronted with two irreconcilable demands: On the one hand, they are required to portray the suffering experienced by 'victims of trafficking' in a manner that is simple enough for the public to comprehend, in order to generate empathy and encourage funding. Yet on the other hand, they are likely to be aware that the reality of trafficking is more complex and that utilising this construction of ideal victimhood could be harmful to migrant womyn.

While some interviewees posited that ideal victims were important for NGOs' marketing strategies, they did note that constructions of ideal victimhood may have damaging consequences for migrant womyn. One project manager explained that simple representations of 'innocent' womyn misinforms the public:

Public opinion on trafficking has been pretty poor and sadly I would say it is pretty poor because of the misinformation that anti-trafficking NGOs have put out there... So then how much does public opinion really understand these things and how much of it has been sugared-coated and simplified in marketing drives? [NGO interviewee, 17]

The misunderstandings referred to by this interviewee may reinforce a 'two-tiered hierarchy of victimhood', which distinguishes migrant womyn involved in the sex industry as either deserving or undeserving of support. Scoular and O'Neill (2007) suggest that the binary of 'deserving and undeserving' is pervasive in domestic policy responses to the sex industry in England and Wales, manifesting most notably in those that focus on exiting sex workers. Viewed in this light, the victim status of those that do not fit the neat ideal victim stereotype – that is, the majority womyn – yet who have nonetheless suffered exploitation in the sex industry, is both unfairly questioned and withheld. One NGO interviewee

recounted an example in which one police force assumed that elements of agency in victim's accounts negated their victimisation:

This police station, they were investigating one of my cases of a woman and she was trafficked really young and the way they were interviewing her, it was like 'you knew you were coming to do this!' Regardless of whether she knew or she didn't know, the fact is she was exploited... especially if the woman admits to having known or admits to agreeing to come for sex, then you're lost [NGO interviewee, 07].

As such, those that have exhibited some agency at some point along their trafficking journey may be positioned as complicit in their victimisation and denied victim protection provisions. In this regard, my findings compliment the work that O'Brien (2013) has conducted on anti-trafficking campaigns, which highlights that womyn who have been duped into working in the sex industry are prioritised over those that were aware they would become involved in selling sex.

It was not only the anti-trafficking NGOs that constructed victimhood on the basis of perceived complicity. Some interviewees noted that law enforcement agencies also more readily granted victim status to those that they consider 'innocent'. Conversely, womyn who have perpetrated a crime – often under the duress of their trafficker – are not treated as victims but instead, prosecuted as offenders. Borrowing from the theorising of Tate (2016), the practice of blaming the victimised can be understood as an attempt by the (often white, male) police officer to alleviate their white guilt since "blame negates the need to feel white individual guilt." Some NGO interviewees were scathing of this police practice and suggested that it ignores EU Directive (2011/36) and 2005 European Convention guidelines which obliges states not to prosecute trafficking victims for 'forced criminality'. One NGO interviewee contended that while policy has been written to prevent the prosecution of forced criminality, it is not implemented on the ground:

There's lots of policies that are written at the centre, be it by ACPO, CPS, Home Office etc. But the implementation of those policies is not checked or assessed and neither's the implementation of training packages [NGO interviewee, 12].

Here, he pointed out that policy does not always translate into practice, a theme which underpinned much of Chapter VI. To this end, he explained that although there are training packages available to police officers, there is little incentive for police officers to engage with them given that their completion is not checked by the police force or the Home Office.

It is evident, therefore, that the rescue industry ascribes great importance to passivity in constructions of victimhood and in so doing promulgates, what Vijayarasa (2015: 97) refers to as, “the myth of the coerced victim of trafficking.” Once again, positioned within the role of innocent, helpless ‘victim’ the rescue industry’s interventionist impulses are legitimised. My findings support broader victimological theory developed by Goodey (2005), who posits that perceived non-complicity in victimisation in an important consideration in decisions about whether to grant victim status. Her research indicates that criminal justice agencies are more likely to construct certain social groups as ‘vulnerable’ than others. Repeat victims, migrants, and those implicated in crime are amongst those whom Goodey (2005: 124) suggests are likely to be viewed as ‘undesirable’ victims. As a result, it appears that migrant womyn involved in the sex industry are encouraged to conform to this stereotype of innocence, to change their story of victimisation to fit within the narrow ‘ideal’ victim experience. Often the fabricated parts of her story are exposed during interviews with the police or border agencies and as such, services that the woman would be entitled to as ‘victim of trafficking’ are withheld.

7.4 The choice-coercion binary

This chapter has so far endeavoured to complicate some of the misconceptions and ideal stereotypes that prevail through the construction and production of ‘victims of trafficking.’ This section seeks to inject some more nuance into understandings of victimhood by exploring the limitations of the choice-coercion binary that is so central to the rescue industry. It is clear that the concepts of ‘choice’ and ‘coercion’ feature heavily in the rescue industry’s constructions of victimhood, with these concepts used to grant, and withhold, victim status. Yet I argue here that these concepts are too often positioned as dichotomous and rather, there is a need to recognise the blurred line between the two.

Historically, scholars writing about the sex industry have been reluctant to stray outside the two established feminist factions, functioning to reinforce a binary between choice and coercion.⁶² As Chapkis (1997: 5) posits:

⁶² Broadly speaking, liberal feminists often draw upon evidence which points to their being choice involved in womyn’s decisions to sell sex, whilst radical feminist tend to view the sex industry as inherently oppressive, coercive and violent.

The various “sides” in this dispute have faces and names and histories that are well-known to me. I am concerned about exposing myself to the righteous wrath of one, further injuring another, or misrepresenting a third. The certainty and conviction of those who disagree with me make my own enthusiasm for partial and contradictory truths feel inadequate.

More recently, however, a gradually increasing number of scholars are recognising that the lived experiences of sex workers are too complex to explain through one perspective alone; rather, there are *multiple* truths. This reflects a broader shift in post-modern thinking away from grand narratives, towards more nuanced and relative understandings. To this extent, both the radical and liberal feminist ideologies are “one dimensional and essentialist” (Weitzer, 2012: 16), for agency cannot be straightforwardly dichotomised. Maher (2000) argues, for example, that while radical feminists virtually deny womyn’s autonomy by constructing them as passive victims, liberal feminism can over-endow their agency.

In light of growing awareness of the limitations of dichotomising choice and coercion, some scholars have emphasised that the distinction between forced and voluntary engagement in the sex industry is blurred. This point is made by Hoyle et al. (2011: 322), who suggest that:

...most trafficking victims cannot be seen as authors of their own destiny any more than they can be dismissed as helpless victims who have no agency. They make decisions within the oftentimes considerable constraints on their choice.

This view support Sanders et al’s. (forthcoming) observation that the bifurcation of choice and coercion essentially results in a circular debate that is more about the political manoeuvring of privileged actors than about representations of the lived realities of the sex industry. As such, monolithic paradigms of this nature, which position choice and coercion as polar opposites, fail to recognise variation in socio-structural context and across geographical location, time, and sector of the sex industry (Weitzer, 2010). With this in mind, O’Connell Davidson (2002) posits that the radical-liberal divide fails to incorporate into the debate those that do not wish to celebrate the existence of an industry for commoditised sex, yet still support the construction of sex workers as legitimate workers. Perhaps it is growing recognition of the limits of the choice-coercion binary underpinning the ‘sex wars’ (Weitzer, 2007), that has, at least in part, given rise to other competing anti-trafficking communities.

The importance of anti-trafficking actors' constructions of 'choice' and 'coercion' in victimhood has been examined throughout this chapter. Yet some of the more critical interviewees *explicitly* highlighted a need to move beyond viewing victimhood through the lens of the coercion-choice binary, whilst others *implicitly* lent support to this view through their accounts of victimisation. It is worth noting then that some actors' implicit recognition of the limits of the binary contradicted other views explicitly expressed in their interviews. One director of an anti-trafficking NGO noted that the coercion-choice dichotomy serves no productive function but rather, acts as a barrier to effective service provision:

I actually wonder whether the whole polarisation is in fact a complete red herring and actually you just end up with mud-slinging on either side of the fence... So much mud-slinging has gone on that people realise there is no longer a place for that type of communication [NGO interviewee, 17].

As in the above account, a few interviewees denounced the polarised debates around agency as unhelpful and sought to construct their own anti-trafficking work as 'apolitical'. Another interviewee articulated the weaknesses of the essentialised dichotomisation of choice and coercion when he recognised the heterogeneous nature of trafficking:

I think first of all human trafficking is not black or white. So you can't say that this works for sure and this doesn't work or you were right by saying that prostitution is trafficking or you are wrong. It's just a huge phenomenon and so diverse and becoming more and more diverse... [NGO interviewee, 19a].

In so doing, the interviewee implied that the lived experiences of migrant womyn in the sex industry are variable. While I did not find this assertion surprising in itself since the diverse nature of the sex industry is well-documented (Bowen and Bungay, 2016; Pitcher, 2015b; Sanders and Campbell, 2014; Smith et al, 2015), I was surprised to hear it articulated by this particular interviewee. Having endorsed Harriet Harman's (radical feminist) perspective on prostitution and being part of a modern-slavery working group, I did not expect that he would see any 'choice' in the sex industry. The seemingly contradictory views of interviewees are, however, common in politicised policy networks (Hajer, 1995) and reflect that the lived realities of migrants involved in the sex industry may themselves be contradictory. Indeed, this points to the notion that migrant womyn may experience elements of both choice and coercion simultaneously,

with their degree of autonomy fluctuating over time and in response to the social contexts in which they find themselves.

One way in which the accounts of interviewees agitated the choice-coercion binary was through their understandings of the relationship between victim and victimiser. Contrary to accepted conceptualisations of victimisation – what Best (1997: 10) terms an “ideology of victimization” – interviewees’ accounts demonstrated that the relationship between ‘victim’ and ‘trafficker’ is neither straightforward nor unambiguous. Some interviewees, for example, suggested that victims of trafficking may suffer from ‘Stockholm Syndrome.’ This condition first coined by Kuleshnyk (1984), to explain why hostages develop an emotional bond with their captors and seek to protect them, has been subsequently applied to victims of domestic violence by Graham and Rawlings (1987). Stockholm Syndrome thus involves one or more of the following three key emotive reactions:

- (1) positive feelings by the captive towards his or her captor; (2) negative feelings by the captive towards the police and authorities trying to win his or her release; and
- (3) positive feelings by the captor towards his or her captive [Graham et al., 1994: 31].

Some interviewees pointed out that many victims of trafficking develop emotional attachments to their traffickers, entering into a relationship in which they perceive the trafficker to be their ‘boyfriend.’ One police interviewee explained, however, that to others the ‘relationship’ does not look much like a traditional relationship:

...yeah cos quite often they’ll say ‘he’s my boyfriend’ and they’ll be adamant throughout that ‘it’s my boyfriend.’ But then when you go into the normal common sense question about you know: ‘how did you meet them? Who is their family’ and trying to test that out, they then can’t tell you anything about all that [Police interviewee, 2G].

One NGO interviewee spoke about how the love between the ‘trafficker’ and the ‘victim’ is therefore ‘distorted’, implying that it was based solely upon physical and/or psychological abuse. Yet another NGO interviewee highlighted that the relationship between victim and offenders is often complex, and co-dependent in nature:

There’s a co-dependency there. Notice I’m not saying there’s a coercion. I use the word co-dependency a lot... So, yes there’s usually this co-dependency because coercion implies that there’s absolutely not agency and no part in it and it’s never, never like that... The key word I think is often around problematic relationships, co-

dependency, somebody that they love and that loves them and it's just a really unhealthy relationship. And it can be as unhealthy for the bloke as it is for the woman [NGO interviewee, 13].

In so doing, she indicated that relationships are rarely based solely upon coercion or choice but rather, include elements of both. She also pointed to the idea that relationships between 'victims' and 'traffickers' may be problematic for both parties.

Other interviewees suggested that Stockholm Syndrome manifests in womyn's transitions from 'victim' to 'offender'. From this perspective, not only does the victim herself feel an emotional attachment to her trafficker but also, the trafficker has developed a trusting relationship with their victim. As such, the womyn transitions from 'coerced' into 'coercer', occupying a position of control over other womyn. One ex-police interviewee explained the transition from 'victim' to 'offender', or what he termed becoming an 'alpha-female':

It's very important because people always assume that females are trafficked by men but I've come across on three occasions, direct personal experience... [where] females were actually alpha-females who had been trafficked originally two or three years previously, but they got like 'Stockholm Syndrome' where they actually realised that they akin to the traffickers and they became trusted, an alpha-female. So they actually are used to recruit and train younger females [Police interviewee, 2A].

With this in mind, a few police interviewees were keen to emphasise the unhelpfulness of the stereotype of male 'trafficker' and female 'victim' suggesting instead that often traffickers are womyn. The process of moving from victim to trafficker was also referred to by another police interview:

And your alpha female is the type of person who has probably been trafficked themselves, probably been sexually exploited, probably worked as a prostitute or something like that. But then out of a bond of loyalty, you know Stockholm Syndrome type thing, they are allowed a bit more freedom. They're trusted a bit more [Police interview, 2E].

In so doing, police interviewees complicated the choice-coercion binary, demonstrating that levels of agency may vary over time as womyn shift from 'victim' to 'offender'. It also lends further weight to the inadequacy of stereotypes of victimisation based upon traditional gender norms, in which the male is constructed as dominant and predatory, and the female is passive and helpless.

Another way in which interviewees' accounts can be understood as challenging the choice-coercion binary is in their portrayals of the complexities of womyn's lived experiences of prostitution. One NGO interviewee explained that choice and coercion represent two extremes of womyn's experiences of the commercial sex industry and as such, a middle ground perspective would better encapsulate the majority of experiences:

We talk about the spectrum where you've got your Belle de Jour type, completely free at one end and a person chained up in a room at the other end. But actually, the majority of people live within the spectrum [NGO interviewee, 17].

As this quotation demonstrates, some interviewees pointed to the notion that decisions to sell sex may be both simultaneously *constrained* – often by drug and alcohol addiction, mental health problems, poverty, persecution and/or social isolation – and *rationally selected* based upon experience of working in less rewarding and oftentimes more exploitative, non-sexual jobs. Although often presented in the literature as clear-cut, the distinction between 'victim of trafficking' and 'voluntary migrant sex worker' is therefore considered to be particularly difficult to make in practice. This speaks in some ways to Agustín's (2003: 32) claim that everyone displays choice in their migration since being in more socio-structurally constrained position than people from the Western world does not mean that one is unable to make active decisions.

Some interviewees indicated that many womyn involved in prostitution may fit the Palermo Protocol definition of sex trafficking, yet do not consider themselves to be a victim. Although exploited in some capacity through poor wages, inadequate working conditions and lack of UK citizenship status, they have nonetheless made a rational decision to engage in sex work:

I think she can't possibly be doing that of her own volition, but then I think, like what you told me [other police officer], she might have been living in a shed in Slovakia or something like that. So the life she's got over here, wearing an outfit from Sports Direct or whatever, might be far better [Police interviewee, 2D].

This view was also articulated by a service manager, who similarly noted that although some migrant womyn fit the definition of a 'victim of trafficking' they do not view themselves in that manner. She explained, for example, that she had worked with a group of Thai womyn for whom the exploitation they faced in the UK was tolerable:

So when we first would see these Thai womyn we would talk to them about their circumstances and actually they would have this huge relief that they could be open about “yeah I paid a debt-bond but I wanted an adventure but I didn’t think it was going be like this. I’ve got to pay 7 grand and now it’s 27 grand.” And we’d talk to them about “look you don’t have to stay in this situation” and they would say “you know what, leave me alone because I am going to do this. It’s going to take me 6 months to pay it off and then I’m going to work for a year and save money and then I’m going to go home” [NGO interviewee, 04].

This interviewee indicated therefore that womyn who may be readily granted victim status by the authorities should they apply through the NRM do not always wish to identify themselves as a ‘victim’. Rather, they may in fact be willing to pay off their ‘debt bondage’ in order to then earn money in the UK to send home to their families in their countries of origin. To this extent, while the extortion they endure from their trafficker demonstrates an element of ‘coercion’, an element of ‘choice’ remains in their decision to continue selling sex.

A few police interviewees went as far as to suggest that the blurring of the line between coercion and choice is so great that the process is encapsulated better by the terms ‘consensual trafficking’ or ‘voluntary trafficking.’ This view is demonstrated below in an extract from an interview I conducted with two police officers:

2P: [For] people that don’t deal with trafficking all the time, the girls appear to come and go as they please... They live somewhere, they come out to work the street or they go to the shop or whatever and to some people that would appear that they’re not trafficked.

2Q: They’re almost consensually trafficked. They kind-of agree to some of the terms.

A similar view was articulated by another police interviewee, who explained that it is often Eastern European womyn that are ‘consensually trafficked’:

From our experience it’s normally women from Eastern European countries who are trafficked mostly on a voluntary basis to come into this country through people who obviously facilitate their travel [Police interviewee, 2N].

The employment of the seemingly oxymoronic term ‘consensual trafficking’ may be understood as epitomising the complex interplay between the culture of disbelief and culture of belief, and the paradoxical situation is creates in which victim status is both under and over applied. Indeed, ‘consensual’ implies a reluctance to accept experiences of victimisation, whilst ‘trafficking’ implies a reluctance to accept the voluntary sale of sex. What is clear is that interviewees

account were littered with contradictions and ambiguities of this nature, as they grappled with the complexities of the acts so defined as 'sex trafficking'. To this extent, the seemingly oxymoronic notion of 'consensual trafficking' may be also understood as an attempt to reconcile the complex interplay that occurs between agency and control in the commercial sex industry.

7.5 Does 'helping' always help?

The chapter thus far has demonstrated that victimhood is not an objective experience but rather, something that is conferred upon some migrant womyn and denied to others. In the pursuit of organisational agendas, the rescue industry denies the agency of voluntary migrant sex workers by over-applying victimhood, whilst simultaneously denying victim status to migrant womyn who do not fit the 'ideal' victim stereotype. In this respect, it uses a false binary of choice and coercion to shape its practices, despite evidence that the experiences of migrants involved in the sex industry are best understood along a continuum of agency. One must question why it is then that the rescue industry has eschewed constructions of migrant womyn's experiences of the sex industry as complex and diverse, in favour of simplistic and 'ideal' notions of victimhood. In the final section of this chapter, I therefore question the extent to which the practices of the rescue industry are entirely altruistic, and explore whether in its attempts to help 'victims of trafficking', the rescue industry in fact cause harm to migrant womyn. This section therefore argues that while it would be unconstructive to dismiss blithely the importance of anti-trafficking actors for providing assistance and support to migrant womyn exploited in the sex industry, the help provided to some womyn does not negate the harm caused by the rescue industry to many others.

7.5.1 An altruistic façade?

Although the practices of interviewees were very often conducted with womyn's welfare in mind, it is only at first sight that the rescue industry can be understood to epitomise altruism. A few interviewees pointed to the idea that in addition to providing care to 'victim of trafficking', the rescue industry offers a noble guise under which other, less noble, aims may be pursued. A few interviewees were fervent in their condemnation of the rescue industry

suggesting that actors are self-interested, concerned both with positioning themselves as having the authoritative claim on knowledge and with pursuing their own ideological agenda. One NGO interviewee, for example, noted that some actors within the rescue industry have taken advantage of the topical nature of trafficking, and the perception that anti-trafficking work is honourable, to raise their individual profile/status:

Ok, so I need to be generous but you've got people in the midst of it that are just trying to make names for themselves, and actually they're enjoying the platform that they're getting on the back of this [NGO interviewee, 17].

Another interviewee was similarly critical of the way in which the rescue industry enables repressive practices. She posited that those who engage in rescuing migrant womyn are typically doing so in order to pursue neo-abolitionist goals:

So again, this whole idea that you swoop in and rescue a trafficking victim is just (nonsense). Of course when I burst people's bubble and say "actually this is how it works", all these anti-trafficking agencies, most of whom I will say I'm not actually convinced they've ever set eyes of a trafficking victim, most of whom are policy-drivers, actually most of whom are busy fund-raising for their own anti-prostitution agenda and usually they're often fairly vociferously right-wing, religious agenda [NGO interviewee, 13].

This observation supports existing literature which suggests that trafficking is often used as a vehicle through which to pursue a range of neo-conservative political agendas (Anderson and Andrijasevic, 2008; Cojocaru, 2015).

Similarly, the rescue industry not only appears to police womyn's bodies and restrict their autonomous decision-making but it may also legitimise – or at the least, allow to go unchallenged – the repressive policies of the UK Government. Actors within the rescue industry seem to operate under the assumption that it is in the interests of 'victims of trafficking' to be returned to their countries of origin, legitimising their quick deportation. One anti-trafficking CEO, for example, spoke about how she actively encouraged the quick return of 'victims of trafficking', even urging embassies to expedite the process:

We're looking at trying to work with some embassies to expedite the process if trafficked victims needs to be sent back (to their country of origin)- Like let's see, Eastern European, they'd be sent back to their own country, oftentimes you run into quite a few barriers getting their paperwork, their passports, their documents etc. [NGO interviewee, 08]

As reflected in this interview excerpt, this offers support to the restrictive border

controls imposed by the state and the anti-immigration sentiment is so readily embodies. Similarly, the rescue industry – much like the UK Government and indeed, Western states more broadly – forces its neoliberal ideals upon origin countries. As such, it imposes its perceptions about how people ought to live on others, replicating Western norms and values, particularly in countries that it considers to be less advanced. At the same time, the rescue industry appears to ignore the role the UK plays in the maintenance of the socio-economic conditions in ‘origin countries’. As Desyllas (2007: 72) posits,

...no responsibility is taken by the global North in the perpetuation of... poverty in third world countries through their imposed SAP (Structural Adjustment Programme) and transnational corporations.

While the rescue industry appears to be founded essentially upon the notion that it can ‘save’ the ‘third-world’ Other (Doezema, 2001), the West is not saving ‘the rest’. It in fact may reinforce and extend the neoliberal, neocolonial attitudes that underpin Western governments and in this regard, the rescue industry may arguably be understood as inherently hypocritical.

Few of the anti-trafficking actors I interviewed appeared to question the sense of entitlement they felt to intervene in the lives of migrant womyn. Instead, this ‘saviour mentality’ was viewed unproblematically, or perhaps rendered invisible by white supremacy, with police interviewees particularly frequent in their adoption of the language of the saviour. One police officer epitomised this saviour mentality when they described how they would react to intelligence about a potential case of trafficking in a local brothel:

So if we got intelligence that there’s a brothel with trafficked females in... then we would treat that seriously because we’d obviously want to go and *rescue* those girls [Police interviewee, 2C, *my emphasis*].

The officer’s decision to use ‘rescue’ language is indicative of a widespread assumption within the rescue industry that womyn lack the capacity to exit the sex industry and as such, both *require* and *desire* rescuing. Reflective of the rescue industry more broadly, the interviewee neglected to consider the possibility that the womyn labelled ‘victims of trafficking’ may not always want to be ‘saved’. Her use of the term ‘girls’ functions to infantilise those involved, further reinforcing the perception that they require rescue by the police. This supports Kempadoo (1998: 11) claim that while Western womyn are more readily perceived to have control over their bodies, the non-Western woman is constructed as not yet a

“whole or developed person”; instead, she is the perennial child who requires “guidance, assistance and help”.

This ‘help’ may also, however, function as a mechanism for control. By positioning migrant sex workers as ‘victims of trafficking’, the interventions of the rescue industry become legitimised (Doezema, 2001), forced exiting becomes justified, and (potential) deportation becomes palatable. This intervention may be based upon attitudes of righteousness and is reminiscent of colonial ‘civilising missions’. As Donini (2010: 226) points out, is a characteristic of humanitarian work more broadly which acts as a “a powerful vector for Western ideas and modes of behaviour.” Through processes of humanitarianism,⁶³ the rescue industry imposes Western values upon countries it deems to be less civilised or less advanced. As such, anti-trafficking provides one way in which Europe, through its humanitarianism (Donini, 2010), can pretend to moral superiority. It may be understood as part of a broader trend in the victimisation of the powerless, which allows the West to engage in a soft form of imperialism: one that does not attract the same visceral condemnation as military action but is no less intrusive in the affairs of other countries, and no less controlling of (perceived) poor, weak, uneducated and migrant bodies (Agustín, 2003; 2012). It could therefore be argued that its incursion into the lives of migrant womyn is – at least to some degree – based less upon altruism and more upon self-interest. From this perspective, anti-trafficking is as much about maintaining the global social order as it is about helping ‘victims of trafficking’; self-appointed ‘saviours’ can maintain their socio-political power over those they are purporting to ‘save’.

Many actors within the rescue industry did not even attempt to hide their self-interest in ‘saving’ womyn. One police interviewee, for example, indicated that the relationship between saviour and victim ought to be mutually-beneficial:

You start by just getting them: ‘right now you’ve been released, we will save you. Give us a witness statement’ [Police interviewee, 2G]

He therefore suggested that by virtue of him ‘saving’ the woman – regardless of whether she needed or wanted to be saved – she ought to comply with the police as a witness. This should be understood within its wider context since New Labour’s implementation of managerialism was underpinned by the notion of ‘no

⁶³ Here, I use Donini’s (2010: 220) definition of humanitarianism as “an ideology, a movement and a profession” which involves a “commitment to alleviating the suffering and protecting the lives of civilians caught up in conflict or crisis.”

rights without responsibilities' (Dwyer, 2004). Yet this also represents a broader notion underpinning many police interviews that it is in the interests of the 'victims of trafficking' to act as a witness in any subsequent prosecution. This runs contrary to guidance provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2010), which advises that careful consideration ought to be given to the potential harms involved for victims acting as witnesses in criminal justice proceedings. This lends support to Crawford's (2000: 292) observation that within the criminal justice system there is a danger that victims are being used "in the service of system efficiency." From this perspective, victims of trafficking may be used by criminal justice agencies in the pursuit of neoliberal aims.

A few interviewees also raised concerns about the paternalistic nature of the rescue industry. One was, for example, particularly scathing of the Centre for Social Justice Report (2013) *'It Happens Here'*, which was commissioned by their Slavery Working Group and received widespread acclaim from much of the voluntary sector, particularly those adopting a modern-slavery position. This interviewee raised concerns, however, that it was too heavily informed by a male perspective, ignoring the views and experiences of organisations that construct sex trafficking as a women's issue:

...when you looked at their proposal before they even started they said 'we want to create a new Wilberforce moment'. They had set out from the very start to come up with the conclusions of what they come up with and the whole concept was created by a group of blokes. How were they ever going to- If you're a 20-something year old bloke you're not the most- They're not necessarily the most thoughtful in terms of what the Other is like [NGO interviewee, 15]

Here, her critique of the modern-slavery position and its desire to emulate Wilberforce [see p.95] is clear but moreover, she draws attention to the role of men in the construction of knowledge in the rescue industry. My own observations of the rescue industry were also that the power was held, at least in the main, by men. Indeed, although many case workers were women, positions of power and influence (i.e. management roles) were held by men. This is despite sex trafficking being traditionally framed as a women's issue. This supports Kempadoo's (2015a) assertion that the 'anti-slavery movement' is dominated by white middle-class or elite men. It appears that anti-trafficking work may offer a means through which white masculinity can be affirmed and asserted. As Kempadoo (2015b) notes, anti-slavery advocates may internalise the 'white

man's burden', taking it upon themselves to lead the way in the perceived emancipation of the non-Western, female 'sex slave'. In so doing, they view themselves as following in the footsteps of 'honourable' fore-founding abolitionists such as Wilberforce.

7.5.2 *A few critical voices*

A few NGO interviewees were also keen, however, to distance themselves from the hegemonic rescue industry, rejecting both the language and practices that are so central to it. These critical voices were, however, few. Furthermore, while some were quick to denounce the practices of other anti-trafficking organisations, their descriptions of their own practices were difficult to distinguish from those they criticised. One NGO interviewee emphasised that their organisation did not conduct their own rescue 'missions' but rather, referred suspected cases of trafficking to the police:

I'm sure you've been hearing a lot about rescuing because that's something that's emerged really in the last two years. That is not something that we do ok?... You know, we support women when they escape or they come out of the situation but we don't do rescuing... What we would do is we would always work with the police, so we are not a rescue agency [NGO interviewee, 07].

She was keen to establish her organisation as one that fundamentally viewed womyn as not in need of rescue and one that only supported womyn who themselves *wanted* support. In so doing, she was one of only a few interviewees who more readily recognised womyn's agency and right to self-determination. I found this to be surprising, however, since she was employed by a self-defined radical feminist organisation, which has been the subject of widespread criticism in relation to the victimizing discourse it has historically placed upon sex workers. This may have been an attempt to pre-empt my own critique or it may represent a shift in the practices of the organisation since epistemes, and the practices they foster, can change over time [see: p. 91]. Furthermore, while the interviewee distanced the NGO from rescue practices by claiming instead that they "always work with the police", one might argue that there is little discernible difference in levels of harm between asking another organisation to do the 'rescuing' and doing it oneself.

A few interviewees demonstrated willingness to problematise the 'victimising discourse' (Agustín, 2007: 8) so prevalent within the rescue industry,

by positing that some migrant womyn sell sex voluntarily. This is in keeping with Mai's (2009) assertion that the majority of migrants engaged in the sex industry are neither forced nor trafficked. Some recognised that although migrant sex workers experience poor working conditions that could be considered exploitative – largely due to their precarious immigration status – they do not position themselves as victims. Instead, the conditions migrant womyn face in the sex industry may be preferable to those experienced in their country of origin. With limited access to formal labour markets, ('illegal') migrants may perceive sex work to represent a viable and flexible form of employment (Liu, 2011; Ward and Aral, 2006). Sex working may provide an income that enables “dignified living standards in the UK, while dramatically improving the conditions of their families in the country of origin” (Mai, 2009: 1). As examined earlier in this chapter, choice and coercion intersect in a complex manner and thus it may be unclear where the distinction between the two lies. What is clearer, however, is that the rescue industry can be understood both as being constituted by, and as constituent of, policy and practice that governs womyn's bodies.

As Agustín (2007: 5) notes, it appears therefore that the rescue industry in fact functions to harm and marginalise the people whom it purports to protect. Some of the most critical NGO interviewees in fact eluded to the notion that such is the extent of this harm that the actions of the rescue industry are fundamentally no less harmful than those they are seeking to 'save' womyn from. Parallels can thus be drawn between 'rescuers' and 'traffickers'. From this perspective, the manner in which the rescue industry governs womyn's bodies is similar to the way in which a 'trafficker' controls womyn's bodies. Two NGO interviewees highlighted that the practice of 'rescuing' womyn essentially takes away their own independent decision making. One drew attention to the notion that within the rescue industry actions are often taken on behalf of womyn, based upon anti-trafficking actors' own perceptions about what is morally right and wrong. As such, he suggested that this practice is not fundamentally different to that of trafficking:

And you've got some people that I suppose in the past have been like 'well it's really wrong what's been done to these women, we need to go and rescue them' but where's that woman's freedom and where's her agency? And is that what we should be doing? Aren't we just becoming as bad as those that have made decisions for them in the

past? Just because we perceive our decisions as good decisions, doesn't mean they're right [NGO interviewee, 17].

The second posited that the practices of the rescue industry in fact 'replicate' those of the trafficker, meaning that 'victims of trafficking' may find it difficult to distinguish the two. He argued, for example, that victims may confuse an anti-trafficking actor running a safe house with a brothel manager:

The other thing that creates nervousness is you're actually replicating in many cases the situation they've been from in trafficking. They've had someone whose trafficked them and an awful experience and then to paint a mixture: middle of the night the police take them, they're transported in a car to a house full of women with a rather stern, to them, looking older woman in charge and it takes them a while to realise that they not actually just been transferred by the police to a different brothel [NGO interviewee, 06].

As demonstrated by this account, it seems then that while the 'saviour' is typically presented as the antithesis to the 'trafficker', in reality the distinction may in fact be blurred. This reemphasises the point I make elsewhere – and one that is becoming a theme – that the good intentions of anti-trafficking actors does not negate the harms they impose upon migrant womyn. The dichotomy of 'good' and 'evil' is therefore false but is nonetheless continually reemphasised by the rescue industry in order to maintain their sense of righteousness and to justify their interventions.

Although most anti-trafficking actors appear to engage in the 'rescue industry', it is clear that some recognise how it may disempowers womyn and supports damaging anti-immigration sentiments. In a neocolonial and neoconservative fashion, actors within the rescue industry perceive that 'victims of trafficking' require rescue; they perceive their actions as being based heavily upon altruism and benevolence. Yet in reality, by assuming that the non-Western 'Other' requires 'rescuing' by the more civilised Western-saviour, the rescue industry may be complicit in maintaining traditional power relations between the Western and non-Western worlds. To this extent, while the rescue industry purports to provide a care function – a noble aim – it also has a clear control function. This supports Brown's (2014) assertion that the boundaries between care and control practices are blurred.

7.6 Closing remarks

This chapter has examined how trafficking victimhood is constructed within an 'industry' predicated upon 'rescuing' womyn from commercial sex. It has drawn upon Nils Christie's (1986) 'ideal victim' concept to explore how womyn are oftentimes positioned on a hierarchy of victimhood, their victimhood mediated by a range of intersecting factors. It has demonstrated that ideal victims are those that conform to a stereotype in which individual autonomy and agency are severely limited: that is, experiences fit within the boundaries of the 'sex slave'. The effects of the narrow definition of 'victim' are far-reaching. Indeed, by positioning migrant womyn within a victimising discourse, the rescue industry's imposed intervention is justified. Its interference in governing the lives of migrant womyn is considered noble: an act of altruism. This has the harmful – albeit, perhaps unintentional – consequence of limiting womyn's agency, reinforcing the perception that others are required to act on their behalf and in so doing, impeding the struggle for gender equality. It also has particularly damaging impacts upon reinforcing the notion of the non-Western 'Other' as inferior. Furthermore, the conflation of trafficking with migration functions to justify repressive immigration practices under the noble guise of 'returning' victims to their countries of origin.

This chapter has also sought to demonstrate that victimhood is not an objective category but rather it is inherently political: used in the manoeuvring of anti-trafficking actors as they pursue their organisational agendas. In so doing, I have highlighted a number of blurred boundaries, which have implications the application of the 'victim' label. First, the data presented here support Brown's (2014) assertions that the boundary between care and control is blurred. While the actions of the rescue industry may be well-intentioned and based upon benevolence – offering victim provisions to migrant womyn – it also functions to govern womyn's behaviour. Indeed, anti-trafficking support is typically conditional and therefore only womyn who conform to particular moral standards are considered to be 'deserving' of support. Second, the boundary between 'victim' and 'migrant' may be blurred. The same woman may be labelled a victim by some anti-trafficking actors, whilst others view her as an offender. Finally, the boundary between choice and coercion may be blurred, demonstrating that the somewhat ubiquitous feminist dichotomy is overly-

simplistic. Rather, anti-trafficking actors elucidate that most migrant women involved in the sex industry simultaneously exhibit agency *and* coercion. In the following Chapter, I expand further on some of these key findings, and link with those that have emerged from the other two empirical chapters to form some final conclusions.

Chapter VIII – Conclusion: Anti-Trafficking Politics, Policy and Practice

Once confined to the concerns of only a few feminist activists and NGOs, sex trafficking has re-emerged on the political agenda in recent years (Outshoorn, 2015) as an issue of ‘high politics’ (Wong, 2005). Its rapid advancement as a ‘political priority’ in Europe (Coso, 2011) has, however, facilitated the proliferation of a panoply of myths and misconceptions which are both a constitutive of, and constituted by, the use of trafficking discourses to serve other (hidden) political interests. Indeed as Weitzer (2005) asserts, there are few other fields of social science in which knowledge has been so greatly contaminated by ideology. In light of the ‘mythologisation of trafficking’ (Weitzer, 2007), this field is one which is in dire need of high-quality empirical data; although, there exists a paucity to date. Instead, populist writing on trafficking remains unashamedly sensationalist and steeped in anti-sex work bias (Lerum and Brents, 2016), whilst academic writing has not moved far beyond reviewing the problem and critiquing the literature (Denton, 2015; Weitzer, 2014; Zhang, 2009). Much of this scholarly work on sex trafficking has conformed to the convention of writing in support of one of the two established feminist factions: radical or liberal feminism (Chapkis, 1997). Trafficking debates, therefore, have been highly politicised and are polemical in nature.

This thesis, therefore, adopted as its starting point the idea that trafficking is an issue enveloped in and conditioned by moral struggles, ideological debates and divergent political agendas. Its concern has been with how sex trafficking is governed within an anti-trafficking policy domain that has become a battleground upon which an expanding network of actors tussle for power and influence over the development and implementation of policy. My concern has been to explore how anti-trafficking actors interrelate, how their strategic responses to trafficking are prioritised and what effect this has upon how victimhood is constructed within a rescue industry. To this extent, this research was guided by the following research questions:

How does the network of non-governmental organisations and the police govern sex trafficking in England and Wales? Why do they govern sex trafficking in the manner that they do?

To address these research questions, I have drawn upon data generated from 24 semi-structured interviews with voluntary sector actors and 15 interviews with the police, some of which included two interviewees (total: 18 police interviewees). In so doing, this thesis compliments existing scholarly work, as well as contributing to new knowledge. My work thus develops from and speaks to a broad range of issues, including: the intersections of trafficking and the control of feminised migration (Agustín, 2007; Anderson, 2013; Andrijasevic, 2010; Sharma, 2005); a critique of the reframing of contemporary trafficking as modern day slavery (Bravo, 2007, 2011; O’Connell Davidson, 2006, 2015); that which draws attention to the failings of feminist approaches which totalise sex workers within a victimising discourse (Doezema, 2001; Kempadoo, 2011; Sanders and Campbell, 2014); as well a broader notions of ‘plural policing’ (Crawford, 2006; Maguire, 2012) and networked governance (Bevir, 2011; Haas, 1992; Monaghan, 2011; Rhodes, 1997). It is therefore at the intersection of this diverse body of work that my own fits.

My work shares in common with much of the above scholarship a desire to highlight, and in so doing work towards alleviating, the damaging effects of anti-trafficking policy and practice for migrant womyn. Yet my concern is broader than this: it centres on how ‘anti-trafficking’ has been constituted as a field of intervention – that is, the system through which trafficking is both governed *and* produced. As such, I present new empirical work which contributes to the development of new knowledge not only about anti-trafficking policy and practice itself but also, how it is used in the pursuit of broader (‘related’) political agendas. In particular, there has to date been a dearth of research into anti-trafficking service providers (Meshkovska et al., 2015) and the policing of sex trafficking. It is primarily for this reason that they were chosen to form the research sample. One of the key contributions of this thesis is the identification of a number of different anti-trafficking communities, which at times have intersecting interests and other times are locked in fierce rivalries as they vie for power and influence over anti-trafficking policy and practice (8.1). Specifically, I advance the idea that

a shift in recent years towards networked governance has challenged the traditional feminist monopolisation of anti-trafficking policy and practice, and enabled the modern slavery ‘community’ to adopt a hegemonic position within the anti-trafficking policy domain. Second, this thesis develops understandings of key sites of contention in the prioritisation of strategic approaches to the governance of sex trafficking. In so doing, I approach the issue of anti-trafficking partnerships, something largely overlooked in existing scholarly work (8.2). Finally, I develop Laura Agustín’s (2007) ‘rescue industry’ concept, using empirical data to demonstrate how it constructs victimhood, how victims are utilised in the political manoeuvring of anti-trafficking actors and why victims may be ‘produced’ by the rescue industry (8.3). I now briefly turn to each of these three key contributions, before I reflect upon how anti-trafficking policy and practice functions to maintain Western status quo (8.4) and the utility of sex trafficking as a concept (8.5). I then briefly reflect upon my own positionality within the research (8.6), before offering some final concluding comments which summarise my answers to the research questions (8.7).

8.1 Fierce rivalries and strange bedfellows: Governance and policy networks

There is little agreement about what constitutes trafficking, its prevalence, how it relates to other social issues, or how it may be best addressed. Anti-trafficking policy and practice is thus approached from various angles by different ‘communities’, which serve the interests of copious political agendas. The manner in which trafficking has been constituted as a ‘problem’ has enabled the growth of a vast and diverse network of anti-trafficking actors, each offering what they consider to be the authoritative knowledge and solution. As Musto (2009: 281) observes, trafficking has brought together “the strangest of bedfellows and dialogue partners.” The anti-trafficking policy domain in England and Wales therefore appears to be a prime example of the structures and processes we have come to understand as ‘governance’ (Friesendorf, 2007). While its eclectic theoretical routes in a range of scholarly disciplines mean that the concept of governance may evade easy definition, it elucidates how responsibility for anti-trafficking lies not solely with the core-executive. The UK Government has

relinquished some of its functions (Harvey, 2005; Richards and Smith, 2002) and dispersed authority for anti-trafficking across a plurality of actors from the public, private and voluntary sectors (Pierre and Stoker, 2000; Richards and Smith, 2000; Rhodes, 1997; Torfing, 2012). The development and implementation of anti-trafficking policy is therefore both constituted by, and a constituent of, the plural and multi-sectoral nature of the agencies involved.

While the concept of governance points to the blurred boundary between the state and civil society (Skinns, 2003), it is by using a policy network approach that I have been able to present a rich and deep exploration of anti-trafficking politics, policy and practice. Coterminous with the concept of governance (Monaghan, 2011), the policy network approach I adopted enabled this thesis to capture the complex interactions that take place between the network of actors operational within the anti-trafficking policy domain. Further, it enabled a theorisation of knowledge production and dissemination as an intersubjective process. It has become axiomatic to lament the polarised feminist debates that define sex trafficking discourses, yet as Vijayarasa (2015: 21) observes, few scholars have engaged in a detailed exploration of the key ideological agendas, paradigms or perspectives that are active around the topic of trafficking. Existing research has also neglected to examine how groups of social actors construct the 'problem' of trafficking according to their own values, interests and politics. With this dearth in research in mind, my sociological application of Haas' (1992) 'epistemic communities' facilitated the identification, and exploration, of five key anti-trafficking communities that exist in England and Wales: radical feminist/neo-abolitionist; liberal feminist; modern-slavery; anti-immigration; and crime control. While their boundaries intersect, each 'community' tussles to position itself as having the superior understanding of trafficking and to construct its episteme as the single truth.

Historically, understandings of trafficking have been constructed through a radical or liberal feminist lens, leading to an unhelpful bifurcation of 'coercion' and 'choice' (Chapkis, 1997; Doezema, 1998) which fails to account for heterogeneity in lived experiences of the sex industry. This thesis has demonstrated that sex trafficking and voluntary migrant sex work cannot be straightforwardly dichotomised according to 'coercion' and 'choice' but rather, the boundaries between the two concepts are blurred. Interviewees indicated that

some migrant womyn exploited in the sex industry, and who fit the Palermo definition of trafficking, may not want to be ‘rescued’ but rather, may make a rational decision to tolerate the conditions in which they find themselves. Yet while once radical feminist neo-abolitionism was the dominant frame of reference for anti-trafficking policy and practice (Doezema, 1998), its influence has subsided somewhat in recent years as more anti-trafficking ‘communities’ have entered the policy domain. Radical feminist has, however, left a veritable legacy for anti-trafficking policy and practice: one in which trafficking and sex work is habitually conflated and migrant womyn totalised within an endemic victimising discourse. The construction of migrant sex workers as ‘victims of trafficking’ has been taken up by a significant proportion of anti-trafficking actors within the rescue industry, regardless of the ‘community’ in which they operate.

It is the modern slavery ‘community’, however, that has in recent years exerted the greatest power and influence over the development and implementation of anti-trafficking policy. Modern slavery has become the dominant lens through which trafficking is viewed, and this has shaped anti-trafficking responses. In many ways, the modern slavery ‘community’ positions migrant womyn as the same victimised monolith as does the radical feminist ‘community’. Yet the modern slavery ‘community’ has sought to reframe anti-trafficking beyond its traditional focus on sexual exploitation to all labour exploitation. This is perhaps most evident in the *Modern Slavery Act 2015*, which legislates against slavery in all its forms. The *Act* also demonstrates the modern slavery ‘community’s’ success in achieving a privileged position within the anti-trafficking policy domain. Central to this reframing has been the effective employment of the analogy between contemporary trafficking and trans-Atlantic slavery. It has thus made use of a “politics of pity” (Aradau, 2004: 256), by invoking the visceral imagery one associates with trans-Atlantic slavery to incite action from the public, policy-makers, funders, and a range of other state and non-state actors. At the very heart of the modern slavery ‘community’ rests the shared assumption that trafficking is both more degrading and more prevalent than was the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

With growing ‘membership’ and influence, the modern slavery ‘community’s’ appeal may lie in the manner in which it fosters the mantle of ‘Britain as the righteous’. It draws upon, and repackages, the age-old theme of

colonialism's 'civilising missions' (Woods, 2013), and in so doing, positions its members as virtuous saviours. Its work, therefore, embodies the 'white emancipatory fantasy' (Trodd, 2013: 433). Yet in so doing, Black suffering has been appropriated as a model for non-Black grievances, which may not be out of solidarity or to redress the legacy of colonialism, apartheid and white supremacy. Rather than empowering subaltern womyn, the modern slavery 'community' speaks and acts on behalf of subaltern womyn. It appears to matter little that how it believes womyn want to live may not always accord with how womyn themselves wish to live. This was made clear by those who criticised the modern slavery episteme, who explained that migrant womyn – even those who experience exploitation in the sex industry – do not always wish to be rescued. Although the adoption of a paternalistic and neoconservative approach creates the illusion that the modern slavery 'community's' aim is to bestow freedom upon the enslaved, it functions in reality to impose further restrictions on the bodily autonomy of migrant womyn. Not only does the modern slavery 'community' operate (perhaps inadvertently) to diminish the harms of the trans-Atlantic slave trade but it also diverts attention away from the pivotal role the UK Government plays in maintaining the conditions that enable migrant womyn to be victimised within the sex industry. By constituting slavery as a consequence of individual criminal behaviour, the Government is not held to account for its perpetuation of the global inequalities that push womyn into risky migratory routes and unregulated forms of work (Chuang, 2015).

The modern slavery 'community' may have been able to position itself as dominant within the anti-trafficking policy domain because its interests converge with those of the Government. Indeed, it may function to serve the interests of a neoconservative political agenda which operates to govern 'borders' and 'bodies' (Berman, 2010), by restricting the movement of 'undesirable' womyn from the non-Western world and controlling what parts of the anatomy may be used for labour. Yet its techniques are more subtle and the restrictions upon migrant womyn more tacit than those of the anti-immigration 'community'. Although the draconian and systematically racist practices of border control agencies have attracted a great deal of criticism from scholars, practitioners and migrant womyn alike (Pickering and Ham, 2014; Sharma, 2005), the anti-immigration 'community' exerts a great deal of influence over the anti-trafficking policy

domain. Repressive border practices and the deportation of migrant women are justified under the noble guise of governing sex trafficking. Yet while a victimising discourse is powerful within the anti-trafficking policy domain, the anti-immigration 'community' frequently questions claims to victimhood and can be understood as embodying a 'culture of disbelief.' Border control agencies such as UKBA and latterly, UKVI are understood by other anti-trafficking actors to habitually disbelieve the claims of victims and instead construct them as immigration offenders. This is particularly the case for Nigerian women, who are understood to find it particularly difficult to acquire victim status.

In many ways, the interactions that occur within the anti-trafficking policy domain must be understood within the context of broader changes in public attitude towards migrants. Perceptions of migrants as an inherent threat, and subsequent politicisation of border controls, are considered to have increased exponentially following the London Bombings in July 2005 (Ashworth and Zedner, 2014). Increasingly framed as a crime problem, immigration has become a growing part of the crime control 'community's' broader remit. While it is typically the police that make up its membership, 'investigative-type' NGOs have also emerged in recent years. The crime control 'community' typically adopts a heavy-handed approach to policing trafficking, which involves raiding brothels in order to rescue victims. This is despite a plethora of empirical research which condemns these practices on the basis that they displace, detain and deport migrant sex workers (Boff, 2012; Ditmore, 2009; Soderlund, 2005). Further, their framing of sex trafficking as a crime problem has perpetuated the notion that the blame for trafficking ought to be directed at the individual criminal and that the solution ought to be to encourage the reform and rehabilitation of the victim. To this extent, the crime control 'community' also functions to divert attention away from the structural causes of trafficking and the systemic conditions that promote victim adversity.

While the anti-trafficking 'communities' typically compete for power in the anti-trafficking policy domain, at times their interests do converge. This complex dynamic in which both competition *and* collaboration is fostered is most observable in the relationship between the modern slavery and radical feminist 'communities'. In many ways, the modern slavery 'community' conflicts with the radical feminist framing of trafficking through the lens of a 'violence against

womyn' framework and as such, has endeavoured to shift the debate away from focusing only on trafficking for sexual exploitation to focusing on all labour exploitation. Indeed, those lobbying for the *Modern Slavery Act* were evidently keen to circumvent the issue of the morality of commercial sex, with some interviewees raising concerns that the drafting of the Act had been 'hijacked' by radical feminists. Yet while Robinson (2015) emphasises how the modern slavery lobby sought to distance itself from debates about sexual morality, my findings indicate that the modern slavery 'community' is perhaps not as distinct as it may like to position itself. By creating a distinction between trafficking for sexual exploitation and trafficking for labour exploitation, the modern slavery 'community' conforms to the radical feminist tradition of refusing to accept the notion that sex work is a legitimate form of labour. It does not see exploitation in the sex industry as another form of labour exploitation and as such, begins from the same starting point as radical feminism: that sex work is *not* work. To this extent, my work supports the observations of Belinda Brooks-Gordon (2010) and Elizabeth Bernstein (2010) that on this issue, separatist feminists and the religious Right have found an uneasy alliance.

To date, epistemic communities have not been previously taken up as a concept in scholarly work on trafficking. This does not appear to be because it is not a useful conceptual tool for exploring interactions that occur between organisations within the anti-trafficking policy domain. Rather, I have found that it effectively encapsulates the panoply of ways trafficking is socially constructed by anti-trafficking actors in England and Wales, and the competition that they engage in to shape anti-trafficking policy and practice in their vision and for their preferred outcome. Theorising of epistemic communities is largely in its infancy and in particular, there has been little more than superficial engagement with the concept from outside of the discipline of International Relations. Most scholars within the social sciences have used the concept as little more than a fleeting metaphor, in spite of its potential for notable disciplinary reach (Dunlop, 2013). A sociological reading of epistemic communities has therefore necessitated, in part, that I problematize and adapt the concept. This does not make the concept redundant, however, since as Antoniadou (2002: 26) points out, modifications enables "greater analytical capacity." In particular, while Haas defines 'expert' knowledge in a technocratic sense, I understand expertise as inherently

subjective and fluid, and something which is socially constructed within each anti-trafficking 'community'. To this end, my work supports Toke (1999) and Davis Cross's (2013) observations that the epistemic community framework is limiting when knowledge is understood narrowly as 'scientific' rather than more broadly, as 'social'.

Another pertinent concern is whether, as critics have questioned, epistemic communities represents anything more than a metaphor (Dowding, 1995). Subjective judgment – based upon interviewees' accounts, documentary analysis and observation – was indeed involved in the identification of anti-trafficking communities; it was rare for interviewees to self-identify in this manner. To this end, the communities I identify are 'ideal types' (Weber, 1949): a conceptual tool for aiding understanding of the role played by anti-trafficking actors in the development and implantation of policy. Yet the epistemic community framework has facilitated an exploration of the different alliances that anti-trafficking actors form around shared belief systems, as well as the way in which they grapple to frame anti-trafficking policy and practice in line with their shared understanding of trafficking. It is perhaps less adept at enabling an explanation of the processes by which actors come together as a community, how they generate collective knowledge, and how they use that knowledge to influence policy and practice. With this in mind, the epistemic community framework has functions in this thesis less as a theory in its own right and more as a conceptual tool to facilitate an exploration of why NGOs and the police respond to trafficking in the manner that they do. To this end, my findings support Dunlop's (2013) assertion that epistemic communities are more useful in an exploratory, rather than explanatory, sense.

To briefly recapitulate, anti-trafficking NGOs and the police respond to sex trafficking in the manner that they do, at least in part, because five shared understandings of trafficking shape anti-trafficking policy and practice: neo-abolitionist, liberal feminist, modern slavery, anti-immigration, and crime control. Each 'community' interacts to produce intersubjective knowledge about how best to govern sex trafficking and purveys that knowledge beyond the community in order to influence the development and implementation of policy. While a range of anti-trafficking actors have formed alliances based upon shared knowledge, these communities intersect in a complex manner. It would seem that with the

exception of the liberal feminist ‘community’ – which exists independently – anti-trafficking communities operate in some way to legitimise the UK Government’s neoconservative and neoliberal political agendas. These agendas define how womyn should and should not use their bodies; which womyn can and cannot move freely about the globe; and which social groups are desirable and undesirable. In this regard, anti-trafficking actors may function as an arm of the neoliberal, imperialist state. To this extent, my work supports the view that the state has not relinquished power but rather is allowing the police and anti-trafficking NGOs to do the rowing, whilst it does the steering (Crawford, 2006; Peters, 2012; Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). As such, my findings lend weight to the notion that as the power and influence of non-state actors increase within the policy process, the power and influence of the state does not *ipso facto* decline (Sending and Neumann, 2006). While the epistemic community framework has enabled rich empirical analysis of the anti-trafficking policy domain, it remains a largely inchoate one and requires further empirical application, particularly within the disciplines of sociology, social policy and criminology.

8.2 Strategic responses to governing sex trafficking: Silo-mentality

It is largely accepted that as a complex problem, trafficking requires a complex solution. This is reflective of a broader acknowledgment that neoliberal globalisation has brought with it an increasing number of ‘wicked problems’ (Rittel and Webber, 1973; Torfing, 2012). This thesis has therefore demonstrated that NGOs and the police respond to the trafficking of womyn using a range of strategic approaches, often conceptualised as the ‘3Ps’ of: ‘prevention’, ‘protection’, and ‘prosecution’. It is clear, however, that the ‘3Ps’ are not prioritised equally by anti-trafficking actors; although, that is not to say that these strategic approaches are mutually exclusive. For example, while NGO interviewees were keen to prioritise the interests of victim protection and the police were keen to ensure a case resulted in a successful prosecution, both may wish the victim to participate as a witness in a court of law. Police interviewees, for example, noted that the prosecution of trafficking cases are more successful if victims participate as witnesses, particularly if they are a ‘credible’ witness. They

acknowledged that the 'credibility' of witnesses tends to be enhanced if the victim has received quality support from NGOs. At the same time, NGO interviewees acknowledged that participation in a court case may have positive benefits for the victim's recovery.

This thesis has made clear, however, that the three strategic approaches adopted by anti-trafficking actors are marked by copious pathologies as well as notable issues of contestation. Whilst my own problematisation of how NGOs and the police respond to trafficking uncovered some of these pathologies, others were highlighted by police and NGO interviewees themselves; although, the little consensus on what these pathologies were is indicative of the lack of cohesion within the anti-trafficking policy domain. Under the auspices of prevention, it is apparent that anti-trafficking actors in effect govern 'Western borders' and 'subaltern bodies'. It seems that the move towards 'responsibilising' (Garland, 2000) the public for anti-trafficking through practice similar to Neighbourhood Watch Schemes, for example, may inadvertently cause harm to migrant sex workers who may be displaced, detained and deported by the authorities (Shih, 2016). Further, under the guise of protecting womyn 'at risk' of victimisation, preventative efforts in countries of origin in fact legitimise the control of 'risky' womyn – that is, they justify the targeting of womyn that may be likely to migrate to the UK (to work in the sex industry). In addition to preventing the 'supply' of victims of trafficking, preventative efforts have focused on deterring 'demand', which has given licence to advocates of an anti-prostitution agenda to use trafficking in their manoeuvring for the introduction of a Sex Purchase Law in England and Wales. This is in spite of a plethora of research evidence which demonstrates that far from preventing trafficking, criminalising the client will heighten the vulnerability of (migrant) sex workers (Levy and Jakobsson, 2014; Dodillet and Östergren, 2011). The pornographisation of pain employed in awareness raising videos, for example, functions to justify practices we might otherwise consider repressive, such as the surveillance of womyn involved in the sex industry and the deportation of migrant womyn. Anti-trafficking prevention continues to be used as a justification for the control of borders despite evidence which indicates that if the socio-structural causes of trafficking remain unaddressed, womyn will continue to pursue risky routes of entry and thus be vulnerable to victimisation (Zimmerman et al., 2006).

In relation to the second strategic approach, protection, it is clear that anti-immigration sentiment has pervaded practices. This is perhaps most clear in the involvement of UKVI in assessing the validity of non-EU womyn's victim claims, through the NRM. There was some consensus amongst NGO interviewees that the MoJ-funded 45 day 'Recovery and Reflection' period offered to womyn who receive positive 'Reasonable Grounds' decisions is not long enough. There was not, however, any consensus about what would constitute an appropriate length of time for victim protection, with many interviewees emphasising that the heterogeneity of victims means that individually tailored service provisions are required; although, currently not viable under the Salvation Army contract. To this extent, the MoJ contract with the Salvation Army can be understood as imposing restrictions upon provision which those outside of the contract considered to be detrimental to victims. Central to this second strategic approach is a victimising discourse since in order to justify the existence of victim protection, and to legitimise the Salvation Army contract, a steady flow of victims are required. This points to anti-trafficking as an 'industry' (Christie, 2000). A notable problem highlighted by many NGO interviews was a lack of 'move-on' or 'longer-term' care provisions, which has prompted some NGOs to seek private funding in order to plug this gap. Yet the plugging of this gap in victim provision by NGOs is part of a broader pathology. While in some ways this can be considered a commendable attempt to fill a gap exposed by a retreating welfare state, in others it may be understood as masking the limits of neoliberalism. I return to develop this point later in this chapter.

The third strategic approach to governing trafficking, 'prosecution', also raises some notable problems. It is clear that there are low rates of prosecutions and convictions for trafficking, which interviewees attributed mainly to: victims being unwilling to engage as witnesses, victims being prevented by the police from engaging as witnesses, and the use of 'related' legislation in trafficking cases. The pursuit of 'credible' witnesses is not unique to cases of trafficking (Stanko, 1981); although, criteria of credibility do tend to be applied more rigorously in cases of a sexual nature (Frohmann, 1991). Indeed, it seems that only 'ideal' victims (Christie, 1986) are deemed credible, with their credibility assessed in arbitrary terms. To this extent, victims must meet idealistic expectations of innocence, in order to be considered a credible witness: they must not have

engaged in criminal activity, even under the duress of their trafficker, or demonstrated any choice in their migration or engagement in the sex industry. Further, the utilisation of 'related' legislation to prosecute traffickers is contentious. On the one hand, some interviewees were less concerned with the *means* of achieving a prosecution, provided that the *ends* were appropriate – that is, that the prosecution resulted in a lengthy custodial sentence. Other interviewees noted, however, that the use of trafficking legislation plays an important symbolic function, both in terms of deterring traffickers and in validating victims' claims. More importantly perhaps, prosecution and conviction statistics can be used to validate the existence of specialist police units and the anti-trafficking policy domain more broadly. Without evidence of trafficking, in the form of crime statistics and victims of trafficking, anti-trafficking actors find it difficult to attain resources from the Home Office and other sources of funding.

Although the three strategic approaches are not mutually exclusive, there is a clear disjuncture between the priorities of NGOs and the priorities of the police. Yet the network of anti-trafficking actors have attempted to mask this disjuncture, as well as the disconnect that occurs as a result of there being a range of (oftentimes competing) anti-trafficking 'communities', behind a pretence of partnership working. Touted as the fourth 'P', the importance of partnerships in anti-trafficking policy and practice is reflective of a broader approach to crime control formalised under the New Labour Government's *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*. Interviewees highlighted the importance of partnership working at every opportunity, with some recounting examples that appeared to demonstrate effective collaboration. Yet more often than not, these examples demonstrated that effective partnerships were restricted to within anti-trafficking 'communities' or based more upon willing individuals and compatible personalities than anything more meaningful. As such, it became abundantly clear after only a couple of interviews that I must explore beyond the rhetoric of partnerships to how actors really interact within the anti-trafficking policy domain. Indeed, there has been minimal analysis of the effectiveness of inter-agency partnership working (Sheldon-Sherman, 2012), as well as intra-agency working. The need to get 'beyond the official line' is a common feature of interviewing 'elites' (Duke, 2002; Morris, 2009), yet it seems that in a highly-politicised policy domain this was even more essential in order to negate socially-

desirable and misleading responses from interviewees (Connelly and Wicker, 2013).

As examined in section 6.4.1, one of the key barriers to partnership working amongst anti-trafficking actors was the contention that enveloped the advocacy for, and drafting of, the *Modern Slavery Act 2015*. This is hardly surprising given that the modern slavery ‘community’ utilised the *Act* to deliberately shift attention away from the traditional focus on sex trafficking – the concern of radical feminists – towards other forms of trafficking. As such, some interviewees noted that they had been excluded from the debates that preceded the *Act* and as such, it lacked a ‘violence against womyn’ perspective which takes into account that trafficking is largely a gendered crime. Introduced as part of the *Act*, the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator role was also controversial, with debates largely structured around whether a ‘top-down’ or ‘bottom-up’ approach is most appropriate for shaping anti-trafficking practices. While some interviewees lauded its potential for standardising anti-trafficking practices across England and Wales, others denounced the added layer of bureaucracy it brings to the anti-trafficking policy domain. Further research is required to examine what, if any, impact the *Modern Slavery Act* has had upon anti-trafficking practices and specifically, whether it remains a barrier to partnership working now that it has received Royal Assent.

It seems then that trafficking can thus be understood both as a ‘wicked problem’ (Rittel and Webber, 1973) and an ‘essentially contested concept’ (Gallie, 1955). There is no easy solution to the problem of trafficking but rather myriad solutions put forward by diffuse anti-trafficking actors, based upon their (competing) perspectives. Perhaps the ‘wickedness’ of the problem lies in the fact that it may be understood as related to, or a symptom of, a whole host of other ‘problems,’ dependent upon the perspective one holds. It is perhaps unsurprising that collaboration is difficult within the anti-trafficking policy domain, given that there exists a range of competing ‘communities’ and strategic responses to trafficking. Yet I do not wish to suggest that the optimum goal is unity. As Crawford (1994) asserts, an ‘ideology of unity’ is all but a utopian ideal. Genuine unity would require that all anti-trafficking actors share the same ideological interests, priorities and politics. It would require there to be only one single homogenous anti-trafficking community, which neither would be attainable nor

desirable. Dissention, even conflict, have their place in partnerships: they are manifestations of accountability and a means of problem-solving. In this regard, I do not argue that anti-trafficking actors should embark on a futile search for unity since to do so would likely lead to the silencing of non-consensual voices (Crawford, 1994; 1998). This would sit particularly problematically with my own feminist politics, which recognises the importance of marginal voices and critiques the hegemonic structures that exist to silence them. Instead, anti-trafficking organisations should adopt an ‘ideology of dialectics’ – a shared set of beliefs in the value of arriving at a solution through constructive argument.

The different understandings of trafficking and differential prioritisation of strategic approaches to ‘anti-trafficking’ operate as barriers to partnership working, it would also seem that neoliberalisation fosters an environment in which partnerships are difficult. Rather than facilitating reciprocity, trust and cooperation, the managerialisation of crime control may create uncertainty, suspicion and at times, vehement rivalries. In part, silo-mentality is caused by competition for scarce funding, which has led to NGOs exaggerating the trafficking problem, and producing victims of trafficking, in order to attract funding. My findings therefore complement existing theorising around the ‘Non-profit Industrial Complex’ (INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, 2007), which captures the notion that anti-trafficking NGOs are forced to focus their attention on securing and maintaining funding, rather than realising their aims of ‘ending’ sex trafficking. Once again, this points to anti-trafficking as an ‘industry’, one characterised by hyper-competitiveness. As section 6.5 elucidates, actors, agencies and organisations within this industry are vying for funding and integral to this funding is a steady stream of victims. It is the issue of victimhood that this chapter now turns.

8.3 The rescue industry: When help becomes a hindrance

Despite a multifarious network of anti-trafficking actors approaching the problem of trafficking from a range of angles and prioritising different strategic approaches, a victimising discourse acts to unify the anti-trafficking policy domain. In the ubiquitous conflation of trafficking with migrant sex work, police and NGO interviewees essentialise migrant womyn as a victim monolith. Yet they do little to bestow rights upon migrant womyn or facilitate their bodily autonomy

and instead, focus on the act of rescuing. To this extent, Agustín's (2007) 'rescue industry' encapsulates what is observable amongst anti-trafficking actors in England and Wales. It speaks to the processes that they are engaged in which systematically, and on a large scale, produce 'victims of trafficking.' It captures the productivity of anti-trafficking actors: how in tackling the problem of trafficking, they in fact produce more of it, which in turn legitimises the rescue industry. The network of actors operating within the anti-trafficking policy domain may do so with the overarching aim of ending sex trafficking but it relies heavily upon the production of 'victims of trafficking'. Any approach which relies upon the victim subject to end victimisation is, arguably, inherently flawed. With this in mind, Agustín's (2007) concept also points to how the rescue industry is not based entirely upon the best interests of migrant womyn involved in the sex industry but rather, upon those of a neoliberal, neoconservative, neocolonial, and patriarchal state apparatus. To this extent, this thesis has demonstrated that within the anti-trafficking policy domain, victims may be politically manipulated.

It is important to remember that victimhood is not simply an objective experience but rather, it is a politically conscious act. One does not simply acquire trafficking victim status based upon the interaction(s) that has taken place between them and the offender. Rather, the 'victim' label is conferred upon some womyn by those with relative power, and its application is based upon judgements about who deserves victim status and who does not. The rescue industry more readily confers victim status upon some womyn than others and as such, it is clear that victimhood is mediated by a number of intersecting factors and a hierarchy of privilege relating to: socio-economic status; nationality and race; and victims' perceived complicity in their own exploitation. Indeed, it seems that Nils Christie's (1986) 'ideal victim' concept is apt [see: section 7.3]. The rescue industry equates choice with socio-economic status and as such, the 'ideal' victim is poor and uneducated. The victim is 'foreign' and more ideally, she is non-Western: from the 'third world.' Constructed as perpetually unprivileged and naïve, the rescue industry's intervention into migrant womyn's lives become justified and even considered to be commendable. The victim is also entirely blameless in her victimisation, having demonstrated little or no agency in her movement across borders nor in the sale of sex.

My findings support existing scholarly work which theorises the conflation of sex trafficking and migrant sex work (Agustín, 2005a; Anderson and Andrijasevic, 2008; Sanghera, 2012). It is clear that the quotidian conflation of migrant sex work and trafficking in anti-trafficking policy and practice operates paradoxically to both facilitate and deny victim status. On the one hand, victim status is over-applied to migrant sex workers who are involved in the sex industry by choice. Conversely, the victim label may be withheld and instead, migrant womyn who fit the Palermo Protocol definition of trafficking may be constructed as offenders of immigration and/or prostitution laws. This seemingly contradictory situation can therefore be understood through the lens of two paradigmatic cultures: 'the culture of belief' and the 'culture of disbelief'. Although others have observed the existence of a 'culture of disbelief' in relation to the issue of asylum screening (Jubany, 2011; Stepnitz, 2012), this thesis extends the typology. It is evident that while the majority of anti-trafficking actors adopt a culture of belief in which migrant womyn are constructed as a victimised monolith in need of rescue, the authorities habitually question claims to victimhood. Given that it is the authorities that have the capacity to formally confer victim status through the NRM, this has far-reaching consequences for womyn. The harmful effects of victim denial are felt most by Nigerian womyn, who are constructed as 'false victims' who manipulate the system in order to secure asylum in England and Wales.

Yet while these two cultures of victimhood appear paradoxical, they in fact serve a similar purpose in that they both justify the deportation of migrant womyn. Constructed as an 'illegal alien' within a culture of disbelief, the migrant woman can be justifiably arrested, detained and deported under the guise of protecting national security. Indeed, in the pursuit of an electoral advantage politicians – particularly those on the Right of the political spectrum – have increasingly engaged in tough rhetoric on migration control (Bowling, 2013). Within a climate of populist punitiveness (Bottoms, 1995), the illegal immigrant has been seized upon as perennial 'folk devil' (Cohen, 2002) and blamed for an ever-expanding number of social ills. On the other hand, constructed as a victim of trafficking within a pervasive culture of belief, the migrant woman can be justifiably socially controlled and deported under the guise of protection. Too few question, and fewer still challenge, the notion that 'victims of trafficking' ought to

be returned to their country of origin, which are usually places from which they have tried to leave in the first instance and to which they do not necessary want to return (Nelken, 2010). To this extent, the rescue industry works to serve neoliberal and neoconservative Western hegemony, in that it restricts and represses the movement of subaltern womyn.

At first glance, it appears that the rescue industry is however defined by benevolence and that anti-trafficking actors operate within it altruistically, to provide support to migrant womyn defined as ‘victims of trafficking.’ The formal application of victim status may open up avenues for migrant womyn to receive state-funded care and support. Indeed, a positive ‘Reasonable Grounds’ decision granted by a NRM Competent Authority allows a woman to receive 45 days of MoJ-funded support from the Salvation Army’s sub-contracted NGOs. If victim status is reaffirmed by the police and the CPS, by means of inviting her to participate as a witness in a court of law, additional avenues of support may open, including opportunities to claim financial compensation and ‘Discretionary Leave to Remain’. For womyn who are not formally granted victims status by the authorities, they may still acquire it informally from NGOs that are not bound by the MoJ contract. These NGOs are free to support anyone they so wish to confer victim status open, and engage in practices which over-apply victimhood. The pervasive stigma surrounding sex work means that opportunities for formal support are not always forthcoming. Rather, one needs to be an ‘innocent’ in order to receive MoJ-funded support; a Madonna trafficked and forced into the sex industry. This has meant that some NGOs purposefully mislabel migrant sex workers ‘victims’ in order to open up avenues for their support that would not be available otherwise. It is therefore incontrovertible that through the application of victim status, the rescue industry is able to offer valuable support to disadvantaged womyn, those exploited in the sex industry, and those working voluntarily within the sex industry.

Alongside the positive affect of care that victim status may bring, this thesis has explored how the victim label may also enable the control of migrant womyn. Under the guise of noble action – the rescuing of ‘helpless’ victims – intervention into the lives of migrant womyn can be justified. The rescue industry thus relies upon the ‘needy subject’ (Timmer, 2010) to justify its imposition. Yet the needs identified by the rescue industry are not always based upon the actual needs of

migrant womyn but rather, they are based upon the needs that the rescue industry perceive migrant womyn to have, in a discourse that constructs them as an 'humanitarian project'. In particular, the 'third world' Other is constructed as a singular monolith of powerlessness and those labelled 'victims of trafficking' are easier to dominate and suppress. With the victim label attached, voluntary migrant sex workers are justifiably deported under the façade of rescue. In so doing, their agency is denied, their movement largely restricted to the non-Western world, and their bodies governed. The rescue industry is concerned with imposing onto others, their view of how womyn ought to live. As such, it is about imposing onto others the Western episteme and as such, is reminiscent of colonialism 'civilising missions' (Wood, 2013). This thesis, therefore, lends support to Wendy's Chapkis' (2003: 930) claim that trafficking is both constituted by and a constituent of 'compassionate conservatism' in as much as it demonstrates "a willingness to provide assistance and protection for a few by positioning them as exceptions, proving the need for punitive measures used against the many."

In light of these harms, some interviewees were critical of the rescue industry, which may give legitimacy to Agustín's (2007) claim that it does not operate altruistically. The rescue industry may impose upon migrant womyn its moral view of what constitutes appropriate, virtuous and responsible conduct. To this extent, it extends its own agenda of political neoconservatism and its movement for social purity (Cojocarú, 2015). It reaffirms ownership over the female body. At the same time, O'Connell Davidson (2005) notes that a sense of collectivism and solidarity arises from the 'rescue' of 'slaves.' In so doing, the rescue industry might be understood as engaging in Foucauldian 'practices of the self.' Indeed, to draw upon Mohanty's (1998: 353) theorisation of Western feminism, it is only by constructing the subaltern migrant woman as enslaved and helpless that the Western woman can be understood as liberated and autonomous. The antithetic non-Western woman is needed to affirm the self-presentation of Western woman and *vice versa*, or more broadly the non-Western world is needed to affirm the Western-world (Said, 1993) – that is, they mutually enable and sustain one another. Therefore, while the rescue industry may function to control (as well as care for) migrant womyn, it nonetheless functions to heroise the rescuer. It enables anti-trafficking actors to bask in the 'white emancipatory fantasy' (Trodd, 2013) forged by the early abolitionists so widely

celebrated in colonised knowledge. From this perspective, the rescue industry may be understood as embodying Western privilege and serving the interests of 'the West' by ensuring that social order is not subverted. To this extent, and to borrow from bell hooks (1989: 113), it seems that rescue industry "support[s] and affirm[s] the very structure of racist domination and oppression that [it] profess[es] to wish to see eradicated."

I do not intend to imply, however, that the work of anti-trafficking NGOs and the police is intentionally harmful but rather, that the good intentions of the rescue industry do not negate the harm anti-trafficking policy and practice may cause for subaltern migrant womyn. Some anti-trafficking actors were themselves critical of the victimising discourse central to the rescue industry, and in so doing, spoke to the limits of neoliberalism, white supremacy and patriarchy which intersect to heighten subaltern migrant womyn's vulnerability to coercion and exploitation in the sex industry. Yet even the actions of these critical anti-trafficking actors can be understood to some extent as playing a role in maintaining an exploitative, repressive Western power structure. The voluntary sector is often considered to undertake the commendable task of filling the void left by post-welfare state modernisation (Corcoran, 2011). In this regard, anti-trafficking actors offer support to migrant womyn that may not be available otherwise. Yet in so doing, the Government is in effect absolved from providing these services. This point is made by Roy (2004, unpag.) who draws attention to the fact that NGOs "dole out as aid or benevolence what people ought to have by right." Furthermore, in plugging the gaps left by the retreating welfare state, anti-trafficking NGOs – and the voluntary sector more broadly (Harvey, 2005) – may actually accelerate the state's retreat. This view is supported by Middleton (2006, unpag.) who posits:

By abandoning a radical critique, it has become perilously easy for some NGOs to become co-opted by neo-liberal governments in the [global] North, inadvertently paving the way for further neo-liberalism.

The rescue industry therefore does very little to address the systemic inequalities that exist globally, and which are maintained by Western hegemony. With this in mind, NGOs may operate to undermine efforts to bring about revolutionary social change (Choudry and Kapoor, 2013). Their small, incremental steps create the

illusion of change but they are nonetheless made within a neoliberal, neocolonial and patriarchal political system.

In particular, the rescue industry does little to challenge the presumed right held by Western states to restrict the movement of subaltern people. While some anti-trafficking actors (particularly, NGOs) offer guidance to victims claiming asylum in England and Wales, their work does not demand radical changes to a system that is designed to maintain Western domination: it does not subvert the hegemonic social order. Rather than mobilising a comprehensive and sustained campaign against restrictive border policies which function to push womyn into pursuing more 'risky' routes of migration (Zimmerman, 2006), the practices of the rescue industry in fact serves to justify anti-immigration agendas. While it may be European states that first commissioned 'Fortress Europe', it seems that some anti-trafficking actors are inadvertently helping to build it. In so doing, they function to disguise the limits both of the neoliberal and neoconservative philosophies that underpin Western hegemony. To this end, the rescue industry operates as evidence of neoliberalism's success but is in effect, merely a neoliberal solution to a problem it first created (Forte, 2014).

8.4 Western control of the subaltern woman

This thesis has demonstrated that anti-trafficking responses in England and Wales are politicised and fraught with contestation. Yet while a climate of distrust and at times intense rivalry may exist amongst anti-trafficking actors, they all by and large share one fundamental feature: they operate as a vector through which the Government exerts social control. This lends support to Nikolas Rose's (1996) observation that although the state may have appeared to relinquish control to a range of actors beyond the core executive, it continues to govern at a distance. In some respects then, my work speaks to the Foucauldian notion of dispersed power – that is, that:

[P]ower is dispersed throughout society as well as being concentrated in the state, and that power operate through networks of action that transverse the legal-constitutional divisions that supposedly separate the state from civil society (Garland, 1997: 205).

It seems that while agencification may have given the illusion that the state has relinquished some of its power, this is not necessarily the case. Instead, anti-

trafficking actors may have been, or are at least susceptible to being, co-opted by the state. This may be understood within the context of broader concerns about the voluntary sector (Hucklesby and Corcoran, 2015; Maguire 2012) and those which problematise the gradual shift in policing away from its Peelian traditions of serving the people to serving the state (Connelly and Joseph-Salisbury, 2015). The MoJ contract, for example, enables the state to extend its influence over the provision of victim support and steer the ideological politics and related goals of the NGOs bound by it. Yet the Government's control over the anti-trafficking policy domain operates in more subtle ways too. It is to how anti-trafficking policy and practice functions to govern certain populations that this chapter now turns.

The rescue industry, in effect, may govern the way in which womyn use their bodies. It largely adopts the fundamental notion that the sale of sex represents violence and exploitation, in and of itself, and promulgates this view through its victimising discourse, leaving little room for autonomy. Essentialist gender norms of helplessness are imposed in order to justify the moralising 'missions of salvation' (Cojocar, 2015), conducted under the veil of 'anti-trafficking'. Of course, this tacit form of gender oppression (Walby, 1990) cannot be straightforwardly separated from racial oppression since both may intersect with and reinforce one another (Carby, 1997; Davis, 1981; hooks, 2000; Mohanty, 1998). Indeed, it seems that the 'third world prostitute' body (Bernstein, 2007; Doezema, 2001) is more heavily governed. Attempts are made to restrict her movement to the non-Western world and to control her sexuality, which is constructed as lacking self-control in a discourse that draws upon the traditional hyper-sexualisation of Black womyn. This functions to reproduce neocolonial assumptions that the Western world is more advanced than the non-Western world and reaffirm the distinction between 'the West' and 'the rest' (Kapur, 2002). While some migrants are celebrated, others cause anxiety (Bauman, 1997). This anxiety about the movement of the 'Other' may be understood as a legacy of colonialism and anti-trafficking actors understood as a vector for neocolonialism. They give legitimacy to the unequitable distribution of global mobility (Andersson, 2014) and to whiteness as a global signifier of privilege (Leonardo, 2002). Therefore while a feminisation of migration can be observed, with womyn increasingly migrating in order to improve (labour) opportunities, these opportunities are not distributed equally across all womyn but rather they are

racialised, ethnicised and nationalised. As Bauman (1998) contends, a 'global hierarchy of mobility' is in operation, in which mobility is highly stratified and unattainable for the subaltern woman. She remains firmly cast in the role of always and only an abject victim (O'Connell Davidson, 2015).

Agustín's (2012) claim that the rescue industry engages in a soft form of imperialism is a persuasive one. The actions of the rescue industry may be infinitely more palatable than military action but are, arguably, no less obtrusive to the affairs of other countries. This, as Tate (2016) indicates, is somewhat typical of actions within a post-race society, in which one frequently distances oneself from endemic and institutional racism in order to set oneself apart, as better. Despite constructing themselves as the emancipators of non-Western 'slaves', anti-trafficking actors remain part of a rescue industry that colludes with and keeps in place a system of racial and gender oppression. To this extent, anti-trafficking actors operate to maintain the structures that uphold Western hegemony. The victim label thus becomes another tool in a broader arsenal used to control subaltern women, functioning to ensure that they remain socio-economically, politically and geographically marginal from the hegemonic power structure. With this in mind, the good intentions of anti-trafficking actors may operate to disguise – even to themselves – the ways in which anti-trafficking policy and practice perpetuates systemic forms of inequality.

While I have presented a largely *critical* analysis of anti-trafficking policy and practice, my intention is not to cast anti-trafficking NGOs and the police as inherently bad. Rather, it is to position their work within the broader social-structural conditions that harm subaltern migrant women. My critique is not of the individual 'rescuer' *per se* – whose intentions may not be to cause harm – but rather, it is of systemic patriarchy, Western hegemony, and neoliberal capitalism. These are the conditions which interrelate to force the actions of the rescue industry. My critical analysis of the rescue industry may therefore be interpreted as inimical to the world view adopted by many anti-trafficking actors, in that I regard systemic inequality as so deeply embedded within society that I do not consider anti-trafficking policy and practice to offer any realistic solution to the exploitation of migrant women in the sex industry. Indeed, the small, incremental steps anti-trafficking actors make are made within, rather than to radically change, the system. To borrow from Derrick Bell (1992: 92) "their reaction is

usually reactionary and rarely grapples with the real question(s)". With this in mind, I may face criticism on the basis of my 'pessimistic' account since I do not consider that systemic inequality will be realistically removed in the foreseeable future. Yet by suggesting that the work of anti-trafficking actors does little to redress these systemic problems, I do not wish to imply that they should cease their anti-trafficking practices or stop their attempts to improve the lives of 'victims'. Instead, my findings are intended to forge a direction for improvement and to challenge the 'myth' that we are on an inevitable path to equality (Gillborn, 2008).

8.5 Abandoning the concept of 'sex trafficking'

A feminist social constructionist philosophy underpins this thesis since my concern has been to examine the contradictory truths that exist in understandings of trafficking and in anti-trafficking politics, policy and practice. My research findings therefore reinforce the validity of a feminist social constructionist perspective since they demonstrate the multitudinous ways in which 'trafficking' has been constructed in order to achieve various political ends. Like Agustín (2007), my research leads me to be sceptical of the relevance of the concept of 'trafficking.' Indeed, it is perhaps only helpful when understood as a portmanteau concept for a whole host of other concerns (O'Connell Davidson, 2015) and has been used as a vehicle through which to pursue the interests of a range of (competing) anti-trafficking 'communities'. Kamala Kempadoo (2012: x) has noted previously that "some authors imply" that the notion of human trafficking ought to be jettisoned, yet this claim appears to remain somewhat underdeveloped and tentative in existing literature. My findings lead me to argue that the concept of 'sex trafficking' ought to be abandoned, serving no helpful purpose for oppressed womyn and only the purposes of oppressors. I briefly set out my own reasoning here.

First, neither trafficking nor the act of 'illegal' migration frequently conflated with it, have an existential reality of their own. The movement of people, mobility, is an existent phenomenon (O'Connell Davidson, 2015) but the concept of trafficking is not. Rather, it is socially constructed by those with power and influence in the anti-trafficking policy domain and is best understood as a label used by states to classify one type of human mobility (O'Connell Davidson, 2015).

To illustrate the socially constructed nature of trafficking, let me turn briefly to two examples. In the first, a womyn is held against her will, she has been transported and locked away by force, and then physically and sexually abused. In the second, a migrant woman is handcuffed and moved to Yarl's Wood immigration detention centre, from which she cannot leave and in which she experiences physical violence and sexual abuse (see: Sambrook, 2013; Taylor, 2015). There are few discernible differences and both can be understood as conforming to the 'three feature of trafficking' (Elliot, 2015: 54; Sullivan, 2015: 88). First, in each case the *action* element is present; both involve movement. Second, in each case the *means* element (force) is observable, and in both cases the migrant woman is subject to *exploitation* of a physical and sexual nature. Yet in the first example few would disagree that it constitutes trafficking, whilst in the second few would accuse Serco of trafficking or the government of employing a 'trafficker.'⁶⁴ In each case, the act is intrinsically similar yet labelled very differently: one as the crime of trafficking and one as an acceptable practice. To this extent, sex trafficking as a (legal) concept may be too heavily embedded in power to have material relevance.

Second, 'sex trafficking' as a concept does not allow for the complex realities that define the feminisation of migration and the sex industry. The victimising discourse so central to the concept excludes the accounts of sex workers in all their messy complexities (Chapkis, 1997) and ignores the notion that multiple truths can, and do, exist. Yet the construction of the parallel dichotomies of 'trafficking-migration' and 'coercion-choice' has become so deeply engrained that the diversity of migrant sex workers lived experiences is lost. Trafficking as a concept relies upon the construction of migrant womyn as objects and as such, allows no scope to understand migrant womyn as subjects: decision-makers (O'Connell Davidson, 2015). Thus the concept of trafficking has been constructed in such a way that it fails to elucidate the complex intersection of power and resistance migrant sex workers experience or the way in which migrant sex work can be simultaneously exploitative and empowering (Connelly and Sanders, 2015). Womyn's decisions may of course be mediated by the alternatives available to them. Yet ultimately, the exploitation, violence and

⁶⁴ Serco has been contracted by the UK Government to run the Yarl's Wood immigration detention centre.

coercion migrant sex workers may be subjected to is not unique to the sex industry but rather, is present across a range of labour markets and is an endemic feature of neoliberal globalisation (Connelly et al., 2015). The gendered structural inequalities and sexist ideologies that exist globally work in conjunction to subordinate womyn, and shame and marginalise those engaged in sex work. To this extent, if we accept the point that sex work is a legitimate form of labour, the separate concepts of 'sex trafficking' and 'labour trafficking' are not required. Trafficking for the purpose of sexual labour would be just one subcategory of labour trafficking. Yet this, in effect, would require the rescue industry to accept the agency of sex workers.

Third, trafficking as a concept has been too much about visceral reaction and too often couched in moral judgment, which has come at the price of objectifying the subaltern migrant womon and sensationalising the exploitation, coercion and violence she may have experienced. In this manner, trafficking – particularly in its hegemonic reframing as modern slavery – is constructed as lying beyond politics (O'Connell Davidson, 2015). This is despite it being, as I have endeavoured to demonstrate, an extremely politicised issue and 'victims of trafficking' an inherently politicised category. As Andrijasevic and Anderson (2009: 154) note:

Not all those horrendously abused or caught in what some people describe as 'modern day slavery' will count administratively as victims of trafficking.

Therefore, by labelling migrant sex workers 'victims of trafficking', the state diverts attention away from the part it plays in maintaining the conditions under which migrant womyn are vulnerable to exploitation in the sex industry. The UK Government can thus obscure its role in the creation and the perpetuation of global inequalities between; men and womyn, white and non-white, rich and poor, and the state and the individual (Bravo, 2007). Instead, the victim label reinforces the perception that trafficking ought to be viewed through the lens of criminality and as such, the 'trafficker' offers a convenient scapegoat for blame. As Sharma (2005: 91) astutely observes:

[M]ost migrants are victims of the daily, banal operation of global capitalist labor markets that are governed by nation-states. They are victimized by border control practices and the ideologies of racism, sexism, and nationalism that render unspectacular their everyday experience of oppression and exploitation.

As such, the individual trafficker or the organised crime gang can be successfully constructed as the bogeyman, the perennial outsider, the folk devil. To this extent,

trafficking as a concept cannot be separated from an unhelpfully simple crime discourse of 'good' and 'evil.' Yet it is precisely its simplicity, its ability to titillate, and to create a visceral response that means that sex trafficking as a concept, and a legal category, will likely have longevity.

In arguing that the concept of sex trafficking ought to be jettisoned, I am not suggesting that womyn's movement across borders is always entirely voluntary or that migrant womyn are never coerced into, or exploited within, the sex industry. Indeed, there are high levels of violence within the sex industry in England and Wales (Connelly, 2014; Kinnell, 2008), which may be felt disproportionately by some migrant womyn as their undocumented status heightens risk of exploitation across all sectors of labour (O'Connell Davidson, 2006). This risk is also heightened by policies that 'criminalise' commercial sex and which operate to conceal exploitation (Brooks-Gordon, 2010; Levy, 2014; Sanders, 2009). What I am arguing is that exploitation, coercion and violence are part of the lived realities of most migrant womyn not as something that is relevant for a small minority of 'victims of trafficking'. A similar point is made by Mendel and Sharapov (2016) who posit that more research is needed at the macro-level in order to understand better the socio-structural contexts in which exploitation takes place, rather than focusing on the form of exploitation we have labelled 'sex trafficking'. With this in mind, I do not intend to imply that the sex industry is populated by "happy hookers" (Bindle, 2015b: unpag.). Rather, I contend that it is unhelpful to draw false distinctions between 'sex worker' and 'victim' because womyn's lived experiences of the sex industry are likely to involve elements of both coercion and choice (Chapkis, 2003; Maher, 2000; Weitzer, 2012), which fluctuate over time.

8.6 Feminist reflections on positionality

Following in the footsteps of other feminist scholars, I have sought to adopt a reflexive approach to this thesis. It comes from a perspective Patricia Hill Collins (1989) advocates in which knowledge is understood to reflect the subjectivities of its creator. I have therefore tried to refrain from presenting a sanitised version of the research: I do not wish to give the illusion that every part of it went according to plan or that it was always a comfortable process. Instead I agree with Pillow (2003: 196) that as a whole:

[t]he qualitative research arena would benefit from more “messy” examples, examples that may not always be successful, examples that do not seek a comfortable, transcendent end-point but leave us in the uncomfortable realities of doing engaged qualitative research.

It therefore seems apt, as I draw this thesis to a close, to briefly set out what I consider to be the limitations of the research and the issues that have troubled me most.⁶⁵ In so doing, I hope that I go some way towards expounding the dilemmas I have faced during this research project since these challenges are too often silenced in the academe and made to remain the researcher’s ‘secret’ (Ryan-Flood and Gill, 2010).

First, I wish to briefly reflect upon my experiencing of recruiting participants for this research project. While I was able to successfully recruit NGO and police interviewees, I was unable to recruit individuals responsible for assessing trafficking and asylum claims – that is, the NRM Competent Authorities: UKHTC and UKVI – as I had intended. My research therefore lacks empirical data from the agencies that I understand to be part of the anti-immigration ‘community’. Yet like Sherlock Holmes’ curious case of ‘the dog that didn’t bark’, the Home Office’s refusal to engage in fact tells us a great deal. First, viewed in the light of Western border agencies being a frequent source of critique (Shantz, 2010), it may be indicative of the Home Office fearing exposure of their repressive practices. Second, it may tell us something about the Home Office’s perception of the importance of academic research; it may be read as an implicit disregard for research that strives to affect social change. Research may have slipped further down the agenda of the border agencies in recent years, following the imposition of additional constraints on their resources as a consequence of budget cuts (House of Commons, 2013) and a rise in both trafficking and asylum claims. That said, researchers with greater social capital than myself have been successful in recruiting Home Office interviewees (including, Easton and Matthews, 2012), which raises a third interesting issues, this time regarding power dynamics. My experience supports Duke’s (2002) observation that PhD researchers occupy a vulnerable position within the academe’s hierarchies of power: my age, gender, relatively minimal research experience and lack of academic credentials intersect

⁶⁵ I also reflect on some of the issues I encountered during this thesis in the methods chapter [see: section 4.7], and in Chapters V and VII using extracts from my fieldwork diary.

to define my research status. Finally, perhaps most importantly, their indifference towards this research may be understood within broader neoliberal, neocolonial Western politics: it may be read as indicative of a disdain for the lives of migrant womyn. Deemed a threat to the social order, it may not be in the interests of the Home Office to engage in research which may potentially highlight migrant womyn's oppression.

A second issue I have wrestled with has been whether my thesis is intellectually and politically limited because of my decision not to include migrant womyn in my sample, particularly those ascribed the 'victim' label by authorities. Yet this was a conscious act to ensure that I did not engage in practices I understood to be exploitative. It has enabled me to distance myself from the practices of the 'rescue industry' – but also from those Mohanty (1988) understands as 'Western feminist' – which construct the non-Western woman as a singular monolithic predicated upon assumptions that they are powerless, victimised and dependent upon the West. By not including 'victims' in my sample, I do not myself engage in the victimising discourse I have criticised in this thesis. It therefore allows me to reject the 'victim' label ascribed to some migrant womyn by NGOs or the authorities. To study migrant womyn in their role of 'victims of trafficking' would mean, as Agier (2011: 68) argues in the case of refugees, "confusing the object of the research with that of the intervener who creates... this category." By constructing migrant womyn involved in the sex industry as an 'object' of study, I may have in effect become part of the production of 'victims of trafficking'.

Third, while part of their theoretical richness rests in the eclectic routes of 'governance' and the various conceptualisations of 'policy networks', therein lies one of my key challenges. I could have deeply embedded this thesis in a Foucauldian analysis of discourse and governmentality. Yet I chose not to, initially because I was deterred by claims that Foucault's work is gender-blind (MacNay, 1992), but more so, because other scholars have to varying degrees sufficiently explored trafficking and migration through a Foucauldian lens (including FitzGerald, 2010, 2016; Penttinen, 2000; 2007; Berman, 2003; and Gerard and Pickering, 2013). Networked understandings of governance, on the other hand, have been largely overlooked in the field of trafficking. I could have also employed any number of policy network frameworks in order to explore the interactions

that take place between anti-trafficking actors. Yet my earlier applications of ‘discourse coalitions’ and ‘governance networks’ did not quite capture my concern with how shared understandings bring actors together and are used to shape policy and practice. In my view, it is a sociological application of Haas’ (1992) ‘epistemic communities’ to the anti-trafficking policy domain that provides the strongest contribution to the advancement of inter-disciplinary theory. Yet as the countless discarded versions of Chapter V evidence, getting to that point was ‘messy’ and the fast changing nature of the anti-trafficking policy domain dictates that while I am confident that the epistemic community conceptualisation is most appropriate today, it may not be ‘tomorrow’.

Finally, I wish to briefly reflect upon my position as a young, working-class woman in the academe. The PhD experience has made me better appreciate my inherent privilege, particularly in terms of the ‘invisible knapsack of white privilege’ (McIntosh, 1988) that I carry. Yet it has also brought about experiences of gender oppression. Within the academe my academic identity seemed to be constantly questioned by other (often white, middle class, male) academics, who have implicitly disparaged my work as ‘typically feminised’. Like some other academic fields that experience systematic repression (Hill Collins, 1989; Tate, 2016), my experience supports Attwood’s (2010) observation that sexuality researchers remain to some degree marginalised; their scholarly work lacks cultural capital. Nonetheless, in this thesis I have made conscious attempts to resist academic standard where it sits uneasily with my feminist epistemology. I have drawn attention to my positionality in the research by utilising the first-person and offered reflexive insights by including extracts from my fieldwork diary. Perhaps most obviously, I made a political decision to use a non-traditional spelling of ‘womyn’. When these slight deviations from academic convention have at times been scoffed at by other academics, I consider them as important in challenging what Hill Collins (1989: 751) refers to as the “Eurocentric masculinist knowledge-validation process.” Of course, the requirements of a PhD have necessitated that on many issues, I have conformed to academic convention (Sanchez-Taylor and O’Connell Davidson, 2010). My experiences in ‘the field’ were also mediated by patriarchy as it seemed that I was unable to resist essentialist gender constructs. Frequently warned by my interviewees that my topic would take its toll on my mental health, I was often viewed as passive and

emotional, and like other sex industry researchers my interest in the topic was regarded by some as sexually deviant (Kingston and Hammond, 2014; Taylor and O'Connell Davidson, 2010). It seems that sex industry research continues to be seen by some as taboo (Agustín, 2005b).

8.7 Closing remarks

To briefly summarise, the development and implementation of anti-trafficking policy is a social practice which involves complex interactions between a multifarious network of anti-trafficking actors, who vie for power and influence in the policy domain. This thesis has demonstrated that anti-trafficking NGOs and the police largely structure their response to the trafficking of womyn into England and Wales around three strategic approaches: prevention, protection and prosecution. While these approaches are not entirely discrete, it is clear that NGOs tend to prioritise the aim of victim protection and the police tend to prioritise the prosecution of offenders. This differential prioritisation operates as a barrier to effective partnership working, despite anti-trafficking partnerships being constructed, both in policy and by anti-trafficking actors themselves, as essential to the governance of sex trafficking. Collaboration is further hampered by the neoliberal philosophy underpinning anti-trafficking policy and practice, which has fostered an environment of hyper-competitiveness and distrust. This thesis has also endeavoured to demonstrate that interrelationships within the anti-trafficking policy domain are structured around shared understandings of trafficking, its causes, and most appropriate solutions. To this end, it has explored five key anti-trafficking 'communities': radical feminist, liberal feminist, modern slavery, anti-immigration, and crime control.

There are no unambiguous answers to the problem of trafficking since it is socially constructed by the network of actors operating within the anti-trafficking policy domain. With this in mind, anti-trafficking NGOs and the police respond to trafficking in a manner that aligns with the episteme they hold, and in keeping with others within their anti-trafficking 'community'. Each anti-trafficking 'community' tussles for power within the anti-trafficking policy domain, in order to shape policy and practice in their vision. Yet it seems that the feminist monopoly over anti-trafficking policy and practice has dissipated somewhat as the modern slavery 'community' has risen to become hegemonic. That is not to

say, however, that anti-prostitution sentiment currently has no reach in the anti-trafficking policy domain. Indeed, radical feminism has left a notable legacy in the form of the victimising discourse paramount within the rescue industry. The increasing move towards a mixed economy of service provision in recent years has, however, opened up space for other anti-trafficking communities to pursue their interests and agendas. The modern slavery 'community' has gone some way toward reframing contemporary trafficking as 'modern day slavery', utilising the trans-Atlantic slavery analogy to stimulate a response from the Government, anti-trafficking actors, funders and others. This reframing represents a shift away from privileging sex trafficking over other forms of trafficking in relation to harm.

While the five anti-trafficking communities often compete and conflict, anti-trafficking actors in general can be understood as operating within a rescue industry founded upon the principle that womyn ought to be 'saved' from the commercial sex industry. This rescue industry is often based upon benevolence and may provide support to migrant womyn that might be unavailable otherwise. Yet simultaneously, the 'victim' label may also serve to control both womyn's bodies and state borders. Anti-trafficking has become a means through which the state, using NGOs and the police as vectors, can repair its penetrable borders and restore paternal control over womyn, particularly subaltern womyn who are constructed as a perennial threat. It is difficult to establish the degree to which anti-trafficking actors intend to exert control over subaltern migrant womyn. It is likely that for some, their actions are benevolent and based upon genuine empathy for migrant womyn involved in the sex industry. It is likely that for others, their intentions are self-serving and directed at extending their individual profile, exerting power and making financial profit. For the most, it is likely that their motivations are numerous, complex and fall somewhere on the spectrum between these two positions. Yet intention, in some regards, matters little. A lack of intention to cause harm neither negates harm nor prevents the impact it may have upon migrant womyn. I do not wish, however, to blame individual 'resucers' or the rescue industry *per se* but rather, point to the way in which the rescue industry is both constituted by, and a constituent of, systemic oppression and inequality. While my critical account of social helpers in the rescue industry may be perceived as deeply pessimistic, I do not wish to encourage defeatist attitudes that NGOs and the police cannot help migrant

womyn involved both voluntarily and involuntarily in the sex industry. Rather, I seek to draw attention to how care and control operate simultaneously within anti-trafficking policy and practice, in order to draw attention to how anti-trafficking actors currently operate as vectors through which 'the West' dominates 'the rest'.

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Appendix I: Breakdown of Interviewees

Non-Governmental Organisation Interviewees	
Identification Number	Job Role in NGO
01	Service Manager
02	Case Worker
03	Operations Director
04	Operations Manager
05	Case Worker
06	CEO
07	Case Worker
08	Director
09	Senior Outreach Practitioner
10	Advocacy
11	Founder/CEO
12	CEO
13	Service Manager
14	Case Worker
15	Director
16	Founder and CEO
17	Director
18	Founder and Director
19a	Founder
19b	Manager
19c	Case Worker
20	Case Worker
21	Manager
22	Director
Police Interviewees	
Identification Number	Police Rank
2A	Ex-specialist unit
2B	Ex-specialist unit
2C	Detective Constable
2D	Detective Chief Inspector
2E	Force Intelligence
2F	Ex-Chief Constable
2G	Detective Superintendent
2H	Chief Superintendent
2I	Force Intelligence
2J	Detective Inspector
2K	Vice Liaison Officer
2L	Detective Inspector
2M	Force Intelligence
2N	Head of Force Intelligence
2O	Vice Liaison Officer
2P	Police Constable
2Q	Police Constable
2R	Detective Sergeant

Appendix II: Example Invitation to Participate Letter

Ms Laura Connelly
School of Sociology and Social Policy
University of Leeds
Leeds
LS2

[Police officer's name]
9LU
[Police rank]
[Police Force]
[Address]
[Postcode]

Friday 13 September 2013

Dear [Rank, officer's name],

RE: PhD research request - The Governance of Sex Trafficking

I am writing to you in your capacity as [REDACTED] to ask for your support with my PhD research project exploring the governance of sex trafficking in England and Wales. The study is funded by the University of Leeds, and is being overseen by two senior members of staff, Mr Stuart Lister and Dr Teela Sanders.

The research is exploring how the police and non-governmental organisations respond to the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation. It aims to improve the knowledge base concerning how trafficking is countered and dealt with, which as you will be aware is an important but under-researched area of policy and practice. The project is empirical in design and seeks to adopt an appreciative stance towards those professionals who are tasked with the difficult job of tackling these offences. As the [REDACTED] is widely viewed as undertaking pioneering work in regard to how the illegal trade in humans is addressed, I would very much like to incorporate into the research the views and experiences of its officers, as well as the best practices lessons that they are developing.

Briefly stated, therefore, I would greatly appreciate your support to conduct a small number of interviews with police officers involved in tackling human trafficking. Each interview would take no longer than one hour and would be conducted at the convenience of the interviewee and their respective organisation. In accordance with the University of Leeds' Code of Ethics, anonymity and confidentiality would be guaranteed to participants, as far as possible.

I enclose an information sheet which provides further details about the project but please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions. Additionally, my supervisors can also be contacted via email or telephone: Mr Stuart Lister (S.C.Lister@leeds.ac.uk or 0113 343 5075) and Dr Teela Sanders (T.L.M.Sanders@leeds.ac.uk or 0113 343 4713).

I would very much welcome the opportunity to discuss the possibility of [REDACTED] participating in the research with you or your colleagues, at a time that is convenient to you. Any assistance you could offer would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

Laura Connelly

Doctoral Researcher,
University of Leeds
Student ID No: 200343805
Email: L.Connelly@leeds.ac.uk

Appendix III: Information Sheet

You are invited to participate in the following PhD research project...

**The Governance of Sex Trafficking: Anti-Trafficking Politics,
Policy & Practice in England & Wales**

Researcher: Laura Connelly, School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Leeds

Email: L.Connelly@leeds.ac.uk

Phone: 07825956915

What is the purpose of the project? This project aims to draw upon the expertise and knowledge of experts from law enforcement agencies and non-governmental organisations, whose perspectives have been too often neglected in writings on sex trafficking. It seeks to explore the ways in which sex trafficking is responded to on a ground-level and understand why the issue is responded to in the manner that it is, from the perspective of those who have first-hand experience in implementing anti-trafficking measures.

Why have I been invited to participate? You have been invited to participate because you have experience in responding to sex trafficking on a practical level and have expert knowledge on the issue.

What will I be asked to do if I take part? You will be asked to participate in a 60 minute interview to discuss your experience of and reflections on the way in which trafficking for sexual exploitation is responded to in the UK. Interviews will be conducted between October 2012 and December 2013 and can be organised to fit around your schedule. It can take place either at your place of work or in a semi-public place (e.g. café), whichever you deem most suitable. With your permission, interviews will be audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed word for word. You may decline answering any questions posed in the interview and/or end it at any time. You will also be given the opportunity to review a copy of the interview transcript and amend and/or withdraw data, ensuring that it portrays an accurate representation of your views.

Will my taking part in this project be confidential? All interview transcripts will be anonymised during the transcription process and your identity will not be disclosed in the research report or any subsequent publications. Any direct quotes included in the research report will not have your name attached to them and will only be used with your consent. Audio files and anonymised transcripts will be stored in password protected file on the University of Leeds' secure server and any paper records will be stored in a lockable filing-cabinet in The University of Leeds School of Sociology and Social Policy Postgraduate Research Office, both of which are accessible to the researcher and School's administrator only. As with

any research project, however, data given in confidence does not enjoy legal privilege and may, in rare circumstances, be liable to subpoena.

Has this project been given ethical approval? This project has been through a thorough ethical review process and has been approved by The University of Leeds Ethics Committee. The ethics reference number is: AREA 11-171.

What happens if I want to withdraw from the project? Before your interview begins, you will be asked to sign an informed consent form but you remain free to withdraw from the project at any time up until May 2014. This should give you plenty of time to make your decision, whilst also allowing the researcher time to make any necessary adjustments and remove any direct quotes from the final report, prior to completion of the project in August 2014.

What will I get out of participating in the project? Based on the research evidence collated, a summary of the research findings will be developed, which you can request to be sent in (provisionally) September 2014. The project's recommendations may be used by your organisation to extend or enhance good practice. The research acts both as an outlet in which to showcase the good practice lessons organisations are engaged in and a conduit in which to contribute to changing policy, based on the experiences of those working on the ground/front-line.

What will happen to the results of the project? In addition to providing research participants with a brief summary of the research findings, summaries may also be sent to the main law enforcement agencies and non-governmental organisation within whose remit anti-trafficking responses sit. It is also hoped that the findings of the project may also be publically presented at a number of national and international conferences, and included in peer-reviewed journals

Who is supervising this project? This PhD project is supervised by **Dr. Teela Sanders** (Reader in Sociology, School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Leeds) and **Mr. Stuart Lister** (Senior Lecturer in Criminal Justice, Centre for Criminal Justice Studies, University of Leeds). If you would like to contact my primary supervisor, Teela, please email T.L.M.Sanders@leeds.ac.uk. For further details about her research, please see www.sociology.leeds.ac.uk/about/staff/sanders. Similarly, for Stuart: S.C.Lister@leeds.ac.uk and his webpage: <http://www.law.leeds.ac.uk/about/staff/lister/>.

Who should I contact for further information? If you are interested in participating in this research project and/or you would like any further information or have any questions, please contact the researcher, Laura Connelly, via email at L.Connelly@leeds.ac.uk or phone **07825956915**.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Information Sheet, it is greatly appreciated.



Appendix IV: Nvivo Codes

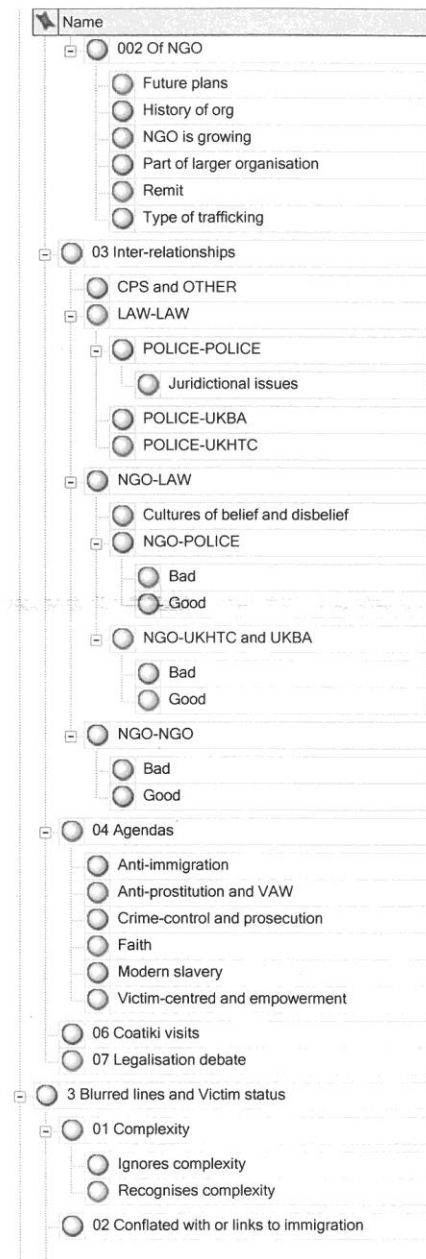
Nodes

- Name
- 1 How policy operates at the coalface
 - 01 Practicalities of trafficking
 - 001 Causes of trafficking
 - 002 Extent of problem
 - Trafficking is growing
 - 003 Identifying victims
 - Airport
 - Asylum interview
 - In detention
 - Information from public
 - Intelligence sources
 - LAW raids or investigations
 - Attitudes towards brothel raids
 - Referrals
 - Victim self-report
 - 004 Understandings of trafficking
 - 005 Shifts in patterns and trends
 - 006 Links with other issues
 - Localised agendas
 - 02 3 P's
 - 001 Prevention
 - Awareness raising
 - Embassies
 - 002 Protection
 - Contracting out (NASS etc)
 - Move-on support
 - Type of support
 - Accommodation
 - Education and training
 - Emotional support
 - Health
 - Holistic
 - Legal advice
 - Oversee other projects
 - 003 Prosecution
 - Lack of prosecution and conviction
 - Operation Eagle
 - Operation Pentameter
 - The investigation
 - Difficulties

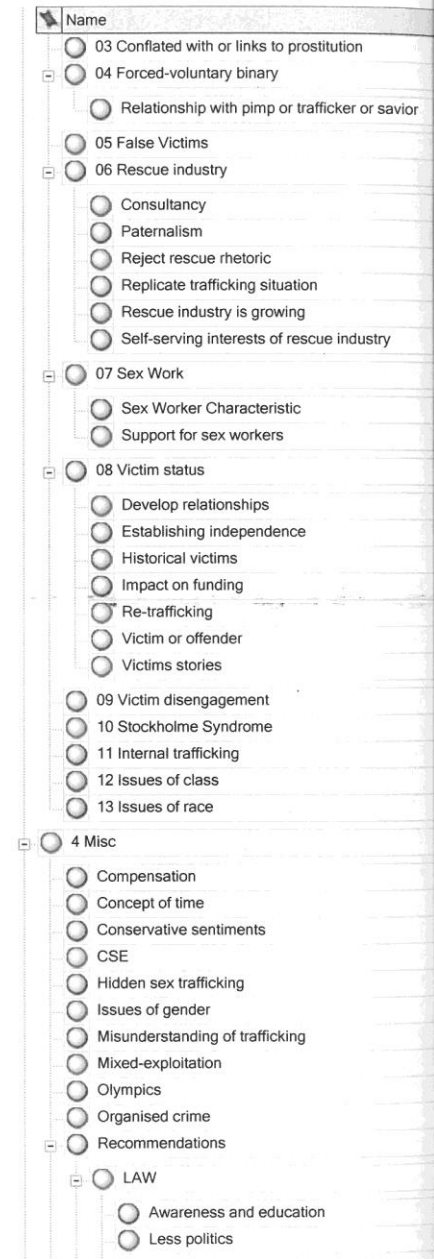
Nodes

- Name
- Blurred line between victim and
 - Cost
 - International nature
 - Language
 - Rehousing
 - Time constraints
 - Traffickers behaviour
 - Victims vulnerabilities
- Plural policing
- Victim testimony
- 03 Government policy
 - 001 Legislation inc. Modern slavery act
 - 002 MOJ contract
 - 003 Devolution
 - 004 NRM
 - 45 day recovery and reflection period
 - Negative claims
 - Report to police
 - 005 APPG
 - 006 Shaped by
 - 007 National Crime Agency
 - 008 National Coordinator
- 04 Funding issues
 - 001 Funding cuts
 - 002 Securing funding
 - 003 MOJ funding
- 2 The politics of anti-trafficking
 - 01 Background of participant
 - 001 Current job role
 - 002 Background in other support work
 - 003 Background in sex industry
 - 004 Background in various types of policing
 - 005 Where interest in trafficking stems from
 - 006 Length of time working at NGO or LAW
 - 02 Organisational set up
 - 001 Of LAW
 - Dedicated units or core policing
 - Response dictated by demand
 - SPOCs
 - Trafficking moving up agenda
 - Training for police

Nodes



Nodes



Nodes

Name	
<input type="radio"/>	More funding or changes to funding
<input type="radio"/>	More partnerships
<input type="radio"/>	More time required
<input type="radio"/>	Policy changes
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> NGO
	<input type="radio"/> Awareness and education
	<input type="radio"/> Less politics
	<input type="radio"/> More funding or changes to funding
	<input type="radio"/> More partnerships
	<input type="radio"/> More time required
	<input type="radio"/> Move on
	<input type="radio"/> Policy changes
	<input type="radio"/> Progress towards recommendations
<input type="radio"/>	Reference to forced labour trafficking
<input type="radio"/>	The Trafficker
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/> Victim characteristics
	<input type="radio"/> Complex needs
	<input type="radio"/> Country of origin
	<input type="radio"/> Heterogeneity
	<input type="radio"/> Indicators of victimisation
	<input type="radio"/> Move for better life
<input type="radio"/>	5 Golden Quotes
<input type="radio"/>	6 Methodological issues

Appendix V: Attributing Sub-Title Quotations

5:2 'Prostitution, it just leaves a nasty taste!' [Ex-police interviewee, 2B]

5.3 'I wouldn't call them trafficked!' [NGO interviewee, 01]

5.4 'A slave, is a slave, is a slave!' [NGO interviewee, 12]

5.5 'And the tax-payer's paying!' [NGO interviewee, 19a]

5.6 'We get a warrant, we kick the door off, we arrest people!' [Police interviewee, 2G]

6.1 'Prevent properly, we wouldn't need to spend money on victims!' [NGO interviewee, 03]

6.2 'Restore first, think about helping the police later!' [NGO interviewee, 06]

6.3 'The defence will rip them to shreds!' [NGO interviewee, 06]

6.4 'Well it's time to add a fourth!' [Clinton, 2009]

6.5 'Trafficking: A bag of money with angel-wings attached!' [NGO interviewee, 13]