

# Human Trafficking



# Human Trafficking:

## *Women's Stories of Agency*

By

Maria De Angelis

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This collection of women's stories is dedicated to mamma and pop, economic migrants in their youth, who lovingly gave me the education they both longed for and never received. Their pioneering spirits and inquiring minds have inspired me in everything I do. It is also for my big brother, Michael, a brave soul who always takes the lead and never follows. And finally for my husband, Eddie, who has been on and at my side throughout my research journeys.



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## FOREWORD

It is a great pleasure to write the foreword for this book. We are currently bombarded by media images of migrants, the desperate and the displaced, fleeing countries in search of refuge, but we should not forget those who have been humanly trafficked, subject to threat and abuse and other forms of coercion, often made to move, often then exploited and put to work in the sex industry or on cannabis farms in conditions of slavery and servitude.

This book focuses on *lived trafficking experiences* and examines the push and pull factors which relate to women leaving their homes. Political instability and wars, unemployment, poverty and debt, and patriarchal oppression and gendered violence can all propel a woman to leave home, alongside the prospect of funds, independent marriage, and aspirations of a better life-style, for example. But it is precisely these factors which attract traffickers who prey on vulnerable migrants for financial gain.

There are now numerous academic studies and international reports that have focused on patterns of human trafficking, but relatively few authors and organizations have given attention to women's voices and to women's experiences. This collection of stories addresses this deficit by presenting different facets of the common human story, whilst remaining true to individual stories. The impact of trafficking on identity, on well-being and agency, and the potential for women who have been trafficked and subject to abuse and exploitation to be "experts by experience" all feature in this kaleidoscopic examination of issues. The overriding themes of this volume are thus for the restoration of human values to centre stage and for knowledge from experience and knowledge of experience on the ground to be put to good use in shaping future policy and practice.

This book privileges women's experiences and does so very effectively, drawing our attention to victimization and victimhood, but also survival and agency. Maria De-Angelis is thus to be congratulated for reminding us in poignant and pointed fashion of what is so very human. There is perhaps no single corrective response to human trafficking or exploitation, only that complacency is not one of them. This book prompts us to reflect further on this.

**Professor Loraine Gelsthorpe,  
Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge**

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE SCENE

“With this picture, I reverse the voodoo onto my trafficker. I am not afraid anymore.”

### **Trafficking stories**

This book is about women’s stories of agency in lived trafficking experience. According to the United Nations “*Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children*”,<sup>1</sup> the definition and benchmarks of trafficking

“shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons; by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs (UN, 2000a: 3a)”.<sup>2</sup>

The Protocol’s multi-barrelled definition and legal benchmarks provide the framework for exploring women’s narratives as trafficking stories within the book. They also serve to ensure integrity between UK domestic research and scholarship conducted at an international level. In line with the Protocol’s criteria, women’s narratives are researched on the *act* of their recruitment and movement using a benchmark of consent. The *means* or force deployed is addressed under a benchmark of coercion, and *exploitation* is examined for women’s experiences across sexual, labour, and slavery-like practices as in forced marriage. This recognised process supplies a defensible framework against which trafficking stories can be included, understood, and analysed in order to reveal women’s own

perspectives on their experiences of victimisation and agency.

Given the breadth and depth of complexities embraced in the Protocol, women's stories are the conduit best placed for reaching the experiences of persons who have lived through some form of social trauma.<sup>3</sup> Within feminist enterprise, an additional value of the story is one of a naturalistic means of researching women's lives. Stories exist to be told and lived wisdom relays more than just chronicles or tradition. It conveys what women think, feel, mean and achieve through being experts in their own experiences (Oakley, 1979; 1989; 1992; Sered, 1992). Consequently, the ability of "story" to collect experience without causing undue harm to women is ideal for a social research enterprise with trafficked women.

### **Agency**

Given the unscrupulous acts and exploitative practices which define trafficking, the idea of agency is a difficult concept to fathom. Widely understood as a person's individual or collective capacity for self-directed and purposeful action (Williams and Popay, 1999; Morash, 2006), the exercise of agency is mediated by environmental and social structures which can limit or de-limit the degree of agency a person may realise (Archer, 1995; Lister, 2004). Set against the inherently abusive practices defining Human Trafficking, the idea of ascribing agency to a trafficked person seems almost inconceivable. Consequently, it comes as little surprise that the imagery of a Victim of Trafficking (the VoT) is most easily understood as the involuntary and un-consenting victim of a trafficking crime. In this popular construction of the VoT, agency exists in a linear and timeless discourse of disempowerment where all agency is removed whatever a woman's economic, cultural, sexual, or social context. This is exemplified in media reporting of sex trafficking as sexual slavery (MacShane, 2010; Butler-Sloss, 2011; Skrivankova, 2011; Townsend, 2011). It also informs awareness-raising, as exemplified in the Blue Blindfold campaign against modern day slavery. Launched by the UK Human Trafficking Centre in December, 2007, and rolled out under a "Crimestoppers" mantle, the campaign asks the public to protect victims by alerting the appropriate authorities to the crime of trafficking. In such popular constructions depicting the victim as totally enslaved for economic exploitation and totally controlled for criminal gain, any actions displayed by women are positioned in opposition to their victimhood, generating an artificial binary between victimhood and agency. This binary has been heavily critiqued for dividing the involuntary and un-consenting person - the innocent and deserving "Madonna" in trafficking

from the willing and consenting - guilty and undeserving “whore” (typically migrant sex workers), who may have been proactive in (and profited from) their illegal movement (Doezema, 1998: 47). Under such oppositional construction, any autonomy granted to women is understood in negative properties of criminality (Hales and Gelsthorpe, 2012) and / or threats to border security (Bosworth, 2007).

In order to explore the attribution of agency for trafficked women (outside of total absence or wholly negative ascriptions), it is necessary to adopt a theoretical framework allowing a relationship to exist between these two opposites. In other words, agency in the context of trafficking requires a framework capable of embracing victimhood and agency as existing in tandem with one another. In this respect, Sen’s (1985; 1992: 57; 1999) political theorising of women’s agency provides a working paradigm fit for meeting this challenge. As Sen observes, women’s agency under patriarchal rules and systems is fundamentally constrained in ways that male freedom is not. This constraint is twofold and affects what Sen defines to be women’s “well-being freedom” (that is, their physical safety and economic security), and also women’s “agency freedom” (that is, their capacity to define choices and to construct the conditions affecting choice). This theorisation of gendered constraints lends itself to the study of agency for several reasons.

Firstly, an appreciation of agentic constraints brings with it an opportunity to explore trafficking experience for signs of victimisation, signs of agency, and the two as existing in relationship to one another. In other words, it leads inquiry into subjective spaces where consent is exacted from women, given by women, and positioned by them as somewhere in-between a totally forced experience or a completely free choice to leave their home and country of origin. This relational stance across victimhood and agency enables consent to surface in less absolute categories “for” or “against” its existence, allowing women to discuss degrees of trickery, choice, involvement, and knowledge over their own actions. Secondly, an acknowledgement of agentic constraints encourages a more sophisticated examination of women’s global journeys - as motivated by economic and political necessities, as prompted by new opportunities for a better life and, equally, as precarious and risky undertakings on their part – aspects more fully explored in Chapter 4. This relational prism better reflects the dynamic, fluid and at times intersecting nature of gendered global movements, enabling aspects of control and choice to surface at different times in a trafficking experience. For example, studies have researched experience at the intersection of sex trafficking and migrations for sex work (Andrijasevic, 2003; 2010;

Agustin, 2005), at the nexus of economic migration and trafficking for forced labour (Bastia, 2005;<sup>4</sup> Skrivankova, 2006), and on transnational marriage in the context of trafficking (Stepnitz, 2009; Tyldum, 2013; De Angelis, 2014). Thirdly, a woman's requirement for physical safety and economic security (her well-being freedom) resonates with well-being for trafficked persons, as set out in the Council of Europe's (2005) *Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings*<sup>5</sup>. Under Article 12.1, well-being is described as a package of measures and protections to subsistence standards of living (accommodation, psychological and material assistance), emergency medical treatment, any necessary translation and interpretation services, counselling and rights based information, legal help, and access to education for children. (CoE, 2005: Article 12). Since implementing the Convention on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2009, any victim presumed to have been trafficked into the UK is entitled to claim this well-being assistance. By viewing women's stories through a relational prism of trafficking agency and victimisation, women are free to reflect on both positive and negative experiences of trafficking support (affecting their well-being freedom), and also to express their own autonomy, resourcefulness, and actions in overcoming trauma and rebuilding their lives post trafficking (their agency freedom).

### **Lived trafficking experience**

The term ***lived trafficking experience*** is used extensively throughout the book. It replaces a trafficking context since it better reflects the diversity and complexity of women's gendered global movements. It is now well established that global movements follow socio-economic and political drivers which both push and pull a woman's movement from home. Within trafficking, these push factors typically include political instability and civil wars (Aiko, 2002; Kligman and Limoncelli, 2005), unemployment (Kelly and Regan, 2000; Kligman and Limoncelli, 2005), poverty and debt (Ejalu, 2006; Viuhko, 2010), patriarchal oppression and gendered violence (Demleitner, 2001; Bales, 2003; Parmentier, 2010), and inequalities between developed and developing countries (Bales, 2005). Common amongst the pull factors attracting women to leave home are excitement and adventure (Salt, 2000), marriage and independence (Kabeer, 2007), funding a project through migrant working (Berman, 2010), and aspirations of a better life-style for women and their children (Skilbrei and Polyakova, 2006). Under these push/pull conditions reflecting women's needs and desires for movement, migratory flows often intersect with one another (Salt and Stein, 1997; Salt, 2000; Bastia,

2005). Well established migratory networks are reported to attract traffickers who prey on vulnerable migrations for criminal gain and, conversely, economic migrants are known to use the services of trafficking groups to facilitate the movement of regular migrants (Kempadoo, 1998; Andrijasevic, 2003). These intersections provide valuable explanation for the growing presence of trafficked women within population flows of smuggling, asylum, and economic migration (IOM, 2008a: TIP, 2013). Intersections also add weight for adopting trafficking experience over a trafficking context, since they better encompass the fluidity, precarity, and reality accompanying many women's movements into and out of an initial migratory situation. As Berman (2010: 94) observes for her own migrant research with sex workers in Eastern Europe and that of colleagues in her field:

“My own fieldwork and that of a number of others suggest that a significant portion of the foreign women who work in European sex industries enter the EU with the assistance of smugglers in order to pursue a specific economic goal – to earn money to escape stagnant economies, start a business, supplement existing incomes, or support children of elderly parents back home (Minder, 2004). Migrants often ‘have some agency in arranging an often long and highly expensive journey’ through smugglers; while the smugglers may turn out to be traffickers and thus deceive and harm these migrants, their situations equally involve decisions they themselves have made (Black, 2003: 40)”.

This intersectionality - present in women's lived experience - is by no means problem free. Crossovers in population flows can and do make it difficult to distinguish trafficked persons from exploited migrants and to accurately determine where a free migration ends and a forced migration begins. In spite of separate Protocols delineating trafficking and smuggling, movements legally conflate where the smuggled person (a voluntary and consenting adult) becomes exploited during the process of recruitment, transit and arrival at their end destination. Legally, an experience of exploitation at any stage from recruitment through to final destination entitles the smuggled person to claim a victim of trafficking (VoT) status (Goodey, 2008). In lived reality, the legal rights and protections associated with trafficking come secondary to the political agendas of organised crime and border security framing illegal entry and work in the UK. Encapsulated in a “migration-crime-security” nexus (Lindstrom, 2007), women's movements and actions come in for criminal and immigration scrutiny over missing, expired, and fake documentation, bringing sanctions of detention and deportation according to the

irregularity and its perceived seriousness. Given the proactive role played by traffickers in women's immigration predicaments, scholars have called for a better integration of data and development across the migration-crime-security nexus (Berman, 2010; Danailova-Trainor and Laczko, 2010). This nexus resonates with women's stories within the book, encapsulating real risks surrounding women's fluid and precarious experiences of transnational movement.

### **Researching trafficking stories**

A recognised absence of women's voices and a shortage of empirical research on trafficking (Salt, 2000; 2005; Brennan, 2005; Gozdziaik and Collett, 2005; Kelly, 2005; IOM, 2008b) makes this study essential.

Figure 1-1: "Voodoo Inverso" - "With this picture I reverse the voodoo onto my trafficker. I am not afraid anymore": ©2009 Kay Chernush |ArtWorks for Freedom



Persons trafficked, not unlike asylum seekers and smuggled individuals, are hard to access. As Brennan (2005: 43) observes for victims in the United States:

“...they have been voiceless for different reasons: because of fear of reprisals from their traffickers, their stage in the recovery process, and concern that their community of co-ethnics will stigmatize them. Given these obstacles, it is possible that few ex-captives will ever step out from the anonymity of their case managers’ offices, to give interviews to researchers, let alone public presentations or press conferences as part of anti-trafficking movement activities”<sup>6</sup>.

In terms of clarifying empirical research with trafficked persons, helpful distinctions exist based upon three possible research positions - persons at risk from trafficking, current victims of trafficking, and former victims of trafficking (Tyldum and Brunovskis, 2005: 21). The majority of empirically-led research tends to be conducted with former victims. As Brennan (2005: 38) explains, survivors of trafficking source researchers with subjects and “ex-captives” with researchers, since formerly trafficked victims exist in a “golden middle”<sup>7</sup> between Police rescue and assimilation within the host community. Former victims tend to display less immediate and acute need for sanctuary and respite care compared with recently rescued women and, in contrast to fully resettled women, remain identifiable through their ongoing contact with a statutory organisation (typically Health, Education, Social Services, Police) or an anti-trafficking project or network (Kelly, 2002). In spite of a golden status, if researching persons exploited or in pain is seen as secondary exploitation (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992; ATMG, 2012), why is researching women’s story so critical in trafficking?

One explanation is that it enables a degree of movement beyond what is typically known and claimed for trafficking victims in the trafficking discourse. Women possess knowledge which remains hidden precisely because it is not sought after by the Police and Border Agencies. Reflecting on her counter-trafficking research with women supported by a housing association<sup>8</sup> Dickson (2004: 1) observes:

“Many of these experiences will not have been raised by women in any other setting because these are not the experiences that are useful to statutory services in terms of prosecution”.

Where personal accounts are sought, women have built knowledge on specific aspects in trafficking experience. For example, women have

developed understanding of their physical and psychological health needs (Zimmerman et al, 2003; 2006), between trafficking and bonded labour (Kalayaan and Oxfam, 2008; Wittenburg, 2008), across trafficking and migrant domestic work (Lalani, 2011) and, more recently, on the experiences of trafficked women who end up in custody (Hales and Gelsthorpe, 2012).

Another compelling reason for accessing experiential stories is that women - as the largest consumers of trafficking services both globally (UNODC, 2012) and locally (SOCA, 2012; NCA, 2015a; 2015b) - better connect policy development with victim-related needs. How one conducts interviews with women may be contested (Oakley, 1981; 2005), but interviewing women is long recognised for reaching subjective experience valuable for socio-political improvement of one kind or another (Reinharz, 1983; 1992; Mies, 1983; Oakley, 1989; 1992; Kelly, Burton and Regan, 1994). As Gozdzia (2008: 153 - 155) observes for policy development in the United States:

“The US Government’s resources for combating human trafficking have been earmarked almost exclusively for provision of services to trafficked persons and technical assistance to service providers assisting them...However...assistance to victims has been provided without the benefit of empirical research aimed to identify their service needs or to evaluate rehabilitation programmes implemented to integrate survivors of human trafficking into the wider society and prevent repeat victimization...Limited knowledge impedes identification of trafficked victims, obstructs provision of culturally appropriate and effective services, and limits prevention of repeat victimization”.

Beyond this, and more critically, Morris (1997: 29) outlines a far greater harm in denying a voice to survivors of suffering compared with harms caused by giving survivors a voice. As Morris explains:

“Voice is what gets silenced, repressed, pre-empted, denied, or at best translated into an alien dialect, much as clinicians translate a patient’s pain onto a series of units on a grid of audio-visual descriptors. Indeed, voice ranks among the most precious human endowments that suffering normally deprives us of, removing far more than a hope that others will understand or assist us. Silence and the loss of voice may eventually constitute or represent for some who suffer a complete shattering of the self”.

All of the narratives in this book belong to women situated in-between immediate rescue and long-term resettlement, and the majority were known either to a statutory organisation or to an anti-trafficking network

or charity during the fieldwork. In presenting their narratives of trafficking exploitation and agency, this book can be read as adding some absent voices to the discursive gap in empirical trafficking scholarship (Brennan, 2005; Kelly, 2005; Davies, 2009; De Angelis, 2014).

### **Limitations and strengths of the collection**

In the pursuit of adding women's voices to trafficking scholarship, this enterprise carries clear limitations as well as significant strengths. Starting with focus, this collection of stories is gathered solely from female former victims, who have been moved across international borders with an element of coercion, into an exploitative situation here in the UK. The collection hails from a qualitative and small-scale doctoral project (completed in 2012) which explored agency through the stories of former victims. It features the stories of twenty-six women whose journeys to the UK include trafficking, a mixture of smuggling and trafficking, or a forced migration. Women with a forced migration are economic migrants whose journeys cross other forms of movement ending in slavery-like practices. For example, one woman sought help from a smuggler to escape persecution in her home country and arrived in the UK without documentation and in debt bondage. Within this participant group, trafficking exploitations fall into three categories – sexual exploitation, forced marriage,<sup>9</sup> and forced labour – though, as with movement, some women experience more than one form of exploitation. For example, one participant was trafficked into a forced marriage at home and for labour exploitation in a factory. Another woman was trafficked for forced marriage and sold into sexual exploitation amongst her husband's acquaintances. Given the homogeneity contained within a "golden middle" status and the heterogeneity evidenced in a personal story, it is not possible to generalise the findings on well-being freedom and agency freedom to women outside of this collection. Nor is it possible to make meaningful comparisons between participants' experiences of agency and the experiences of women on either side of this golden middle. In contrast to participant women, current victims of trafficking may well exhibit signs of far greater trafficking trauma, while resettled survivors may well display a far greater degree of post-trafficking independence.

Additionally, as most of these former victims were known either to a statutory body or a non-statutory project, the benefit and bias affiliated with gatekeepers should also be acknowledged. As Watts (2006) suggests, researchers with insider knowledge of the community or subjects of their research may find it easier to access and recruit research participants.

Without insider status, researchers are reliant upon the services of gatekeepers. Within this enterprise, anti-trafficking professionals from several organisations and networks were the insiders, often sharing an aspect of socio-cultural or trafficking experience in common with survivors of trafficking. These gatekeepers created the conditions conducive for naturalistic story collection by harnessing their own relationship with clients to foster trust towards me - the outsider lacking any lived experience or professional role in trafficking. These gatekeepers fielded women's initial doubts over trust and went through the research contract with them, checking participants' rights to anonymity, confidentiality, privacy and withdrawal of consent. Several unexpected offers to use the in-house services of counsellors and bi-lingual interpreters provided participants with quality support and post-interview care beyond my expertise and personal capacity to gift. A full discussion of feminist ethics and methods are provided in Chapter 2, along with vignettes of participating women and anti-trafficking professionals.

Gatekeepers' generous support of story collecting, however, creates its own bias. Women rescued and supported by particular programmes reflect the profiles of their supporting projects (Tyldum and Brunovskis, 2005). This explains the sample biases in sexual exploitation and forced marriage since participating projects target these facets of trafficking. As such the over-representation in sexual exploitation cannot be generalised out, for example, to inform a discourse on gendered UK trends in trafficking over the course of the fieldwork. As Bosworth et al (2011: 776) suggest, exploring alternate ways of accessing trafficked women - for example through direct correspondence and phone calls - opens an alternate gateway into trafficking experience which could alleviate this aspect of gatekeeper-related bias<sup>10</sup>.

Before closing this snapshot of limitations and strengths, a significant success factor in accessing women's stories was a shared goal of feminist praxis. Feminist praxis is an approach which connects research and lived practices, generating knowledge which mediates public policy.<sup>11</sup> As Tyldum (2008: 36) observes, the trafficking concept is blurred by political difference on how to treat politicized issues (such as prostitution, immigration, security and crime) which directly influence how trafficking is governed. Given that these political agendas drive the funding released for trafficking research, the relationship between funding and new knowledge production is a volatile one:

“...the very sensitive issues, and the risk of reactions from various agencies and funders if politically unwanted definitions are used, seem to discourage even some knowledge producers from describing how they see

relationships – for instance, between prostitution and trafficking – as they fear this may have impact on their possibilities for future funding”.

As an independent and self-funded researcher, this collection of stories escapes such institutional and financial expectations for a particular and disembodied representation of *the* trafficking experience. Women who came forward volunteer a breadth of experience in trafficking spanning a range of exploitations and intersecting a number of migratory flows. Many amongst them voice a hope that their stories will improve the social milieu for other trafficked women who follow them. By engaging in the research process and sharing their subjectively rich experiences with an empirical researcher, women enter praxis - as their perspectives on safety, health care, economic security, legal and rights based information, social integration and community belonging, build experiential social and policy understanding of well-being freedom. Moreover, as women exercise agency and adapt to life in the community, their actions create socio-political understanding of the structural barriers and opportunities open to former victims (their agency freedom).

## **The legal and policy context**

The decade which frames the study - 2000-2010 - is widely regarded as “golden” in terms of international-UK cooperation in human trafficking. The Protocol (UN, 2000a: Article 2) introduced a “3-P” anti-trafficking paradigm in the form of “prevention”, “protection” and “promotion” of cooperation among state parties, as well as providing an internationally accepted definition and set of legal benchmarks for discerning trafficking. The Council of Europe (2005) Convention went on to supply the machinery needed to protect human rights and support the victims of trafficking crime by, simultaneously, investigating its commission and prosecuting the perpetrators (CoE, 2005: Article 1). In compliance with international obligations, the UK Government launched two human trafficking initiatives following the Protocol’s ratification on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2006, and ratification of the Convention on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2008.

First, in response to the Convention’s requirement for a “Competent Authority” (CA) - a named organisation with approved powers of decision making over trafficked persons - the Government opened the Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2006, as its Competent Authority or legal decision making body. The UKHTC mandate was to become a multi-agency centre for excellence in human trafficking. During the study, the Centre had an operational team of thirty-five staff, top-

weighted with Police personnel, followed by administrators, three seconded staff (one from another statutory agency and two from leading anti-trafficking projects), as well as invited representatives from the civil sector. This brought in other temporary partners from academia, research, and community fora – whose advice and expertise informed a spectrum of working parties<sup>12</sup>.

Second, in compliance with Article 10 of the Convention (which requires the Competent Authorities to implement a formal system to help staff identify and support victims) the Government implemented a National Referral Mechanism (the NRM), on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2009, as the official system for accessing VoT status and services. With two entry points into the NRM, the UKHTC is the gatekeeper of one route: that of a presumed victim rescued as a result of a police raid or referred by any agency other than the UK Border Agency (UKBA). The UKBA (which operated as an Immigration-led Competent Authority during the study) was the gatekeeper in the other route: that of a presumed trafficked person who appears in the Immigration and Asylum systems. At the time, the UKBA had nine or ten Competent Authorities (spread across the country and based amongst other business units), who effectively work part time on a trafficking brief. In theory, they are positioned to deal with trafficking cases as and when they arise out of normal immigration business. During the fieldwork, the UK Border Agency had an estimated staff of 25,000 people, located in over 130 countries, but an approximate staff group of only 40 case holders occupying such part time roles within the UK.<sup>13</sup> Unlike the UKHTC, which remains the hub for human trafficking expertise within the broader National Crime Agency (NCA), the UKBA became two units in March 2013: one responsible for visas and immigration (UKVI) and one in charge of immigration enforcement. Together they form a new Home Office CA - replacing the old Competent Authority: the UKBA. Unlike the UKHTC which works exclusively with trafficking cases, UKVI and Immigration Enforcement retain duties of border security and control.

Whichever Competent Authority route a trafficking case enters, the consent of a “victim” is required before making a referral to the NRM. Anyone withholding consent is unable to gain a victim of trafficking status or to access state funded trafficking support. Women who consent to an NRM referral receive a “recovery and reflection” period which may result in a residence permit to temporarily remain in the UK for an additional 12 months (Home Office, 2007: 57).

In terms of victim support, the United Kingdom’s NRM arrangements can be read as surpassing the rights and safeguards prescribed by the

Convention. For example, whilst Article 13 stipulates a “Recovery and Reflection” period of 30 days (in which victims have the legal right to remain in the identifying country and decide if they wish to cooperate with law enforcement agencies), the Home Office “Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking” (2008: 3) raises this to 45 days. Similarly, whilst Article 14 obliges Competent Authorities to renew victim residence permits where criminal investigations or personal needs dictate, the UK grants twelve month permits as opposed to the recommended six months (Home Office, 2008: 3). The explanation behind this points to a balancing of victim and law enforcement needs “enabling victims to cooperate in criminal investigations and provide greater security for them” (Home Office, 2009a: CM 7465: 36).

However, it could also be argued that no matter how well the needs of victims and the demands of law enforcement are balanced, any official system servicing these two needs is inherently conflicted. A victim-centred approach requiring protection does not sit easily with a law enforcement approach requiring timely intelligence and robust prosecutions. As Goodey (2008: 431) observes of these two systems, a victim centred response “indirectly” provides a means of addressing crime through the medium of victims. Where this happens, the interests of social justice and the requirements of criminal justice effectively compete, for example, as happens when women’s right to recovery is infringed by a Police or Immigration-led interview within the protected 45 day recuperation period (ATMG, 2010). Located within the “migration-crime-security” nexus marking contemporary trafficking activity, Goodey reasons:

“Policy responses to human trafficking, unlike many other areas of organised crime, do focus on victims through programmes that address prevention and protection. However, it is debatable whether the current focus on trafficking has yet reached a ‘socialisation of criminal policy’. Rather, one could argue that the move towards a ‘victim centred’ focus is well on its way –” (Goodey, 2008: 433).

New improvements to victim’s rights, including initiatives contained in the European Union Directive (EUP, 2011) are evaluated by the European Commission. In respect of this story collection, substantial benefits derive from the extended coverage of trafficking protections to women trafficked for forced marriage and criminal activity (EUP, 2011: paragraph 11)<sup>14</sup>. Beyond this, the EU Directive sustains the momentum for placing victims at the centre of human trafficking crime responses. Consequently, whilst women’s experiences predate UK endorsement of the EU Directive in

April, 2011, the book addresses its impact on women because it accords with women's lived experiences and suggestions for praxis.

## **Outline of the book**

This final section explains how the focus on agency, in a context of trafficking oppression, is set out in the book. Given an empirical interest in women's stories, each chapter takes a different aspect of trafficking experience and develops insight into women's agency. The decision to present information thematically is based on the potential to create deeper insights, given the diversity in women's experiences.

## **Chapter 2: Methodology and Participants**

This chapter presents the feminist and qualitative underpinnings of this social research. It explains the epistemological rationale and the choices in methodology, methods, and analysis of empirical data. Methods privilege the "social and personal relations" within a semi-structured interview for being a rich source of knowledge creation between the researcher and the researched (Oakley, 1981: 231). Similarly, the "social moments" (Jowett and O'Toole, 2006: 458) in a focus group are favoured for their fluid and naturalistic properties for uncovering opinions and meaning (Wilkinson, 1998a). In acknowledgement of empirical knowledge building as a "practical production" between the researcher and the researched (Fontana and Frey, 2000: 664), care is taken in subsequent chapters to highlight the influence of extant trafficking knowledge (from media, research, policies and the researcher) on women's experiences, and the impact of women's experiences on dominant discourses surrounding contemporary movement, trafficking victimhood and understanding of women's agency. In essence, the methods and data analysis are chosen for generating co-created knowledge – an integral element of praxis.

Centrally, the chapter reflects back on the practical and ethical problems of accessing hidden populations and reaching hard-to-tell narratives, and introduces the women and their stories. The perspectives of anti-trafficking professionals, interviewed as part of the original doctoral research, are also added to various discussions throughout. Staff inclusion is intended to compliment (and not to validate) women's perspectives, since the collection is ostensibly a celebration of women's agency. Staff classifications can also be found in this chapter, alongside the Focus Group profile.

### **Chapter 3: Trafficking Identity**

This chapter engages with how trafficking identity is viewed by the women subjects in trafficking. It assesses the VoT imagery for its positive and negative connotations, and critiques the management of trafficking for its reifying effects on identity. It centrally connects with how women convey a sense of their trafficked and pre-trafficking personas to others, as well as the role played by the trauma story (Kleinman and Kleinman, 1997) in promoting and hindering the well-being and agency freedoms of trafficked women.

### **Chapter 4: Trafficking Benchmarks**

This chapter explores how trafficking benchmarks are experienced by subjects with a lived experience of trafficking. It locates trafficking movement in the nexus of migration, crime and security, addressing push / pull factors and posing a challenge for the construction of easy duals across motivations and movement. By raising some of the definitional and lived complexities within the three benchmarks of consent, coercion and exploitation, women's stories depict truer narratives embracing elements of agency and victimisation. These truer stories embracing opportunity, constraint and transgression pose difficulty for official assessments of trafficking.

### **Chapter 5: Well-being Freedom and Agency Freedom**

This chapter celebrates the ways in which women with a trafficking experience come to realise some well-being and agency freedoms. It foregrounds the criticality of voice for sustaining the self under suffering (Morris, 1997), and reframes women's power in their capacity to survive and adapt.

A trafficked women's well-being freedom is legally understood and practically set out as a policy package of trafficking protections and services. Under the Council of Europe (2005) Convention (Article 12: 1a-f), VoTs are entitled to six well-being measures - secure accommodation and an adequate standard of living, emergency access to medical treatment, any necessary translation and interpretation services, counselling and rights based information, legal help, and education for children. Women and anti-trafficking professionals talk about the positive and negative experiences of service delivery surrounding women's rights.

Set against this, women rebuild and refashion their lives post-

trafficking in a variety of imaginative ways. Principally, women celebrate survival as the exemplar in achieving agency. Following refugee and asylum scholarship (Hunt, 2008; Vervliet et al, 2013), the actions of women in rebuilding social belonging, independent living, consumer, and gendered / sexual freedoms are examined for signs of adaptation and agency freedoms. The chapter closes on some of the ways in which anti-trafficking professionals assist and resist the expertise of women.

## **Chapter 6: Collecting Story – Shaping Praxis**

Under a relational lens on victimisation and agency, this chapter connects issues raised by participants in preceding chapters with wider anti-trafficking policy and practice developments. In addressing policing (in particular of the prostitute subject in trafficking), the chapter explores prostitution as violence against women and as a sex work discourse. This comparison highlights the risks to presumed victims of trafficking and sex work migrants from the UK's lack of a sex work agenda. The chapter also examines marriage in a context of trafficking, linking to assessments and developments concerning forced, sham and transnational marriages, the criminalisation of forced marriage, and limitations in the Domestic Violence Immigration Rule. The chapter closes on the efficacy of an advocacy model in trafficking, presenting women as experts of their own experience and professional attitudes towards this. The lens on praxis exhibits policy, research, and practice conundrums significant to the women and anti-trafficking professionals within this story collection.

### **Notes**

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<sup>1</sup> This legislation is also referred to as the Palermo Protocol or the Trafficking Protocol or, simply, the Protocol.

<sup>2</sup> According to the definition, children (under the age of eighteen) cannot consent to be trafficked, but adult consent is negated only where the act, means, and exploitations in trafficking apply (Article 3b).

<sup>3</sup> For an example in narrative work with Holocaust survivors, see Bar-On, 1995; Bar-On and Chaitin, 2001; De Vries, et al, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Bastia's paper addresses teenage migration but is included for its contribution on intersectionality and voice.

<sup>5</sup> This legislation is commonly referred to as the Convention.

<sup>6</sup> Co-ethnics refer to persons of the same ethnicity. Given the stigma attached to trafficking for sexual exploitation and / or prostitution, co-ethnic migrants and refugees often disassociate themselves from trafficked co-ethnics.

<sup>7</sup> This term was first coined by the anthropologist Elzbieta Gozdziaak.