The Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking in Australia and Singapore

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This thesis is presented for the degree of PhD in Psychology

August 2018

Statement of Candidate

I certify that the work presented in this thesis entitled “The Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking in Australia and Singapore” has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree to any other university of institution other than Macquarie University. I also certify that this thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help or assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis. The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Human Ethics Committee (REF 5201 2006 12). The data presented in this thesis was collected in both Australia and Singapore and was approved for both countries by the Macquarie University Ethics Committee.

Wesley Tan

August 2018

Acknowledgements

This thesis would definitely not have been possible without a host of people. To my supervisors, Professor Amanda Barnier and Dr Anthony Arcuri, I will forever be grateful for your guidance, expertise and wisdom. Amanda, thank you for reeling in my idealism and setting realistic boundaries. Every time we spoke, you imbued me with a tremendous belief that the task ahead was possible despite what at times seemed like slow and meagre progress. Anthony, the level at which you commit to immersion in and display compassion for the qualitative data inspires me. Your careful explication and modelling of the process of Grounded Theory will be an experience I always cherish. Together, you have scaffolded me through this arduous process to completion. I am deeply indebted to the ways you both managed to perfectly blend instructive direction with empathic understanding for both stressful life events and the emotive nature of my area of research.

To Associate Professor Doris McIlwain, my dearly departed friend, mentor and original supervisor – words could never express my gratitude to you for taking me under your wing as a young undergraduate student. Look at what we've done! The faith in my capability and trust in my judgement you instilled in me has propelled me through the darkness of your departure. The world has lost a great light, but I shall endeavour personally and professionally to be like the moon to your sun, radiating the warmth absorbed from your presence to the world in your absence.

To my mum and dad, Helen and Joshua, I don't think I will ever be able to understand the magnitude of the sacrifices you have made for me. You have both selflessly and repeatedly put aside your ambitions to enable me to pursue mine. You have instilled in me a relentless commitment to pursuing justice, a steadfast commitment resistant to public opinion, the courage to hold unswervingly to my

purpose, and a hope that tomorrow can always be better than today, so thank you and I love you.

To my Macquarie psychology family – I'm the last one to get here but woo we finally all made it! Haha! Maddie, Ashleigh, Bec, Jo, Lil, Tuki and Nikki - I think if there ever was a motley crew who exemplified courage and resilience in the face of adversity it's you lot. We'll forever be bonded by the unique experience of what we have accomplished. I never knew moving into an office would mean inheriting a family. That day turned out to be one of the best things that has ever happened in my life. We've experienced the whole gamut of emotions in the times we've spent together. And it just bewilders my mind that the future that is ahead of us individually and collectively will only be more enthralling. Megan and Rory, thank you as well for parachuting in and saving the day. I'm so glad I had the two of you to navigate me through uncharted waters of writing conventions, formatting and submission. I never intended anyone to have to wade into the depths of my idiosyncrasy under such pressure but you both arrived just in the nick of time!

To my closest friends who've seen me through this process – Shea, Jessie, Kara, Liv, Lizzal, Ben and Julie – I know you guys will say you didn't really do anything to deserve recognition. But what you provided was perhaps the most important commodity through this season – joy. Joy amidst the struggle, joy amidst the waiting, joy amidst the uncertainty, and joy amidst the triumph! You have all shown such tremendous patience and generosity, reminding me that life is more than my all-consuming and ever-present to-do list. Your unconditional acceptance and assurance that I can always be myself and that we take on the world and strive for greatness together has been invaluable. You make life a pleasure, being human a privilege, and the challenge of creating the future a possibility.

Finally, to the survivors who shared your stories with me – particularly Anne, Sandra, and Arun, who have become my friends – bearing witness to your stories, your experiences, your tragedies, and your triumphs will always be my life's greatest privilege. You have opened up your lives to me with such honesty, vulnerability and courage and I humbly hope I have done them justice and served you well.

Abstract

This thesis investigates how survivors of human trafficking reflect upon their lived experiences, contextualised within their life narratives. Adapting the Grounded Theory approach to qualitative research, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 survivors in Australia and Singapore (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). My results suggest that a unique constellation of pre-trafficking factors contribute to survivors' vulnerability and encapsulation. This in turn has psychological consequences that impact the strategies survivors' employ to exit their trafficking context. Post-trafficking experiences are characterised by the transition from systemic dependence to resettlement with ongoing consequences for their psychological wellbeing. My findings and theory help to fill large gaps in the literature and drive recommendations for service provision, interventions, legislation and further research.

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Chapter 1

An Introduction to Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is an issue that has begun to attract the attention of the global community due to its impact on survivors' wellbeing (Batstone, 2010; Shelley, 2010). While not a new phenomenon, the trafficking and exploitation of children, women and men around the world has been furthered by globalisation and technological and transport advances since the 1990s. Human trafficking is believed to be the fastest growing criminal enterprise in the world -- the second most profitable illicit trade after drugs -- demanding the sustained attention of political bodies at both national and international levels (Doezema, 2002; Kelly & Regan, 2000; Raymond & Hughes, 2001). With this has come a surge of awareness and advocacy, foregrounding the plight of victims in popular consciousness. Media outlets such as the New York Times, National Geographic, the CNN Freedom Project and MTV have given human trafficking special attention in the form of extended articles, coverage and interviews. Special programs, documentaries and films also have been produced in collaboration with non-government organisations (NGOs), such as Not For Sale, Stop The Traffik and The A21 Campaign, featuring numerous celebrity spokespeople. This increased attention and awareness has led to greater action, with over 250 organisations in the United States alone that are committed to addressing trafficking on both a global and local level.

In this thesis, I address the pivotal role that psychology has to play in the understanding, treatment and rehabilitation of rescued victims and investigate the factors that facilitate the proliferation of human trafficking. Specifically, I investigate how survivors of human trafficking reflect upon their lived experiences, contextualised within their life narratives. Adapting the Grounded Theory approach to qualitative research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), I conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 trafficking survivors in Australia and Singapore. My

results suggest that a unique constellation of pre-trafficking factors contribute to survivors' vulnerability and "encapsulation". This, in turn, has psychological consequences that impact the strategies that survivors employed to exit their trafficking context. Survivors' post-trafficking experiences are characterised by their transition from systemic dependence to resettlement and independence, with ongoing consequences for their psychological wellbeing. My findings and theory help to fill large gaps in the literature on human trafficking and drive recommendations for service provision, psychological interventions, legislation and further research.

In this chapter, first, I define the phenomena of human trafficking and describe the various forms of trafficking that occur. Second, I discuss the existing research in the field broken down in survivors' pre-trafficking, trafficking and post-trafficking time periods. Finally, I highlight gaps in the existing literature, which serve as a rationale and foundation for the research project I conducted for this thesis.

Definition of Human Trafficking

The most commonly utilised definition of human trafficking was developed as part of the United Nations Trafficking Protocol (UN, 2000, p. 2):

> *The recruitment, transportation, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or 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 prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs.*

> *The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth above has been used. The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered trafficking in persons.*

This UN Protocol takes a criminal justice approach to the issue, and identifies three main elements as constituting trafficking: (1) the *action* (the recruitment and movement of the person being trafficked); (2) the *method* (force, coercion or deception); and (3) the *purpose* (exploitation of the labour or the productive potential of the individual). Someone may be considered a victim of human trafficking regardless of whether they were born into a state of servitude or were transported to the exploitative situation, and whether they once consented to work for a trafficker or committed criminal offences as a direct result of being trafficked. While the term trafficking may suggest that the transport and movement of victims across international borders is involved, this is not always the case. While such experiences may be categorised as international trafficking, domestic trafficking within the borders of individual countries is also highly prevalent (O'Connell Davidson, 2006, 2010). At the heart of this phenomenon are the myriad of ways in which freedom can be restricted, not the process involved in international transportation itself. The Protocol was supplemented by an additional document, titled 'Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking', which gave special consideration to the rights of victims of trafficking, particularly with respect to protections for minors (United Nations, 2002). It outlines several governmental responsibilities towards survivors, including providing them with access to avenues for compensation and ensuring their safety, as well as protection from prosecution for

illegal acts committed while they were trafficked (for a more comprehensive review, see Gallagher, 2015).

The UN categorises the various forms of human trafficking into five broad types: (1) trafficking of adults for sexual exploitation; (2) trafficking of adults for commercial labour exploitation or domestic servitude; (3) trafficking of children for sexual and labour exploitation; (4) bride trafficking or forced marriage; and (5) organ trafficking. Human traffickers typically employ six control strategies that have been identified by the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2015): (1) physical or sexual violence; (2) restriction of movement of the individual; (3) debt bondage or bonded labor; (4) withholding of wages or refusal to pay at all; (5) retention of their passports and identity documents, and (6) threat of denunciation or reporting to the authorities.

Much of the academic literature and public discourse that has addressed the issue of human trafficking commonly include two claims regarding what is known about the issue: firstly, that human trafficking is equivalent to slavery, and secondly, that trafficking is highly prevalent and pervasive, and that there are millions of victims currently suffering its consequences. The first claim, that human trafficking is a form of modern slavery, revolves around a false dichotomy between freedom and restriction, and a lack of clarity surrounding what is meant by the terms ‘force’, ‘coercion’ and ‘exploitation’ in the UN definition (Gallagher, 2015; O’Connell Davidson, 2006). The Protocol has been criticised for assuming that the myriad of migration strategies employed globally can be simply divided into two mutually exclusive categories – voluntary and consensual versus involuntary and non-consensual ie. trafficking (O’Connell Davidson, 2006). This assumption oversimplifies the reality of the complicated systems, processes and regulations surrounding migration, and fails to acknowledge that the abuses that constitute trafficking vary in

severity and result in a continuum of experience rather than a dichotomous proposition (Anderson & O'Connell Davidson, 2002; Andrijasevic, 2003). That said, the Protocol definition "does not describe a singular, unitary act leading to one specific outcome, but rather refers to a process (recruitment, transportation and control) that can be organised in a variety of ways and involve a range of different actions and outcomes" (O'Connell Davidson, 2006, p. 8). However, little consensus has been reached as to what constitutes excessive force, coercion or exploitation and how to distinguish trafficking from legal migrant employment agreements in which workers are often also subject to restriction of movement, debt bondage, passport confiscation, non-payment of wages, physical violence or threat of deportation due to the absence of global political standards of minimum employment rights (Anderson & Andrijasevic, 2008; O'Connell Davidson, 2010). This ambiguity surrounding the definition trafficking has resulted in a discourse ripe for exploitation for those with a political agenda, and a reality in which those on the front lines encountering the phenomenon having to make judgements regarding the point on the spectrum where appropriate treatment ends and inappropriate force, coercion and exploitation begin (Anderson & O'Connell Davidson, 2003).

Similarly, many authors cite a number of estimates regarding what is known, or believed to be understood, about the prevalence of human trafficking. According to the ILO (2015), nearly 21 million people are victims of human trafficking, 11.4 million of whom are women and girls. The ILO estimates that approximately 4.5 million victims are forced into sexual exploitation, meaning the vast majority of forced labour is found in industries such as domestic work, agriculture, manufacturing and entertainment. Other organisations have estimated that between 12.3 to 27 million

people exist in some form of slavery around the world at any given moment (Clawson, Dutch, Solomon, & Grace, 2009).

However, there are questions about the methodological rigour by which most of these trafficking estimates have been derived (Fedina, 2004; Weitzer, 2011). Because of the clandestine nature of human trafficking, gaining access to and conducting research with survivors is extremely difficult. Thus, it is almost impossible to establish a reliable and accurate estimate of the scope of the phenomenon at a local level, which then can be extrapolated nationally or globally (Laczko, 2005). Additionally, as mentioned above, differences exist between the legal definition of human trafficking outlined above and operational definitions understood by those tasked with its enforcement, which is further compounded by inconsistencies in law enforcement policies and practices across the many countries from which data is collected. Some critics have even gone as far as to deem the current estimates as being achieved through “shoddy research, anecdotal information” (Sanghera, 2005, p. 5), emotive manipulation of statistics (Murray, 1998) and weak, political or dogmatic biases (Di Nicola & Cauduro, 2007). Nevertheless, while there are obvious flaws in the methodologies previously utilised, they are the best estimates currently available, and the vast discrepancies between them signal the need for research employing innovative and comprehensive methodologies that are grounded in systematically gathered data.

The intersection between types of trafficking. While the definition of human trafficking and the various forms it takes may appear clear cut in theory, in reality it is a much more complex picture. Historically, most of the attention around human trafficking has emphasised sex trafficking, which is unsurprising given the intense emotionality of many survivors’ narratives (Pocock, Kiss, Oram, &

Zimmerman, 2016; Zimmerman & Schenker, 2014). However, most recent estimates suggest that the number of labour trafficking survivors exceeds sex trafficking survivors. This is to be expected given that labour trafficking includes all labour exploitation that occurs in industries including agriculture, construction, manufacturing, hospitality and domestic servitude. Despite this, there has been a disproportionate response and policy emphasis from government bodies that may leave the impression that human trafficking is exclusively sex trafficking, with other forms of exploited labour under-studied (Belanger, 2014; Brennan, 2008). This is reflected in the fact that, in most countries, legislation against sex trafficking preceded legislation against forced labour.

Statistically, greater numbers of sex trafficking survivors have been documented relative to victims of forced labour (Raymond & Hughes, 2001; Raymond, D'Cunha, Dzuhayatin, Hynes, Rodriguez, & Santos 2002). However, these numbers have been questioned by Webber and Shirk (2005), who proposed that the differences are influenced by four key factors. First, sexual exploitation requires individuals to be accessible to members of the public, thus making them more visible and increasing the likelihood of being rescued. Even in cases where members of the public may not realise that sex trafficking is taking place, they may notice and dislike the fact that prostitution is occurring in their neighbourhood and contact law enforcement. Second, sex work occurs in a much more public context than other forms of forced labour such as domestic servitude or agriculture trafficking in isolated regions, so it is easier for law enforcement to investigate and intervene. Third, there is a direct relationship between the amount of media attention sex trafficking has received and the number of women rescued from the industry, which is influenced by the extent of public awareness about the issue (Webber & Shirk, 2005). As more

members of the public have become educated about the existence of sex trafficking relative to labour trafficking, the likelihood of more survivors of sexual exploitation being discovered has increased. Finally, survivors of labour trafficking may also be sexually assaulted or suffer sexual exploitation as part of their trafficking experience (Batstone, 2010; Logan, 2007). While their primary form of exploitation may come in the agriculture, construction or hospitality industry, the fact that they suffered secondary abuse may lead them to be classified as a case of sexual exploitation by law enforcement or their service providers.

Therefore, it is not clear that the stereotypically portrayed image of an extremely brutalised female victim is representative or even sufficiently common to warrant the current emphasis in government programs and policy responses to trafficking (Weitzer, 2014). Zimmerman and Watts (2003) claimed that it should not be assumed that all women who have been trafficked are traumatised, consider themselves victims, detest their captors or wish to escape or go home. Such depictions may do a disservice to some survivors who have been trafficked but are subject to “more mundane pressure and control” (Kelly, 2002, p. 34). Overall, research is required into the nature of survivors’ experiences across types of trafficking, to understand both what is common across them, as well as specific idiosyncracies that might eventuate from the different types of trafficking. In light of this need, in the next section I review the research literature on human trafficking.

Existing Research Into Human Trafficking

The existing literature on human trafficking spans numerous academic disciplines including, but not restricted to, migration, labour and international law, political science, international studies, psychology, sociology, anthropology, social work, human rights, health services, geography and gender studies. This research

has been conducted by a mixture of academics in the aforementioned disciplines, NGOs and government bodies at local, national and international levels (Gajic-Veljanoski & Stewart, 2007). For the purposes of this thesis, I confined the scope of the following literature review primarily to studies conducted in the fields of psychology and psychiatry, supplemented by research from other disciplines where further information was required to enrich and deepen understanding. I prioritised studies that collected data directly from survivors of trafficking over, for example, research that contained secondary accounts of survivors' experiences from service providers or members of law enforcement. Although existing research on experiences of sex and labour trafficking is in its infancy and may appear somewhat piecemeal and anecdotal, I organise and discuss the available work below. I considered the literature on child trafficking, forced marriage and organ trafficking as beyond the scope of this research project since no survivors of these types of trafficking ultimately were involved in the research I conducted for this thesis.

In the hope of imposing a semblance of structure upon a heterogeneous body of literature, I sought a broad heuristic to help frame this review. While much of the existing research has lacked a firm theoretical foundation (Godziak & Bump, 2008), some researchers have conceptualised experiences of trafficking within the context of stages or phases of human trafficking (Cwikel & Hoban, 2005; Gajic-Veljanokski & Stewart, 2007; Logan et al., 2009; Tyldum & Brunovskis, 2005). However, there is little agreement regarding how many stages of trafficking there are, with authors proposing processes that range from as few as two stages to as many as eight stages (Sanchez & Stark, 2014).

For example, Tyldum and Brunovskis (2005) claimed that there are three main stages of trafficking in which survivors may be categorised as "persons at risk of

being trafficked, current victims of trafficking, and former victims of trafficking" (p. 21). Alternatively, Cwikel and Hoban (2005) proposed five stages in their sequence derived from accounts of sex trafficking: "predeparture, transit, working in the destination country, possibility of deportation to the country of origin, and reintegration" (p. 308). Overall, most of these heuristics have concentrated on the recruitment and exploitation phases of the trafficking experience, often at the expense of an exit strategy or post-trafficking phase (Preble, 2016). Interestingly, the processes described in research generated from accounts of sex and labour trafficking often include nearly identical stages (Aronowitz & Dahal, 2014; O'Connor & Healy, 2006). Therefore, for the purposes of this program of research, I organised the literature into three distinct structural phases of the trafficking experience, which I describe and discuss in the rest of this chapter: (1) the pre-trafficking phase, which includes the factors that lead individuals to become vulnerable to traffickers in the first place and the process of their recruitment; (2) the trafficking phase, which addresses everything from their transport and treatment while under exploitation to their eventual exit; and finally (3) the post-trafficking phase, which includes the physical and psychological consequences of trafficking, and their experiences of service provision and therapeutic interventions.

Pre-trafficking. Central to the definition of human trafficking is the exploitation of the vulnerability of an individual. The factors that contribute to this vulnerability have been broadly conceptualised as including economic opportunity (Gajic-Veljanoski, & Stewart, 2007; Schauer & Wheaton, 2006), personal characteristics and social and cultural experiences (Cwikel, Chudakov, Paikin, Agmon, & Belmaker, 2004; Gajic-Veljanoski, & Stewart, 2007; Zimmerman et al., 2008). More specifically, poverty, limited employment and educational opportunities, gender, age and prior

abuse history often are regarded as contributing risk factors to human trafficking vulnerability (Zimmerman, Hossain, & Watts, 2011). In this section, I outline the extant research into these economic, personal and socio-cultural factors, and examine their impact on the process leading up to and including survivors' recruitment by their traffickers. While research into these factors has been broadly differentiated into categories (and thus discussed in separate sections for clarity below), in reality they are highly interrelated and believed to collectively compound survivors' vulnerability.

Economic risk factors: poverty, education and unemployment. The most commonly cited of all the risk factors for trafficking are low socio-economic status (SES), economic disadvantage or poverty (Ugarte, Zarate, & Farley, 2000). Poverty has prominently featured in studies across the globe and in research into both sex and labour trafficking. Survivors typically are trafficked from developing source countries to developed destination countries. Logan, Walker, and Hunt (2009, p. 12) claimed that "many people who are poor yet hopeful for a better life are sometimes misled into thinking they are going to work under certain conditions or for a certain amount of pay that does not become reality". For example, in a large-scale study of the extent of labor trafficking amongst migrant workers in San Diego, Zhang, Spiller, Finch, and Qin (2014) found that the primary risk factor was a lack of economic opportunity in the country they were from. Likewise, a review of 122 labour trafficking closed case files, supplemented by 28 survivor interviews, found that seeking greater economic opportunity and the desire to financially support their families were the primary reasons that victims sought employment overseas (Owens et al., 2014). The survivors who were interviewed "made clear that a lack of upward mobility, economic opportunity, and conflict drove many labour trafficking survivors to seek employment

overseas" (p. 29). Sexually exploited women in Mexico listed poverty, lack of access to formal education and insufficient job opportunities as some of the principal causes of their predicament (Acharaya, 2008). Similarly, out of a sample of 28 European trafficked who were women interviewed, 17 identified "earning more money" as a motivation for their initial migration (Zimmerman et al., 2003). Most scholars believe that such examples highlight how poverty encourages risk-taking in the hope of survival, limits the economic options that survivors otherwise could take advantage of to better their lives, and creates an environment that is ripe for exploitation (Preble, 2016). The lack of education typical of those at risk of trafficking also is believed to increase the likelihood of them choosing more perilous forms of migration leading to their eventual exploitation (Gajic-Veljanoski & Stewart, 2007; Gushulak & MacPherson, 2000).

However, findings regarding the relationship between education and risk of trafficking are highly varied. In their study of labour trafficking, Owens and colleagues (2014) found that survivors came from highly diverse educational backgrounds; whereas 10% had no formal education whatsoever, almost a third had attained a college or technical degree. Despite their expertise, these educated survivors were willing to migrate for low-level positions that promised to pay better than they would have earned in their country of origin. In a mixed methodology study, Simich, Goyen, and Mallozzi (2014) compared 96 trafficking survivors and 84 non-trafficked migrant workers, and found that while they all migrated primarily for economic reasons, those trafficked had higher education levels when compared to non-trafficked migrants. Similarly, in a systematic review of legal papers on trafficking and reports released by NGOs, Perry and McEwing (2013) concluded that, in many cases, the poorest and least educated individuals were not necessarily the most vulnerable since migration

was not an option they were able to consider. Recent advances in education in many developing countries make it hard to determine the ongoing influence of educational attainment on risk for trafficking.

Overall, while poverty, lack of education, unemployment and the desire to support their families are prominent themes in survivors' accounts (Acharaya, 2008; Datta, David, Bales & Grono, 2013; Clawson et al., 2009; Schauer & Wheaton, 2006), existing research has yielded inconsistent results. It is likely that the picture is much more complex than just low SES; broader contextual factors need to be taken into account since not all impoverished people become trafficking victims.

Personal risk factors: age, gender, prior abuse history. In terms of personal characteristics, whereas media reports about trafficking primarily centre on the risks to young women of being sexually exploited, academic studies instead describe a large demographic of sex trafficking cases, ranging from young, educated and independent women to divorced women to single mothers and married women with and without children (Aghatise, 2004; Cwikel et al., 2004; Zimmerman et al., 2003). In fact, Simich et al. (2014) found that labour and sex trafficking survivors in their sample tended to be older than their non-trafficked migrant counterparts. From the perspective of gender, Owens et al. (2014) compared the likelihood of migrant men and women being trafficked to the United States and concluded that men and women from economically developed or developing countries were equally likely to become trafficked when they felt their economic mobility was threatened. However, Owens et al. noted an effect of gender on the industry that people were most likely to be trafficked into, with men more likely to be trafficked into agriculture and women into domestic servitude. Likewise, Belanger (2014, p. 101) contrasted Vietnamese migrants who were and were not exploited and concluded that "young, single men

and women who were 30 years of age or under tended to be more educated, more resourceful" and more involved in identifying a non-exploitative means of entering the migrant workforce. As a result, they were less likely to become trafficked.

When it comes to prior histories of abuse, most studies examining the influence and prevalence of prior violence in trafficking survivors' histories have been conducted with children and are beyond the scope of this program of research. However, some evidence suggests that abuse histories contribute to later vulnerability to sex trafficking (Clawson, Dutch, Solomon, & Goldblatt, 2009; Macias Konstantopoulos et al., 2013). For instance, both Cwikel et al. (2004) and Zimmerman et al. (2003) found that many female survivors of sex trafficking had violent or difficult childhoods characterised by abuse, rape, homelessness, neglect, poverty and deprivation. Much of this retrospective research has been conducted in Europe. One study of 204 female trafficking survivors across seven countries reported that half of the women had pre-trafficking exposure to physical abuse, while a third had been subjected to sexual violence (Hossain et al., 2010). A more recent historical cohort study of trafficked survivors in the United Kingdom found similarly that childhood physical or sexual abuse were common among trafficked adults, with 43% of those surveyed reporting one or more incidents in their past (Oram, Khondoker, Abas, Broadbent, & Howard, 2015). It is evident that "a finding consistently present across studies of sex trafficking is that most victims were at a disadvantage on account of contextual stressors, adverse and traumatic experiences such as sexual abuse, individual vulnerabilities, or a combination of all of these" (Contreras, Kallivayalil, & Herman, 2017, p. 33). Notably, most of the research into prior abuse histories has been in the context of sex trafficking, so further research is

required to clarify whether similar rates of abuse act as a risk factor in labour trafficking cases.

Cultural risk factors: lack of social support, conflict, political instability. At a cultural level, individuals who come from countries where there is a patriarchal society, high crime, war and/or conflict and the perception of institutionalised government corruption are believed to be more vulnerable to trafficking (Aronowitz & Dahal, 2014; Clawson et al., 2009; Cwikel & Hoban, 2005, Gajic-Veljanoski & Stewart, 2006; Owens et al., 2014). For example, case studies of sex trafficking suggest that civil unrest and political uncertainty in their country of origin may make women more susceptible to their traffickers' machinations, as fear for their lives results in them accepting any offer of a way out (Jac-Kucharski, 2012; Raymond, D'Cunha, Dzuhayatin, Hynes, Rodriguez, & Santos, 2002).

According to the ILO (2015), membership of a socially excluded group or a minority is a significant risk factor in labour trafficking, as is migrating from rural to urban areas, or from one region to another within a single country. A culture of normalised migration, combined with concurrent societal instability, contributes to situations of personal desperation (Hodge & Lietz, 2007; Hodge, 2008; Roby, 2005; Rushing, 2006; Skilbrei & Tveit, 2008) by undermining their cultural identity and sense of belonging (Zhang et al. 2014). Ultimately, displacement is believed to increase an individual's vulnerability due to their ensuing unfamiliarity with the geographic, cultural, economic and social support systems that may exist within their new found context. This, in turn, may increase their vulnerability to exploitation by traffickers (Belcher & Herr, 2005; Busza et al., 2004; Cwikel et al., 2004; Gajic-Veljanoski & Stewart, 2007; Gushulak & MacPherson, 2000; Zimmerman et al., 2008, 2011).

Recruitment. Much of the early focus of research into recruitment into trafficking focused on sex trafficking and featured stories highlighting the use of force (Batstone, 2010; Raymond & Hughes, 2001). However, the prevalence rates of such cases of abduction actually are rather low. For example, in Zimmerman and colleagues' (2003) study of 28 sex trafficking survivors, just two of them reported being abducted in their country of origin. Most recent studies instead contextualise recruitment for trafficking within the larger migration context, emphasising the prominent role that deception and coercion play in the overall process (David, 2012; Molland, 2010).

In a mixed methodology study that surveyed and interviewed Vietnamese migrant workers returning from Malaysia, South Korea, Taiwan and Japan, Belanger (2014) discovered an entire network dedicated to profiting from and facilitating the migration of individuals motivated by economic opportunities. These networks were somewhat supported by government policies that required a migrant's legal immigration status to be tied to a specific employer. Such arrangements could be co-opted easily by traffickers who sought to earn revenue both from the large upfront fee prospective migrants were forced to pay, and their productive capacity once they arrived in their destination country. The debt incurred played a huge role in exacerbating an individual's vulnerability, as "the cornerstone of migrant workers' precariousness in the Asian context is the large financial or material debt contracted by migrants to cover premigration related costs" (Belanger, 2014, p. 91).

Similarly, research into labour trafficking in the United States has found that many survivors originally were required to pay recruitment fees for jobs in which they later were trafficked (Owens et al., 2014). Survivors reported that their recruitment came most commonly through existing social networks and acquaintances who often

worked on behalf of agents located in their home countries. These recruiters manipulated them through a mixture of fraud and coercion, combining false promises and high-pressure tactics to get them to commit to contracts (which half of them said they did not have time to read or could not comprehend). Such fraudulent promises of employment during the recruitment process have been documented in cases of both sex and labour trafficking (Aronowitz & Dahal, 2014). In a qualitative study involving life story interviews with sex trafficking survivors in Australia and Singapore, Yea (2012) discovered that they often were deceived about the type of work they were supposed to be involved in and/or the conditions in which that work would be performed. Additionally, all women interviewed incurred a sizeable debt, which forced them to remain bonded in their employment context for a prolonged period in the hope of paying it off.

Overall, trafficking survivors are more likely than non-trafficked individuals to have intermediaries involved in their migration (e.g., acquaintances, employers or agencies), and as a result also are more likely to pay more for their migration than non-trafficked individuals (Simmich, Goyen, Mallozzi, 2014). A greater understanding of the role these networks play, and survivors' experiences of the deceptive and coercive tactics employed, is required to understand the factors that contribute to their vulnerability.

Considered together, it is evident that most research on the economic, personal, cultural and recruitment factors that contribute to pre-trafficking conditions of survivors has been conducted in highly specific contexts, yet yielded decidedly diverse results. While the roles of prior abuse, conflict and displacement in vulnerability have been established, the roles of socio-economic status, age and gender are less clear. This could be due to the fact that it is not the presence of such

factors themselves that contributes to an individual's vulnerability, but survivors' experience of them that is key. For instance, based on his work at the border between Laos and Thailand, Molland (2010) pointed out that studies that investigate economic factors typically do not employ a standard definition for what qualifies as poverty, and conflate it with unemployment, consumerism or a desire for greater material possessions. We need to distinguish between absolute and (experienced) relative poverty within and between regions as well as understand the difference between factors that specifically contribute to trafficking and other factors that engender migration. Interestingly, in South-East Asia, individuals with medium levels of income are more likely to migrate, suggesting that the poorest of the poor tend not to consider migration as an attractive option. Rather, it may be those who harbour greater ambitions that ultimately are most at risk (Molland, 2010). Overall, it is evident that the economic approach utilised in much of the available literature may somewhat oversimplify the complexity of trafficking survivors' narratives. Instead, we need a theoretical framework that captures the commonalities in survivors' experiences while accommodating the variability in their accounts.

Trafficking. Having been recruited and transported to their destination, research suggests that survivors then find themselves subject to even greater force, deception and coercion in an environment closely controlled by their trafficker. Physical violence typically has been considered the most egregious method of maintaining coercive control over trafficking victims. Research into sex trafficking consistently shows that survivors experience higher rates of physical and sexual violence compared to their non-trafficked sex worker peers (see Oram et al., 2012 for a review). For instance, McCauley, Decker, and Silverman (2010) found that 10% of the Cambodian women they surveyed who had been sexually exploited also suffered

physical violence, and over 30% indicated some degree of sexual abuse while they were trafficked. Similarly, in a European sample of 192 women receiving support from post-trafficking services, nearly all of them reported experiencing physical or sexual violence, with 76% reporting physical abuse and 90% reporting sexual abuse (Zimmerman et al., 2008). Physical injuries also were reported by 57% of this sample, and 76% indicated they were never granted freedom of movement. Interestingly, when Muftic and Finn (2013) investigated the experiences of American sex trafficking survivors, all the domestically trafficked women reported psychological abuse, compared to slightly fewer (82%) of those trafficked from other countries, and 94% said they were exposed to violence compared to just 50% of those from overseas. These results indicate that there is tremendous global variability in the prevalence of violence experienced by sex trafficking survivors, even between domestic and internationally trafficked women within the same country.

Even when such forms of violence and abuse are not present, survivors endure a myriad of psychologically coercive tactics. These may include threats of violence to the victim (Gupta, Reed, Kershaw, & Blankenship, 2011; Zimmerman, 2003) and family members (Acharaya, 2008; Hossain et al., 2010) as well as restricted movement and communication (Di Tommaso, Shia, Strom, & Bettio, 2009). In order to establish complete control over their victims, traffickers employ tactics of social isolation, degradation and control of bodily functions (Contreras, Kallivayalil, & Herman, 2017). For example, women sexually exploited in Singapore and Australia experienced various degrees of isolation, restriction of movement and communiation, surveillance, threats of punishment and abuse from their traffickers, and degrading working conditions (Yea, 2012). Acharaya (2008) concluded that experiences of violence during the trafficking phase may exacerbate earlier pre-trafficking

experiences of abuse. The cumulative impact for these women is a severe loss of self-esteem and autonomy. This loss of self-efficacy and autonomy further entraps them by ensuring they have no hope of escape, resigning them to fulfil the terms of their fraudulent contracts (Logan, Walker, & Hunt, 2009).

Such conditions are not unique to sex trafficking survivors. Zhang et al. (2014) reported that labour trafficking victims experienced many of the same tactics, including threats of harm, restriction, deception and abusive labour practices. In Owens et al.'s (2014) review of 122 cases of labour trafficking in the United States, the most frequent tactics that traffickers employed to maintain control over victims were: threats or use of violence, deprivation, intimidation and control, and threats of law enforcement action. In fact, 84% of survivors reported experiencing isolation, restricted communication and surveillance, while 82% recalled demeaning and demoralising treatment such as verbal abuse and humiliation. Traffickers employed additional restrictive tactics, such as sleep deprivation, to further reduce survivors' ability to rationally contemplate their situation and plot an escape (Gajic-Veljanoski & Stewart, 2007).

Many labour trafficking survivors report work related injuries that compound their experiences of abuse. For example, survey data from 446 male labour trafficking survivors mainly from the fishing and manufacturing industries found that nearly half reported experiencing violence; a third reported severe violence and another third reported work-related injuries while trafficked (Pocock, Kiss, Oram & Zimmerman, 2016). Likewise, Zimmerman and Schenker (2014) concluded that work-related hazards are common in jobs done by trafficked workers, especially in dangerous industries like commercial fishing, manufacturing, agriculture and construction. In another recent study by Zimmerman and colleagues, almost half of a

sample of 383 men who had been trafficked reported experiencing violence. Nearly all described bad living conditions, long hours and severely restricted freedom. It is noteworthy that these abuses are not country specific, as the men in this study were trafficked to seven different countries and into a dozen different industries (Pocock, Kiss, Oram, Zimmerman, 2016).

In contrast to the stereotypical picture of traffickers involved in organised crime, research into the nature of the networks engaged in human trafficking shows that this is not the case (David, 2012). An extensive study of Vietnamese migrant workers revealed that the majority of those who suffered exploitation were trafficked by “small enterprises where the owner can directly supervise and exercise control over workers” (Belanger, 2014, p. 97). In contrast, Surtees (2008, p. 46) cited geographic differences in the forms of trafficking networks, claiming that “in south-eastern Europe, much human trafficking is by organized criminal groups, which is in contrast to regions such as South-East Asia, where trafficking is often informal and managed through personal connections”. Irrespective of the size of the network involved with their trafficking, survivors across various contexts lack access to social networks and support services. Traffickers are able to undermine their victims’ hope of rescue by telling them that the police, government and social service agencies will arrest them, mistreat them or deport them, and therefore that such agencies will not protect or assist them (Preble, 2016). For example, labour trafficking victims in the United States typically immigrated legally in the hope of achieving the “American dream” and supporting their families back home (Owens et al., 2014). Most of the survivors interviewed had no previous encounters with law enforcement, either in their home countries or in the United States. Thus, for them, the threat and fear of deportation, the possibility of involvement by law enforcement or the claims of their

traffickers' ties to law enforcement, were enough to prolong their enslavement by keeping them from seeking help and ensuring their cooperation.

However, Gould (2014, p. 199) suggested that "deception and physical coercion are difficult to sustain" for traffickers over a prolonged period of time. Gould's findings from surveys and interviews with sex workers in South Africa (including a subset who had been trafficked) indicated that traffickers' ability to maintain a powerful hold over their victims gradually weakens, or is perhaps perceived as less influential by the victims, increasing victims' sense of power and willingness and efficacy to leave. In a lone study that documented how survivors were able to leave their labour trafficking context, Owens et al. (2014) reported that 59% of the 122 survivors in their study escaped by running away with the help of a community member, service provider or friend. Another 19% were identified by the authorities and removed from their trafficking situation. Finally, 14% were actually arrested by authorities, either on suspicion of committing a crime or for being an illegal immigrant. It is clear that more research is required into the factors that determine survivors' ability to leave their trafficking context and the ultimate method of exit.

Logan, Walker, and Hunt (2009) usefully summarised survivors' experiences while in their trafficking context in terms of four key themes. First, survivors are filled with fear of physical and sexual violence from their traffickers as well as fear of deportation or legal and immigration problems stemming from a lack of trust in law enforcement. Second, they lack knowledge of alternative courses of action, their rights and services that exist to assist them. Third, they are isolated, often lacking social support, transportation and the ability to navigate around their destination country; typically they also lack the language proficiency to get help. Finally, they are

subjected to physical and psychological confinement, as they are both held physically captive and subject to coercion. This psychological confinement is created through the use of shame, with threats about exposing their circumstances to their family or the public, and by withholding their money and legal documents such as passports, visas and identification (Logan, 2007). While there is great variability in rates of force, deception and coercion reported in existing studies, further research is needed not only into the prevalence of such tactics, but the impact of these tactics on the psychological experience of survivors who are subject to them. Such research would enhance our understanding of how survivors may combat these tactics and successfully and more quickly transition from acquiescence to escape.

Post-trafficking. Understanding the post-exit trajectories of trafficking survivors is critical. Indeed, determining whether the original factors that contributed to their vulnerability have diminished, remained the same or even been exacerbated can help establish survivors' risk of revictimisation or re-trafficking (Yea, 2015). In this section, I will review existing research on survivors' experiences of exiting their trafficking context, the complexity of their interactions with post-trafficking support services, the psychological and physical consequences of trafficking and relevant literature on the treatment of survivors. While the majority of psychological and physical consequences described in the existing literature have resulted primarily from their trafficking experience, they have been included here as part of the post-trafficking literature because they typically are documented in studies of survivors in their post-trafficking phase sometime after they have exited their abusive situation. Most of these results have been documented by studies utilising retrospective, cross-sectional research methodologies.

Exit impact. Much of the research on exits from trafficking has centred on sex trafficking survivors rescued from prostitution. The most commonly reported way in which sex trafficking victims are identified is via a raid by the local law enforcement and immigration authorities on sites such as brothels and bars. These experiences can be extremely traumatic, confusing and chaotic for survivors, as law enforcement personnel storm the location, remove both victims and traffickers, and begin interrogations to sort victims from traffickers (Ahmed & Seshu, 2012; Magar, 2012; Soderland, 2005). During this process, sex trafficking victims may be misidentified as criminals and arrested for prostitution or solicitation (Contreras, Kallivayalil, & Herman, 2017). Additionally, there have been reports of police brutality and violence, including sexual violence, towards women rescued from prostitution, which reinforces many victims' deep mistrust of the authorities (Williamson, Baker, Jenkins, & Cluse-Tolar, 2007). For example, Busza (2004) conducted a mixed methodology study of 100 Vietnamese women who had been involved in the sex industry in Cambodia, most of whom reported experiencing police brutality on top of prior violence at the hands of both their clients and traffickers.

The limited research available suggests that experiences of survivors who exited sexual exploitation in the US are similar those in other countries (Aron, Zweig & Newmark, 2006; Raymond & Hughes, 2001). Aron, Zweig, and Newmark (2006) interviewed a mixture of 34 sex and labour trafficking survivors in the United States who were being supported by three different NGOs; they mainly originated from Asia and Latin/South America. The women reflected upon their experiences of raids by the authorities, reporting that the traumatic and dramatic nature of such actions was compounded by the fact that law enforcement officers treated everyone as a criminal until further information was obtained.

Research regarding the impact of exiting contexts of labour trafficking is more limited, with just two studies found that address the issue. Survivors in Owens and colleagues' (2014) American study spoke of how their extreme geographical isolation and constant surveillance made the process of escaping extremely difficult. In contrast, survivors in Belanger's (2014) study of South-East Asia trafficking survivors spoke of the complex legal and immigration consequences they had to take into consideration when planning their escape. For instance, they reported either having to escape a work context to which their immigration status was tied and risk becoming an illegal or undocumented worker, or being forced to leave when their employee contract was terminated, which meant being classified as deserting the workplace. In both cases, survivors said that their sense of "failure and shame often was more difficult for them to handle than their experience of abuse and coercion" (Belanger, 2014, p. 100); they feared that the manner of their exit from trafficking would have repercussions on their future employment opportunities overseas. Given that the majority of survivors exit their trafficking context by escaping, further research is needed to understand how survivors are able to do so.

Engagement with service providers. Once survivors exit their trafficking context, they find themselves in need of post-trafficking support, which commonly is in the form of service provision from relevant authorities and non-government organisations (NGOs). In terms of survivors' engagement with such services, Macy and Johns (2011) reviewed existing research from the perspectives of both sex trafficking survivors and service providers themselves. They concluded that although survivors' needs change over time, the core services of health care, mental health support, legal advocacy and permanent housing remain constant. In countries that have a specific support program for trafficked people, such as the United States and

Australia, there are various lengths of visas that can be granted depending on survivors' context, ranging from permanent to just a few weeks or months.

Permanent residency is rare and extremely difficult for survivors to secure; often it is predicated on survivors engaging in arduous criminal cases against their traffickers (Yea, 2015). This is potentially problematic as survivors who agree to cooperate in a criminal investigation or testify in court may choose to do so because they have few alternative options or social networks to call upon for support (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2007; Lam & Skrivankova, 2009). Aron, Zweig, and Newmark (2006, p. 11) went as far as to claim that this "requirement that victims must cooperate is disempowering and counterproductive to service providers' goals of fostering empowerment and independence in trafficking survivors, to help them rebuild autonomous lives." Few studies have investigated survivors' reasons for not engaging with post-trafficking services, primarily due to the great difficulty in locating survivors after they have returned to their home country, and the fact that the focus of most research has been the trafficking act itself (Brennan, 2005). That said, several authors have highlighted shame and mistrust as hindrances to survivors engaging with various types of services (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2012; Clawson et al., 2008; Gajic-Veljanoski & Stewart, 2007). More research into the factors that influence survivors' engagement with and experiences of service provision is necessary.

A crucial element of survivors' post-trafficking trajectory is the process of transitioning from being dependent on service provision to re-establishing their independence. Survivors may either be repatriated to their country of origin or resettled in the country they were trafficked to. However, issues relating to repatriation and resettlement have received relatively little attention in human trafficking literature (Surtees, 2013), despite claims that "successful integration and/or

settlement can be key to the process of nurturing survivor resilience through reducing the factors that lead to their trafficking" (Yea, 2015, p. 313). Brennan (2005) shared instances of women in the United States who were resettled after experiences of sexual exploitation but then rejected in their new communities due to stigmatisation. Both Jha and Maddison (2011) and Dhungel (2017) described similar experiences in survivors' home villages in Nepal. In contrast, Crawford and Kaufmann's (2008) research, also conducted in Nepal, discovered that women who were provided with vocational training, micro-financing and business acumen were well received in their home communities, with three quarters of them successfully able to reintegrate and overcome the stigma of their experiences.

The importance of providing survivors with economic opportunities also has been highlighted by Yea (2012), who found that financial hardship and disillusionment were key factors that lead sex trafficking survivors to return to contexts of sexual exploitation. Belanger (2014) suggested that the experiences of labour trafficking victims parallelled that of sex trafficking survivors, with migration policy, financial debt and cultural norms collectively contributing to their return to exploitative working arrangements. Taken together, these studies highlight that further research is required to contextualise the impact that service provision, immigration status and economic opportunities have on survivors' post-trafficking trajectories.

Psychological consequences. The limited research into psychological consequences suffered by survivors as a result of their trafficking experiences consistently has found high rates of mental health problems, with depression, anxiety and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) most commonly cited (Abas, Ostrovschi, Prince, Gorceag, Trigub, & Oram, 2013; Kiss et al., 2015; Muftic & Linn, 2013; Oram,

Stockl, Busza, Howard, & Zimmerman, 2012; Ostrovschi, Prince, Zimmerman, Gorceag, & Gorceag, 2011). These symptoms are believed to result from a combination of survivors' pre-trafficking experiences, experiences within their trafficking situation and their post-trafficking context (Robjant, Roberts, & Katona, 2017). However, tremendous variability has been found in the rates that survivors report such symptoms.

In a meta-analysis of 19 studies addressing consequences suffered by women trafficked primarily into sexual exploitation, high rates of symptoms indicative of anxiety (48-98%), depression (55-100%) and PTSD (20-77%) were reported by survivors (Oram et al., 2012). For example, Crawford and Kaufman's (2009) analysis of 20 case files belonging to sex trafficking survivors in Nepal discovered that accounts of shame and humiliation were prevalent. Survivors described experiencing social isolation, lack of motivation and a tendency towards aggressive behaviour when aggrieved, even long after they were freed from their traffickers. However, these "clinical" descriptions were noted by service providers over the course of their assistance to survivors, not assessed by standardised measures. Another study conducted in Nepal by Tsutsumi et al. (2008) used screening measures to determine the prevalence of depression, anxiety and PTSD in 64 female survivors of sex and labour trafficking. The overall rates of depression and anxiety amongst survivors were very high, with survivors of sex trafficking displaying higher rates of depression and PTSD than their labour trafficking counterparts. A more recent study by Rimal and Papadopoulos (2016) of 66 female sex trafficking survivors in Nepal found that 87%, 86% and 30% of the women scored above clinical thresholds for anxiety, depression and PTSD, respectively.

Similar results have been found in Europe, with approximately half of a convenience sample of 200 trafficked women across seven European countries reporting a depressive or anxiety disorder (Zimmerman et al., 2006). High rates of depression also were found in a sample of 192 European women repatriated after being trafficked primarily from Moldova and Ukraine. In fact, 39% of survivors acknowledged having suicidal thoughts within the past seven days before they were interviewed, and more than half of them scored above the clinical cutoff for PTSD (Zimmerman et al., 2008). Raymond and Hughes (2002) reported that 85% of a group of American sex trafficking survivors reported depressive symptoms, with many also experiencing suicidal ideations. While high levels of depression, anxiety and PTSD have been reported by both men and women after leaving situations of labour exploitation, levels generally are lower than those in samples of women rescued from sexual exploitation (Tsutsumi et al., 2008; Zimmerman et al., 2008). For example, Turner-Moss, Zimmerman, Howard, and Oram (2014) highlighted the high level of exposure to trauma amongst a predominantly male labour trafficking sample, of which 57% reported at least one symptom of PTSD.

Studies that have examined the factors that influence the severity of psychological consequences experienced by survivors have yielded mixed results. An Israeli study into the role of pre-trafficking abuse found that exposure to prior trauma was related to depression and PTSD (Cwikel et al., 2004), while an American study suggested instead that women who reported experiencing abuse as a child were more likely to report physical health problems but not worse mental health outcomes following trafficking (Muftic & Finn, 2013). Being held captive for longer within their sex trafficking context has been associated with greater post-trafficking mental health problems among trafficked women in the United States (Muftic & Finn,

2013) and returning to Moldova (Zimmerman et al., 2008), but not in a sample of trafficked women returning to Nepal (Tsutsumi et al., 2008) nor a sample of both males and females in the United Kingdom (Oram et al., 2015).

In a large-scale study, Hossain, Zimmerman, Abas, Light, and Watts (2010) studied 204 women and girls trafficked into sexual exploitation at seven different post-trafficking sites in Europe. Suffering injuries and sexual violence were strongly associated with higher levels of post-trafficking depression, anxiety and PTSD. Symptoms of depression and anxiety increased in severity relative to the amount of violence survivors experienced and the length of time they spent trafficked. However, symptoms decreased in severity as the more time passed from when they exited their trafficking context. Hossain and colleagues argued that exposure to violence and other contextual factors may be as significant as the sexual exploitation itself in determining severity of the psychological consequences of trafficking. Kiss and colleagues (2015) extended this research with interviews of 671 male and female trafficking survivors and concluded that experiencing threats, severe violence, poor living conditions, long working hours and unfair loss of pay all were linked to an increased likelihood of developing symptoms of depression, anxiety and PTSD. The high level of psychological distress survivors' experienced was reflected in the fact that 8% of the adult participants admitted attempting suicide in the past month.

While all of theses studies have reported high levels of depression, anxiety and PTSD symptoms amongst both male and female survivors of trafficking, the reliability of their results is undermined somewhat by their (no doubt pragmatic) choice of a variety of non-diagnostic screening measures rather than diagnostic instruments (Cwikel et al., 2004; Tsutsumi et al., 2008; Zimmerman et al., 2008). The cross-sectional and correlational design of these studies also makes it difficult to

know how these symptoms change over time. However, I identified two studies that addressed these limitations. Ostrovschi et al. (2011) used the Structural Clinical Interview (SCID) in a longitudinal study of 120 women returning to Moldova from being trafficked overseas. At initial intake, 88% of participants received some form of psychological diagnosis, including 35% with PTSD alone, 13% with PTSD co-morbid with a mood or anxiety disorder, and another 13% with a mood or anxiety disorder without PTSD. Interestingly, while the number of survivors diagnosed with PTSD alone decreased to 15% at a subsequent follow-up (which occurred an average six months after initial assessment), 20% of the sample now had PTSD co-morbid with a mood or anxiety disorder, while another 18% had anxiety or other mood disorder without PTSD. Using the same sample, a subsequent study investigated factors that increased the likelihood of mental health symptoms (Abas et al., 2013). The authors concluded that developing a mental disorder was associated with childhood sexual abuse, poor social support, a large number of post-trafficking needs and the duration of trafficking. These results suggest that the psychological impact of trafficking extends well beyond survivors' repatriation, particularly when victims experience severe co-morbid psychopathology, which might explain the variability in previous results investigating these phenomena.

Taken together, existing research into the psychological consequences of trafficking highlight the importance of considering the influence of all stages of survivors' life experiences on their mental health, not just events surrounding the trafficking itself. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the majority of these studies, the psychological consequences and various contributing factors have been linked statistically, but not yet explained theoretically. As a result, a theoretical framework that accounts for the dynamic nature of psychological consequences is still required.

Physical consequences. Another key determinant of the quality of survivors' post-trafficking experiences is the physical and health-related consequences they continue to suffer even after they are freed. The majority of these post-trafficking consequences stem from the abuse and violence survivors suffered and the nature of the conditions they were forced to endure. Physical problems such as headaches, dizziness, back and stomach pain, dental issues, nausea and exhaustion have been documented globally in studies with sex trafficking survivors (Clawson et al., 2009; Crawford & Kaufman, 2008; Cwikel et al., 2004). In Zimmerman and colleagues' (2008) European study, close to 80% of survivors reported headaches and persistent fatigue, while almost 60% reported back pain, memory difficulties, stomach pain, pelvic pain and gynaecological issues. Given their involvement in sexual exploitation, survivors of sex trafficking also had increased risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV. While a review of the research specifically investigating HIV is beyond the scope of this thesis (as none of the participants I interviewed in my program of research were HIV positive) prevalence rates of HIV range from 23% to 46% of survivors surveyed (see Oram et al., 2012 for a review). In another study, 23% of the women and 8% of the men surveyed after contact with post-trafficking support services in the United Kingdom were diagnosed with STIs (Oram et al., 2015).

Research on labour trafficking also has documented significant physical and health-related consequences. For instance, survivors of labour exploitation in Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam most commonly reported recurring health issues involving memory problems, exhaustion, dizziness, headaches, weight loss, nausea and backpain (Kiss et al., 2015). In a rare study into health problems associated with labor trafficking in the United Kingdom, 81% of the mostly male sample reported

physical health problems including headaches, backpain, fatigue, vision problems and dental pain. Such a high rate of physical distress was somewhat to be expected given that three quarters of the 35 participants whose case records were analysed in this study exited their trafficking situation less than a month before they were interviewed (Turner-Moss, Zimmerman, Howard, & Oram, 2014).

While the literature detailing physical consequences of trafficking is still in its infancy, it is evident that ongoing health problems negatively impact survivors' recovery. Interviews with survivors have revealed that these challenges may prolong their anxiety and discomfort, exacerbate their psychological challenges and profoundly impact their ability to work and support themselves and their family (Aron, Zweig, & Newmark, 2006). Other researchers have argued that the high rates of physical health problems may arise, not just from the violence, poor living conditions and lack of healthcare experienced, but also as somatic manifestations of psychological distress (Turner-Moss et al., 2014). For example, "gastrointestinal problems are well-described somatic manifestation of anxiety and stress; but for trafficked women, they may also be associated with poor nutrition or sexual and urogenital problems" (Zimmerman et al., 2008, p. 58). As a result, formulating a treatment plan for survivors is a complex undertaking, and further research is required to detail the interaction between psychological and physical consequences of trafficking, along with a detailed account of their influence on survivors' post-trafficking trajectory.

Therapeutic interventions. As addressed above, although mental health problems are highly prevalent among victims of trafficking, recovery without treatment is rare, particularly for those diagnosed with PTSD (Hossain et al., 2010). The possibility of recovery is even slimmer in cases with co-morbid psychological

disorders (Ostrovschi et al., 2011). Unfortunately there is little, if any, research on clinical interventions for the treatment of victims of trafficking. Much of the literature related to psychological interventions with survivors simply suggests principles that psychologists should bear in mind over the course of delivering therapy, rather than describing actual cases of treatment (Robjant, Roberts, & Katona, 2017). The majority of the limited research with survivors has been conducted with children rather than adults, more specifically with child soldiers (see Katona, Robjant, Shapcott, & Witkin, 2015, p. 8 for a review) and is beyond the scope of this current review. As a result, evidence-based psychotherapy interventions developed specifically to address the experiences of survivors of trafficking mostly is non-existent (Macias Konstantopoulos et al. 2013; Macy & Johns, 2011).

However, in the course of conducting this literature review, I discovered two recent studies that make concrete therapeutic recommendations based on survivors' experiences. The first is a small pilot study conducted by Robjant, Roberts, and Katona (2017), who reported a treatment trial in the United Kingdom involving 10 female sex trafficking survivors. Participants received between 10 to 19 sessions of narrative exposure therapy, which involved the "detailed exploration of, and exposure to, traumatic events experienced chronologically and in context" (p. 2). Survivors were assessed with the Post-Traumatic Diagnostic Scale prior to treatment, post treatment, and three months after treatment. Prior to treatment, all participants displayed severe forms of PTSD. After treatment, scores ranged widely from mild to moderate and severe. Importantly, by the three-month follow-up symptoms had decreased dramatically with 70% of survivors now classified as having only mild symptoms; the remaining three survivors were classified as having moderate symptoms. Although this study is limited by its lack of a control group, no participants

dropped out over the course of the treatment, suggesting that the chosen therapeutic approach was acceptable and tolerable for survivors. While the authors acknowledged that they did not control for the impact of other contextual factors and positive life events that may have occurred in the course of the study, it is evident that narrative exposure therapy provides one promising option to assist survivors in processing their shame in an attuned and empathic manner.

The second study I found involved detailed case studies of three female sex trafficking survivors (Contreras, Kallivayalil, & Herman, 2017). The authors highlighted the importance of providing long-term treatment options for survivors based on the issues raised over the course of each treatment. While Contreras et al. provided little detail about the specific therapeutic framework used, they argued that although existing brief treatments may result in a decrease in the symptoms of anxiety, depression or PTSD (e.g., Clawson et al., 2008; Williamson, Dutch, & Clawson, 2010) they may not address the deeper interpersonal consequences of trafficking: “the survivor’s relational and identity challenges will require a strong therapeutic relationship that is consistent, predictable and sustained over a long period of time” (p. 45). For example, many survivors refuse to engage with support services for many reasons such as the cultural stigma of mental health problems. Thus, therapeutic approaches need to be culturally sensitive (Shigekane, 2007). It is evident from these studies that a theoretical understanding of the unique needs of trafficking survivors is required before the best approaches to their treatment and rehabilitation can be determined.

Gaps in Existing Research.

Having reviewed existing research that has investigated human trafficking, it is apparent that while an admirable amount of work has been conducted in the past two

decades, significant gaps still exist in the literature regarding survivors' experiences. More specifically, current approaches lack a solid theoretical basis that encompasses the interpersonal, dynamic and contextual nature of trafficking. These form a point of departure for the research project I describe in this thesis.

The interpersonal nature of human trafficking. The majority of studies conducted thus far have taken an economic or epidemiological approach to understanding human trafficking, emphasising the importance of determining global trends, risk factors and prevalence rates at a macro level. While such research is useful in determining how macro-level systems contribute to and sustain environments in which trafficking proliferates, the interpersonal or inter-subjective nature of the relationship between survivors and their traffickers and the individual behavioural patterns of victims themselves have been neglected. Survivors have been broadly categorised in many studies by, for example, the type of trafficking endured or their manifested symptomology, at the cost of the depth, diversity and complexity of information that could be revealed by taking into account their individual differences. If we can better understand micro-level interactions between survivors and their traffickers and develop a theory that captures both the commonalities and variability in their experiences, we will be in a better position to inform best practices in policy responses, post-trafficking support services and outreach programs.

The importance of investigating trafficking from an interpersonal perspective is emphasised in the definition of human trafficking, which, as described at the beginning of this chapter, involves the exploitation of the vulnerability of an individual through the use of force, deception or coercion (UN, 2002). In other words, it is the deliberate and calculated intention of the trafficker to take advantage of another person that is the definitive determinant of human trafficking; force, deception and

coercion are interpersonal processes. As a result, trafficking has to be "perceived as a social problem, not an economic one" (Molland, 2010, p. 32), as the definition "frames power not in terms of the subject, nor structural forces, but in terms of the inter-subjective dyad of victim and perpetrator" (Molland, 2011, p. 236). Thus, it is only logical that an interpersonal phenomenon be investigated from an interpersonal perspective. This perspective should not just take into account the relationship between a victim and their traffickers, but also broader social networks including their family of origin, other survivors, and the service providers tasked with their rehabilitation.

The dynamic nature of human trafficking. The second aspect of human trafficking that has been neglected by much of the extant research is the dynamic nature of the trafficking experience. Amongst all the documentation of factors that impact trafficking from an economic or epidemiological perspective, the fact that the influence of these factors changes over time has been overlooked. This neglect is partly due to the cross-sectional nature of the methodologies employed, with the data collected at a single time point. The few studies that have investigated temporal changes note that time has important consequences for survivors' experiences, particularly when it comes to exiting the trafficking context and survivors' post-trafficking trajectory. For example, as I noted above, traffickers' ability to maintain control over their victims decreases over time, gradually enabling them to seek potential avenues for escape (Gould, 2014). Also, recovery from mild psychological symptomology has been shown to occur naturally with increasing temporal distance from the trafficking context (Hossain et al., 2010). Finally, the impact of negotiating important post-trafficking milestones over time, such as achieving permanent residency or the successful resolution of legal action against their traffickers, may be

as beneficial to survivors' mental health as therapeutic interventions (Robjant, Roberts, & Katona, 2017).

It is clear that more research is required into the dynamic nature of survivors' trafficking experience. Such considerations may help to clarify the complex and often contradictory nature of existing findings. For example, it might not be low SES itself, but changes in the level of SES that increases an individual's vulnerability and subsequent risk of being trafficked. By investigating how survivors' experiences change in response to different factors as they move through pre-trafficking, trafficking, and post-trafficking stages, researchers can begin to generate a theory that effectively captures their narratives. It is only by understanding these nuances as they unfold over the course of trafficking that researchers will be able to determine how survivors are capable of "getting out of the coerced situation, as well as [their] future actions and potential problems in the course of rehabilitation" (Tyldum & Brunovskis, 2005, p. 21).

The contextual nature of human trafficking. The final aspect of human trafficking that requires consideration in future research is the importance of contextualisation. While some have criticised existing research for not diversifying the types of trafficking investigated or deepening our understanding of the role of variables such as gender (Katona, Robjant, Shapcott, & Witkin, 2015; Preble, 2016), we can argue that it is not so much the type of trafficking but the context in which it occurs that is important to the psychological experience of survivors. Contextualisation interacts with the interpersonal and dynamic nature of trafficking as greater contextualisation is necessary at both personal and socio-cultural levels.

At the personal level, case studies and interviews have revealed that survivors share their stories not from the perspective of being a victim of trafficking, but within

the broader context of their life experiences (Contreras, Kallivayalil, & Herman, 2017). In her critique of previous studies of sex trafficking, Yea (2012, p. 55) argued that "virtually none critically explore the changes that women routinely undergo during and after the period they are trafficked – both mundane and episodic – and implications these changes can have on their post-trafficking trajectories." She added that understanding the "changes in self-understanding and attitudes that occur when women are deployed in trafficking situations are, nonetheless … of critical importance in supporting their needs" (Yea, 2012, p. 55). In other words, rather than superficial descriptions of factors that increase an individual's risk of being trafficked, contextualisation of survivors' pre-trafficking life experiences would serve to reveal how a series of converging, complex incidents may contribute to a perception of constrained choice and subsequent vulnerability (Sandy, 2007). Likewise, the contextualisation of survivors' post-trafficking trajectory within the framework of their life narrative would facilitate a theoretical understanding of specific elements of their trafficking context that may be related to particular symptoms, not just the mere documentation that psychological disorders are likely to occur.

Contextualisation is also required at the socio-cultural level. As Contreras, Kallivayalil, and Herman (2017, p. 41) stated, each survivor understands his or her experience "based on the social context in which she was born and raised". Survivors find themselves embedded within a pre-trafficking familial and cultural context, a network of exploitation while being trafficked and ultimately a complex post-trafficking legal and service provision system. Research into survivors' experiences needs to develop a greater understanding of the impact that these structural changes and systemic challenges have upon the treatment process and survivors' life trajectories.

Overall, it is evident that past research in this field, while admirable, requires further development in its approach and findings. As a result, it has not comprehensively captured the experiences of survivors of human trafficking. This chapter's synthesis of existing literature reveals significant theoretical issues that have yet to be addressed, highlighting especially the importance of an interpersonal, dynamic and contextual understanding of the phenomenon in question. In light of this, my research project explicitly examines the experience of human trafficking survivors in Australia and Singapore. More specifically, my research aimed to provide a theoretical understanding of how survivors reflect upon their experiences and contextualise these within their life narratives. While this research question may seem rather general compared to those described in studies reporting quantitative research, it provides a valuable starting point from which the phenomenon can be investigated. I turn now to introduce this project and offer an in-depth explanation and exposition of the methodology I used to study and reveal the experiences of trafficking survivors.

Chapter 2

The Research Method: Grounded Theory

Considering the heterogeneous nature of the existing research reviewed in Chapter 1 as well as the lack of a comprehensive theory about how survivors of trafficking contextualise and are impacted by their experiences, the possibility of developing testable hypotheses was severely limited. Since testable hypotheses are essential to the process of conducting quantitative research, instead I adopted an exploratory and explanatory qualitative approach to characterising and understanding the experiences of trafficking survivors. Such methods are particularly likely to yield in depth insights into phenomena such as feelings, thought processes and emotions that are difficult to access through other methodologies (Stern, 1980).

Specifically, I adopted Strauss and Corbin's (1998) development of Glaser and Strauss' (1967) Grounded Theory (GT) approach to qualitative research because it guides and enables researchers to develop hypotheses based on data collected from participants with first-hand experience of the phenomena being investigated. The systematic and iterative investigation of the veracity of the hypotheses generated then enables them to be refined into an "innovative theory that is 'grounded' in the data collected from participants on the basis of the complexities of their lived experiences in a social context" (Fassinger, 2005, p. 57). The method of GT has been especially useful in cases "where existing theory is inappropriate, too abstracted, or absent entirely – without also losing sight of necessary rigour in analytical practice" (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003, p. 134). The hypotheses that are developed over the course of employing GT and which ultimately comprise the resultant theory elucidating the phenomena in question can then be subsequently tested empirically and quantitatively in the future.

In this chapter, I first describe the history and basic tenets of GT, and justify in detail why I chose it as my research methodology. Second, I consider the ideal

methodological processes proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and further developed by Strauss and Corbin (1998), and then detail in depth the actual methodology I implemented, including the consequences of necessary changes to the canonical approach. Finally, I offer brief profiles of each of my research participants to introduce them to the reader.

History of Grounded Theory

GT was the brainchild of sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, who published their seminal book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* in 1967. GT was developed in response to the pervading positivist approach most commonly utilised in sociological research at the time, which considered quantitative studies to be the most valid form of research methodology (Charmaz, 2003). Glaser and Strauss argued that this resulted in the creation of abstract theories that had little relevance to the surrounding psychosocial context of the phenomena being studied (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003). Building on their expertise and training in quantitative and qualitative research respectively, Glaser and Strauss (1967) created GT to be a "general method of comparative analysis … closing the embarrassing gap between theory and empirical research" (p. vii), combining the best components of both of their areas of expertise. Following their seminal publication, Glaser and Strauss continued to collaboratively develop their methodology, before diverging sharply on philosophical, epistemological and procedural grounds in the 1990s (see Charmaz, 2008; Fassinger, 2005; and Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003 for further information). Since then, Strauss and his colleague Juliet Corbin have published *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* in 1990, which is now in its fourth

edition, and has become the foremost resource for researchers looking to apply and develop GT.

Basic Tenets of Grounded Theory

The original goal of GT was the "discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 2), or in the words of Strauss and Corbin (1998), a "theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process" (p. 12). From this perspective, theory was defined as "a set of well developed categories … systematically interrelated through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework that … offers an explanation about phenomena" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 22). What distinguished GT as 'grounded' was the fact that this data was "collected from participants on the basis of the complexities of their lived experiences in a social context" (Fassinger, 2005, p. 157). It is from this data that theory is allowed to emerge. As such, what is of most interest to exponents of GT are the meanings created in interpersonal relationships, in the hope of uncovering how different people define their realities based on their subjective perspective of interpersonal interactions (Cutcliffe, 2000).

To accomplish this, the GT methodology first involves "generating theory and doing social research, two parts of the same process" (Glaser, 1978, p. 2) through a "continuous interplay between analysis and data collection" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 273). Rather than data collection and analysis being conducted sequentially, as is the case in most other forms of empirical research, the hallmark of GT is the simultaneous integration of these stages, which inform each other repeatedly during the course of the research project (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). This results in a theory that is "faithful to the everyday realities of a substantive area", "closely related to the

daily realities" of the participants investigated, and "highly applicable" and meaningful in guiding future interactions with the phenomena of interest (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 238-239).

Second, in GT, the researcher is deeply embedded in the research process rather than acting as a distant, impartial recorder of empirical phenomena (Charmaz, 2008). The process of GT research is one that consists of "a constant two-way dialectical process or 'flip-flop' between data and the researcher's conceptualisations" (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2007, p. 134) and a "constant interplay between the researcher and the research act" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 42).

According to Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.7), a GT researcher has to possess the following six characteristics:

1. The ability to step back and critically analyse situations,
2. The ability to recognise one's tendencies towards bias,
3. The ability to think abstractly,
4. The ability to be flexible and open to helpful criticism,
5. Sensitivity to the words and actions of respondents, and
6. A sense of absorption and devotion to the work process.

It is evident from these characteristics that the application of GT requires mastering the delicate balancing act between objectivity and sensitivity of the researcher. While this may seem paradoxical at first glance, it is crucial to the GT process, which contains mechanisms intended to enhance its objectivity and scientific rigour (Fassinger, 2005). As such, GT seeks to find a "balance between the art and the science" (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 65).

Objectivity for a GT researcher entails an "openness, willingness to listen, and to 'give voice' to respondents" and "hearing what others have to say, seeing what

others do, and representing these as accurately as possible" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 43). This is accomplished primarily through journal keeping or memo writing. Strauss and Corbin (1998) described memos as "written records of analysis that may vary in type and form" (p. 271) and that capture evolving ideas, insights and processes in progress. Memos serve the dual purpose of keeping the research 'grounded' in the data, while maintaining the researcher's awareness of their subjectivity (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

At the start of a project, these memos contain the researcher's preconceptions and motivations surrounding the substantive area of study. Amidst data collection, memos may encompass a researcher's reactions to the content being revealed, including acknowledgements of the reciprocal relationship between researchers and participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Finally, during data analysis, memos function as accounts of coding procedures, theoretical developments, procedural directions and reminders as well as diagrammatical depictions of relationships among concepts (Arcuri, 2007).

Taken as a whole, these memos serve as "a means for making transparent the interpretative, constructive process of the researcher, become part of the data record, and are incorporated into the analytic procedures as well as the final products (Fassinger, 2005, p. 163). Successive memos addressing the same concept track its development as the researcher gathers more data to elucidate its dimensions and properties and delves deeper into its role in the theory. Thus, "writing and storing memos provides a framework for exploring, checking and developing ideas" (Charmaz, 2008, p. 166), ensuring that a sufficient degree of objectivity is constantly maintained through the process of GT.

GT simultaneously acknowledges that researchers possess pre-existing conceptual frameworks that greatly influence their analysis of the data collected, either consciously or subconsciously (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003). Strauss and Corbin (1998) claimed that a researcher's theoretical sensitivity, or their capacity to "have insight into, and being able to give meaning to the events and happenings in the data… which through alternating processes of data collection, analysis and immersion, lead to insights" (p. 46) is heavily influenced by their sensitising concepts. Sensitising concepts provide the departure point for the analysis required to develop a grounded theory by giving the researcher a sense of how the phenomena being investigated may fit within conceptual categories. They are "ways of seeing, organising, and understanding experience… embedded in our disciplinary emphases and perspectival proclivities" (Charmaz, 2003, p. 259). Sensitising concepts may include the researcher's personal history and prior experiences, professional expertise, existing theoretical knowledge and familiarity with the phenomena in question (Charmaz, 2003; 2008), all of which might inform interpretation of the data and the creation of theories emerging from this data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Strauss, 1987).

It is imperative that these sensitising concepts be rendered explicit, and that "rather than acting as data per se, the researcher's sensitising concepts must remain flexible and accommodate new concepts that naturally emerge from the data" (Arcuri, 2007, p. 40). This knowledge of what one brings to the analytic 'table' helps avoid confirmation bias, allowing the researcher to be curious and open to the plethora of possible meanings without forcing preconceived ideas upon the data. In doing so, it "enables the analyst to use experience, putting experience into data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 47), and maximise their theoretical sensitivity.

The contributions of objectivity and sensitivity are balanced in GT through the use of the method constant comparison. This process pervades the entire GT procedure, and occurs when “data is matched against data not only for similarities and differences but also consistency, with researchers being able to check into how they give meaning and conceptualise” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p.47). For Strauss and Corbin (1998), asking questions and making comparisons are fundamental to GT. Data first should be interrogated by asking questions that sensitise the researcher to what the data might be signifying, determine the nature of relationships and processes among different concepts, provide a degree of structure to the evolving theory, and inform further data collection and analysis (Arcuri, 2007). Comparisons are then made across data to reveal similarities and differences both within and across participant responses, increasing the density and complexity of certain concepts, whose veracity is constantly compared to newly collected data.

One key area where the impact of the method of constant comparison is clearly demonstrated is in the sampling of participants. Rather than the more commonly used method of convenience sampling, GT employs theoretical sampling. This involves “focused data gathering for the purpose of moving the analysis forward” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 106) by “sampling based on emerging concepts … to explore the dimensional range or varied conditions along which the properties of concepts vary” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 73). According to Fassinger (2005), the process that determines how participants are sought is “directed by the gaps, unanswered questions, and underdeveloped ideas in the emerging theory … The point of theoretical sampling is to explicate and verify the categories and their interrelationships that are gradually emerging through the coding process” (p. 62).

In GT, decisions regarding sampling permeate the entire process of, rather than occur prior to, data analysis and are not designed to maximise the number of participants or achieve representativeness of a target population. Instead, participants are selected for their potential to increase the comprehensiveness of the understanding of emergent concepts and to clarify relationships between them (Arcuri, 2007). As such, theoretical sampling is cumulative, with “each new event that is sampled [building] upon concepts derived from previous data collection and analysis, adding new properties, dimensions, specificity or variation to a concept” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 139).

Theoretical sampling becomes more specific as the research progresses because its goal is to fill in the gaps in properties and dimensions of the concepts under investigation (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). As a dynamic process, theoretical sampling also includes deliberately seeking disconfirming evidence (such as negative cases) with which to interrogate the emerging theory, and may incorporate accompanying information from other elements of the data collection process (e.g., participant feedback, memos, existing literature; Charmaz, 2003). By doing so, researchers seek to uncover data that will maximise the similarities and differences both within and between concepts. Overall, researchers cannot predict where theoretical sampling will take them, but just endeavor to “ask questions of the data, then attempt to determine the best source of data to answer those questions” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 137).

The goal of theoretical sampling is to eventually reach a point of theoretical saturation, which is deemed as “having occurred when gathering more data sheds no further light on the properties of their theoretical category” (Charmaz, 2008, p. 167). When no new concepts or relationships among concepts are being discovered, the

researcher has successfully developed a theory in which “the properties of, and relationships among, constructs are specified in the form of a substantive theory about the social behavior under investigation” (Fassinger, 2005, p. 157). Strauss and Corbin (1998) cautioned that theoretical saturation is not to be confused with simply repeatedly discovering similar concepts or themes in the data: “It is more than a matter of no new concepts – it also denotes the development of concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions and includes showing their dimensional variation” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 134). By maximising the differences between participants during theoretical sampling, a researcher can fast-track the process of achieving theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

In summary, GT is best described by Fassinger (2005), who claimed that GT, when used correctly, should create a theory that is “derived inductively through an iterative, concurrent process of data collection, coding, conceptualization and theorizing, wherein new data are constantly compared to emerging concepts until no new themes, categories, or relationships are being discovered, at which point the properties of, and relationships among constructs are specified in the form of a substantive theory about the social behavior under investigation” (p. 157). This theory can then be graphically represented in a model that can be communicated and applied in various fields.

Why GT Was Chosen as a Methodology

I selected GT as the methodology to investigate the research question “how do survivors of trafficking reflect upon their experiences and contextualise them within their life narrative?” because it appeared suited to the nature of the phenomenon I wished to explore and most consistent with my values as a researcher (and the values of my supervision team). Importantly, the aims of GT parallelled my

goals of respectfully handling qualitative data, generating a substantive theory that encompassed survivors' experiences and acknowledging significant influences of the life experience of the researcher.

I developed the research question outlined above to facilitate systematic exploration of the area of interest and to elucidate its complexities rather than try to prove or disprove pre-determined hypotheses. It is important to note that while this research question may seem very general to practitioners of empirical research, it is typical of qualitative research, which "begins with a broad question and often no pre-identified concepts… It is this very openness to discovery that makes doing qualitative research so interesting" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 21). In fact it is "necessary to frame the research question(s) in a manner that provides the investigator with sufficient flexibility and freedom to explore a topic in some depth" (p. 25). Having settled upon a qualitative approach, GT seemed a natural choice for this project for at least six reasons (Ponterotto, 2005). First, given the nature of most research in the field of human trafficking (as outlined in Chapter 1), I needed a methodology that could capitalise on a potentially small number of heterogeneous participants. This is a particular strength of GT, which emphasises variability in data to flesh out the properties and dimensions of key concepts and ultimately achieve theoretical saturation (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Second, I was attracted to GT's ability to give voice to and value participants' lived experience. GT enabled the level of respect for the highly emotive content conveyed during data collection that this sensitive area of research demands. In fact, Fassinger (2005) recommended that researchers utilise a "rhetorical convention of expressing theoretical postulates by giving voice to participants' experiences by means of extensive quotation" (p.157).

Third, I chose GT for its ability to generate theory; I hoped to find a pathway towards cohesiveness in a disparate field of research literature. GT has proven particularly useful when faced with existing theory that is “inappropriate, too abstract or absent entirely” (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003, p. 134). Fourth, a central part of my motivation for this project was a desire to contribute to research on human trafficking in a way that would be practically applicable for others working in this field. This dovetails perfectly with Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) emphasis on the importance of GT findings as highly practical and easily accessible. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 237), in order to ensure a high level of practicality, GT should be developed with four highly interrelated properties firmly in mind:

1. Theory must fit closely within a substantive area – theory needs to both fit and work; i.e., categories must apply (but not be forced on) data and be relevant to and explain the behavior under study,
2. Theory must be readily understandable by laypeople concerned with the area,
3. Theory must be sufficiently general to be applicable to a multitude of diverse daily situations within the substantive area and not just a specific situation, and
4. Theory must allow the user potential control over the structure and process of daily situations as they change through time

Fifth, I wanted a method that could take into account my familiarity with the area of study. Prior to the commencement of this research project, I was involved with various non-government organisations (NGOs) involved in advocacy and direct client support of survivors of trafficking for over three years. These roles included serving on an NGO board, being a volunteer coordinator and creating recreational programs to foster community between survivors. Rather than seeing such experiences as in conflict with a researcher’s supposed requirement of objectivity,

both Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1998) highlighted the importance of the lived experience of the researcher in GT. As detailed above, these experiences form the basis of the researcher's sensitising concepts, and function as valuable points of departure from which one can ask questions and make comparisons with freshly collected data (Arcuri, 2007). That said, a degree of bracketing of one's subjectivity is required in GT to prevent it exerting an undue influence over the research findings and compromise the objectivity of the final theory (Morrow, 2005). Thankfully, GT provides many recommendations and techniques that enable researchers to remain sensitive to and minimise potential areas of bias in interpreting and analysing data; such methods made GT perfectly suited for the task at hand (Ponterotto, 2005).

Finally, both my original primary research supervisor, Associate Professor Doris McIlwain, and my secondary supervisor, Dr Anthony Arcuri, possessed a great deal of expertise in the application and execution of GT. Therefore, the choice of GT methodology allowed me to take advantage of their insight and experience and be immersively scaffolded as I embarked upon my research process.

Conceptual Frameworks

Having established a foundation for the use of GT, the first stage of the research process consisted of an in-depth examination of my research supervisor's and my conceptual frameworks. This served two purposes. The first was to facilitate our self-reflective awareness and reflexivity regarding our pre-existing subjective perspectives on human trafficking and in doing so render explicit our sensitising concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Ponterotto, 2005). This process involved reflecting on, and recording in memo form, my research paradigm, past experiences and current beliefs relating to survivors of trafficking and their narratives. The second was

to provide an opportunity for the reader to critically examine my impact as researcher on the research process (Hall & Callery, 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As Silverman (1998) noted, the validity of qualitative research is maximised when scholars can determine the extent to which the ensuing theory truly reflects the data and not just the personal beliefs and characteristics of the researchers involved.

Researcher's reflections. The research paradigm that I ascribe to is post-positivist, in that I believe in an objective reality that is only imperfectly perceivable (Lincoln & Guba, 2000), but also constructivist, as multiple possible interpretations of this reality exist. I also believe that the interpretations one holds to be true are governed dynamically by both conscious and unconscious forces that orient us towards the world in characteristic ways, and that these can be explained by psychoanalysis and psychodynamic theory.

Relating specifically to the phenomena of human trafficking, my past experiences and interactions with survivors have left me with a keen impression of their strength, ambition and determination, along with their desire to not be defined by their experiences. I am motivated by a keen commitment to justice, a deep empathy for their narrative and a righteous anger at those who exploit them. Having taught various undergraduate courses on trauma and personality and being highly familiar with existing trauma literature, I believe in the reconstructive nature of traumatic memory. As a result, my engagement with survivors' accounts involves immersing myself in their lived experience, not determining the veracity of the details of their narratives.

Supervisor's reflections.

This thesis was supervised originally by Associate Professor Doris McIlwain. But as I explain below, our work together was interrupted. The supervisor most closely

associated with the development of the theory described in Chapter 3 was Dr Anthony Arcuri, who provided the following reflections in April 2018:

I came into this research with perspectives on human experiences and interactions that have been strongly informed and influenced by psychodynamic theories, and by 15 years' experience working in psychotherapeutic practice. The specific psychodynamic models I draw on in my thinking include (in no special order) Kohutian self psychology, and Freudian, Jungian, Lacanian and relational psychoanalyses. My clinical practice involves my careful attention to the co-construction of realities, such that each participant in an interaction brings their own conscious and unconscious subjectivities that intersect to produce outcomes bound loosely by objective realities. At the same time, I am aware that in some cases closed power structures can severely limit if not prohibit the ability of an individual to exercise personal autonomy, responsibility and control.

And so, in approaching and engaging with Wesley's nuanced interview work with survivors of human trafficking, I was sensitised both to the influence of multifarious power structures through which the survivors moved (or within which they were held), and to the contributions of their complex individual psychologies to their pathways into, and experiences during, exiting and following their periods of captivity. In balancing these considerations, I attempted to hover my attention evenly between my feelings for the survivors and my cooly detached analysis of their narratives, so that I could to the best of my abilities connect with and analyse their experiences.

Dr Anthony Arcuri

April 2018

Research Procedure, Data Collection and Justification of Approach

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the iterative nature of GT involves simultaneous data collection and analysis. For the sake of clarity, here I somewhat artificially attempt to describe the two separately. Specifically, in this section I cover the practical implementation and issues related to data collection: I describe the rationale for my choice of semi-structured interviews, how I recruited participants, the development process for the interview guide, how I sampled participants and the nature of the interview process itself. I then describe my procedures for data analysis, based on those recommended by Strauss and Corbin (1998), in separate sections below.

Employment of semi-structured interviews. Having elected to use qualitative data collection methods, which include interviews, focus groups and/or naturalistic/observational methods (Potter & Hepburn, 2005), I chose interviews as the sole method of inquiry for this research project for a number of reasons. First, naturalistic/observational methods were impractical, both when taking into account the researcher's safety and potential ethical concerns for survivors, which will be discussed in greater detail below. Second, I determined that one-on-one interviews would afford survivors the greatest degree of anonymity, and therefore, freedom in expressing their feelings and perspectives surrounding their experiences. Finally, I had previous experience and training in conducting and analysing such research interviews, and was confident in my ability to successfully use them in this project.

I decided that these interviews should involve a semi-structured format to enable a degree of consistency across the questions asked and topics covered in each interview. From a GT perspective, semi-structured interviews contain topics that are chosen before beginning the research based on the researcher's sensitising

concepts. However, when and how the questions are asked is not structured, providing the level of flexibility required for theory construction and theoretical sampling and saturation (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). This allows the questions themselves to evolve over time across the interviews to investigate new concepts that emerge and develop across the differing contexts in which participants' experiences were embedded.

Recruitment. In terms of the recruitment of participants, trafficking research can aim to recruit potential participants at three different stages of trafficking: (1) when they are persons at risk, (2) current victims, or (3) former victims or survivors of trafficking (Tyldum & Brunovskis, 2005, Tyldum, 2010). I eliminated persons at risk as an option due to the fact that little is currently known about the differences between those who end up being trafficked and those who do not (see Tyldum, 2010 for a review); the logistical and financial aspects of conducting a longitudinal, prospective study also were prohibitive. I next eliminated current victims since Tyldum (2010, p. 3) advised that collecting "information about ongoing abuse, exploitation and coercion, particularly if victims are aware information is being collected, and then not act to improve their situation is likely to ruin any belief the victim had in humanity, or any hope of being rescued". Such data collection could possibly lead to safety risks and psychological consequences for the researchers involved, particularly those who strongly value justice as I do as well as violate ethical codes of conduct for research on vulnerable populations (Zimmerman & Watts, 2003).

Therefore, I made a decision to only interview adult survivors of trafficking who had at some stage been assisted by an NGO support program. This enabled me, first, to take advantage of my existing networks and connections in the anti-trafficking

sector. Second, it assisted in the identification of potentially suitable participants who would benefit from being interviewed, and provided a resource of existing expertise and support for survivors in case the research process was experienced as retraumatising (Tyldum, 2010).

I chose Australia and Singapore as the sites for research for a number of reasons. First, I had a high degree of familiarity with both countries, having been born in Singapore and immigrated to Australia at a young age. Second, I had a high degree of familiarity with the anti-trafficking organisations and cultures of both countries. Finally, differences in government policy on human trafficking between Australia and Singapore seemed likely to yield a high degree of variability in survivors' experiences and assist me in achieving theoretical saturation. I expected the biggest difference to be in the length of time between when survivors were trafficked and when they were interviewed, since the Singaporean government does not provide the option for survivors to become permanent residents as in Australia.

As part of the process of participant recruitment, I contacted six NGOs involved in anti-trafficking work in Australia and Singapore, four of which responded positively. I provided information about the nature and scope of my research to these four NGOs and requested interviews with some of their key NGO staff who had direct contact with survivors. My goal here was twofold: first, to make connections and build rapport with their staff in the hope that they would be willing to provide me with access to survivors in their care; and second, to provide more sensitising concepts and further the development of my interview process. Although initially I planned to include analysis of the interviews with service providers in this thesis, my subsequent interviews with survivors yielded such copious amounts of complex data that I decided to let survivors speak for themselves. As such, the analysis of service

provider data presents a future opportunity for complementary research. Once rapport had been established with the staff at an NGO, I then broached the subject of potentially interviewing survivors they supported as well. Examples of the information provided to NGOs and the consent forms survivors received are provided in Appendix A.

Interview guide. Using my own sensitising concepts and those taken from interviews with NGO employees as a platform, I developed a guide with which to interview my first research participants. I anticipated that, following the first interview, this guide would evolve continually as a result of the analysis of previous interview data. This is in line with the iterative nature of GT research, which features alternating stages of data collection and analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As a result, the questions asked of both the participants and the data over the course of a research project are expected to change over time, as the researcher seeks further information about specific concepts that have arisen in previous interviews and their properties and dimensions (Arcuri, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this way, GT's pursuit of theoretical saturation significantly differs from other forms of qualitative research, which utilise homogenous interview guides.

Rather than containing a list of specific pre-determined questions, my initial interviewing guide consisted primarily of several potential areas of inquiry, including questions about survivors' experiences of their family of origin, conditions they endured while they were trafficked, how they managed to exit the situation and how it impacted the way they perceived themselves and viewed the future (see Appendix B). Preceding these general areas of inquiry were several standard questions, which I designed to collect demographic information and provide me with points from which to ask questions and make comparisons (Arcuri, 2007). These initial questions also

served to ease participants into the interview process and help build rapport with them prior to asking more explicitly about their trafficking experience. Throughout the interview process, I took great pains to avoid imposing my subjectivity on participants; I aimed to minimise the use of prompts. When I did use prompts I tried to ensure that they were more related to process (e.g., encouraging greater elaboration) than to content (e.g., paraphrasing) (Rennie, 1998).

Sampling process. I considered participants as eligible to be interviewed if they met the UN definition of human trafficking (UNODC, 2003), which included having their vulnerability exploited, being coerced, deceived or forced to work, and not being adequately remunerated for their labour. I specifically asked NGOs for as much variety as possible in interview candidates in terms of age, gender, nationality, types of trafficking and length of time spent captive. These variables arose during analysis of my sensitising concepts as strong contributors to differences in survivor experiences. Finally, all participants had to speak English well enough to be able to suitably express their thoughts and feelings in conversation.

I decided to conduct the first interviews for this project in Singapore, given that I had pre-existing knowledge, experiences and personal relationships with survivors in Australia to provide me with sensitising concepts. These sensitising concepts would enable me to ask questions of and make comparisons between the survivors' experiences of the Australian and Singaporean context. I chose the first participant purposively, as I was told that she was a good communicator and that her story was fairly typical of many trafficking survivors in Singapore. Unfortunately, however, my subsequent ability to sample purposively and theoretically was limited by both the amount of information I was provided about individuals, which in most cases was only some demographic information provided to me by NGO case workers, and

logistical constraints on my research project. To gain sufficient access to and variability in potential participants, four research trips were required (two each to Singapore and Melbourne). As a result, it was not possible to completely fulfill the definition of theoretical sampling, and complete the data analysis of all prior interviews before commencing further data collection. In the end, I implemented a system more like maximum variation sampling to attain as demographically diverse a sample as I could within the population available to me (Fassinger, 2005).

I attempted to overcome these limitations by utilising an extensive memoing process. While on these research trips, I communicated daily (via email while overseas or on the phone while interstate) with Associate Professor Doris McIlwain to reflect upon the interview/s conducted that day. I also forwarded her my written memos, including any questions, comments or issues that had arisen that day. Doris would then send replies containing her reflections and suggestions, usually and amazingly within a day of being sent them. This process of checking in regularly made me continually reflect and consider my thoughts on what I thought I was doing as well as canvass alternative perspectives and suggestions made by Doris. These suggestions helped me remain adaptable and flexible to the ever-changing situational contingencies that occurred in the process of data collection.

While this procedure did not completely fulfill the strict requirements of theoretical sampling, the goals of adaptability and flexibility were of prime importance. Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 46) themselves have acknowledged that it is “not rigid adherence to procedure, but fluid and skillful application” that determines the success of the implementation of GT. By their view, “the ideal form of theoretical sampling might be difficult to carry out if a researcher does not have unlimited access to persons or sites” (p. 210) and that as long as “the analyst is comparing incidents and

events in terms of how these give density and variation to the concepts to which they relate, then he or she is doing theoretical sampling" (p. 211).

I expected that a sample size of between 10 and 15 participants would be sufficient to develop a grounded theory that answers the research question of this project. Although such a sample size might appear small to a quantitative researcher, participants in qualitative research are expected to represent unique experiences rather than an entire population. Indeed, as Polkinghorne (2005) stated, "the unit of analysis in qualitative research is experience, not individuals or groups" (p. 139). Because one participant can provide a rich and detailed account of multiple experiences, qualitative data collected from a relatively small number of participants can result in a dense and varied representation of the experience in question. Adding participants to qualitative research is of value only when that participant can add something new to the explanation of the experience under investigation. Therefore, the importance of sample size in qualitative research is secondary to the quality and richness of data collected. In fact, Morrow (2005) went as far as to declare that, "in an interview-based study, numbers mean little" (p. 255).

Interview process. In total I conducted 14 interviews: eight in Singapore, three in Sydney, and three in Melbourne. The three participants interviewed Sydney were previously known to me, while the others were introduced to me by their respective NGOs. Two of the interviews were excluded from the analysis because they did not meet the UN definition for human trafficking. In one case, the participant was a domestic worker who had run away from her employer's home because she desperately missed her family and desired to be released from her contract. In the other, a legal labour dispute over a work-related injury resulted in the man's work permit being terminated and he was in the process of seeking compensation. Despite

the fact that it was evident quite early on in the interviews that these were not cases of human trafficking, I saw the interview through to completion to allow participants to feel heard and to validate their emotional experiences. Therefore, I included a final total of 12 interviews in the analysis.

Despite repeated instructions to the NGOs that participants speak passable English, we required interpretation for the interviews conducted with three Mandarin-speaking Chinese participants, all of whom were trafficked to Singapore. Thankfully, the NGO gave enough notice for me to organise and brief a friend who was an undergraduate psychology student at a university in Singapore who was able to help. While this added a layer of complexity to the research process, she proved to be a highly empathic and attuned interpreter, and her presence did not negatively impact the quality of the data collected.

While my initial aim was to conduct only one interview per day while overseas, on two occasions two interviews had to be conducted back-to-back on the same day. In both cases, the participants were trafficked together, so the fact that I did not have much time to reflect on the data collection process prior to commencing the next interview likely did not have much impact on the GT process. In one of these cases, although it may have been ideal to speak to each survivor separately, this was logistically impossible. They interviewed together after they expressed their desire not to be separated when they turned up 1.5 hours after the agreed interview time. The decision was made to interview them together as they were trafficked together and could shed light and provide further detail as to each other's states of mind.

I conducted all interviews at a place where survivors felt most familiar, comfortable and secure. For those in Singapore, this tended to be at the office of the NGO, where a large boardroom was set aside for my use. In Australia, all survivors

requested to be interviewed at their home. Interviews were simultaneously recorded on an Sony IC Recorder (ICD-UX71) and Apple iPhone 6 as back up in case of technical difficulties. Table 6.1 presents a chronological list of the duration and location of the semi-structured interviews conducted with participants. I recorded 14 hours of interviews in total. I then sent the interview recordings for independent interpretation and transcription to Pacific Solutions Pty Ltd. After receiving the completed transcript, I verified it by comparing it back to the original recording twice. Them I emailed a copy of the transcript to the six participants who requested the opportunity to review their transcript and ensure it was representative of their perspectives. I offered the opportunity to make any changes or offer any further thoughts or reflections on the process. This strategy aimed to encourage their reflection on the process while gathering information that would improve the research experience of other survivors. Only three participants requested minor changes to be made to the transcript; in each case this involved the removal of potentially identifying information like names, ages and locations. The fact that only half of the participants requested to review their transcript, with only half of these requesting very minor changes, spoke highly of the level of trust they had in me as a researcher during the interview process (Tyldum, 2010). Given the deeply personal nature of this project, I took all possible precautions to conduct it in an ethically sensitive and empowering manner, being especially cognisant that participants had many prior experiences of their trust being broken. Of primary importance was the 'trustworthiness' (Haverkamp, 2005) of the research, particularly regarding the emotional wellbeing of participants and confidentiality as they shared their accounts of surviving human trafficking. According to Fassinger (2005), it is the level of trustworthiness that is perceived by participants that ultimately determines the "conceptual or analytical

soundness of the inquiry" (p. 163). He claimed that the quality of a GT was most appropriately assessed by determining its level of trustworthiness, "which is likened to the traditional validity, reliability, generalizability, and objectivity/neutrality standards applied to quantitative studies" (p. 163). Over the course of data collection,

Table 2.1 Chronological List of Semi-Structured Interviews With Survivors.

Name	**Date**	**Duration**	**Location**
Rose	8/1/13	59 mins	Singapore
Alex	15/1/13	1 hr 11 mins	Singapore
Tusher	16/1/13	58 mins	Singapore
Anne	1/12/13	1 hr 18 mins	Sydney
June	15/1/14	49 mins	Singapore
Jiao Jiao	20/1/14	1 hr 15 mins (Interviewed together)	Singapore
Yan Zhi	20/1/14		Singapore
Toyin	13/2/14	53 mins	Melbourne
Sue	14/2/14	42 mins	Melbourne
Tina	14/2/14	48 mins	Melbourne
Sandra	11/4/14	1 hr 4 mins	Sydney
Arun	8/6/14	1 hr 15 mins	Sydney

I made all possible efforts to maximise the level of self-reflection involved in the process, elucidating the inevitable ways in which my subjectivity intruded on the methodology and hopefully minimising its impact on the data analysis process. In this way I aimed to ensure that the end result of my research project was a trustworthy theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Subjective experience of data collection. Throughout the research process, I recorded memos and journal entries regarding the impact of data collection on me. From the first interview, it became evident that my background training in psychoanalytic principles would be essential to my ability to execute GT in the manner its creators intended. Several of the survivors interviewed in Singapore had only very recently exited their trafficking situation (in one case, it was less than a week). As a result, I found myself in the challenging position of sitting with someone and bearing witness to their narrative of abuse and exploitation that no one had borne witness to before (Bromberg, 1996). This was further complicated by, at times, my high level of identification with the survivors interviewed due to our similar ages and cultural backgrounds. I experienced the desire to run out of the room several times, and fought the urge to prematurely terminate interviews due to the circumstances they described. In addition, after two interviews, I had dreams that involved locating their traffickers and violently gaining justice on their behalf.

However, by keeping journal entries and memos as well as engaging in frequent correspondence with my highly attuned supervisors, I believe I was able to maintain a high level of neutrality, which allowed the data to emerge largely unhindered by my subjectivity. At times, disconnections with participants were evident in the transcripts, but I was able to acknowledge that these were not necessarily mistakes on my part, but intrinsic to the normal process of human

communication (Bromberg, 1996). Moreover, I gained an appreciation of the importance of leaning into moments of silence, not feeling the need to immediately fill them with further questions and allowing the participant to experience an attuned, 'holding silence' that could enable further reflection (Epstein, 2013). Thanks to feedback from Doris, I developed my awareness of the moment-by-moment self-state evoked by the intersubjective context of the interview, bearing witness to it while staying attuned to the participant. It was Doris' extraordinary ability to support me as a researcher while scaffolding my growth as an interviewer that made the greatest contribution not just to the trustworthiness of my data collection but also to my growth as a person.

Grounded Theory Data Analysis

As outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998), and discussed earlier in this chapter, the process of data analysis in GT involves constantly asking questions and making comparisons in order to explicate the properties and dimensions of emerging concepts. These concepts, which are the words the researcher uses to describe meanings interpreted from the data, are then linked together as subcategories of higher-order subsuming categories, which are then themselves eventually linked together to form the overarching theoretical framework. To accomplish this, the "data are coded according to an increasingly abstracted process aimed at the generation of a theoretical statement about the phenomenon under investigation" (Fassinger, 2005, p. 160). It is by this process of coding that the researcher comes to understand the content of the data, first, by entertaining a range of theoretical possibilities and, second, by examining the various ways his or her own epistemological premises, research principles and practices have impacted their interpretation of the data (Charmaz, 2008). In this way, GT coding differs greatly from general qualitative

coding, which simply identifies topics or themes that are prevalent in the data. In contrast, the line-by-line coding in GT delves deeper into the phenomenon and attempts to explicate it fully (Charmaz, 2008).

Although in their recently updated edition, Corbin and Strauss (2015) distinguished between open coding, coding for context and coding for process, the terminology used in the previous 1998 edition will be summarised here. This is because other authors have provided similar outlines of the coding procedures involved in GT following this terminology (see, for example, Charmaz, 2008; Fassinger, 2005; and Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003), and they were pivotal in informing the approach and procedures I implemented in this research project. In this section, I discuss the roles of open coding, axial coding, selective coding and coding for process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Although the different types of coding are listed above in a roughly linear sequence, all these types of coding are closely interrelated and, at any point in time during the coding process it is difficult to differentiate the influence of different specific types of coding. In other words, it is practically impossible to carry out a single type of coding on the data at any one point in time.

The first and simplest form of coding Strauss and Corbin described is open coding, which consists of breaking down the data into pieces, exploring their meaning in depth and developing the emerging concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In their words, properties are the "characteristics of a concept or category, the delineation of which defines it and gives it meaning," while dimensions are the "range along which properties of a category vary, giving specification to a category and variation to the theory" (p. 100). The process of open coding begins with microanalysis, the "minute examination and interpretation of data" (p. 58), in which the researcher conducts a line-by-line analysis

of single words, phrases and sentences in the data. This is a focused, immersive process that forces the researcher to examine the intricacies of the data by dissecting and describing it. Fassinger (2005, p. 160) described this process as involving the "transcribed data [being] broken down into units of meaning (concepts), labeling (often with words close to those of the participant) and interrogated (for alternative interpretations, conditions surrounding the meaning, and gaps left unfilled)." Gradually, the researcher moves from line-by-line microanalysis to coding by whole sentences or paragraphs. Later, concepts come to be grouped under more abstract, explanatory and all-encompassing categories.

Having broken the data down into its component pieces through open coding, the second form of coding, axial coding, attempts to reassemble the fractured data in the form of its categories and their interrelationships. Axial coding is defined as the process by which "categories are related to their sub-categories to form more precise and complete explanations about the phenomena," and the "act of relating categories to subcategories along the lines of their properties and dimensions" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 124). This is done by taking into account the conditions, context, action/interactions and consequences described in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998), and involves four key tasks:

1. Laying out properties of categories and their dimensions, a task that begins during open coding,
2. Identifying the various conditions, action/interactions and consequences associated with the phenomena,
3. Relating a category to its subcategories through statements indicating how they are related to each other, and

4. Looking for clues in the data that suggest how major categories might relate to each other (Strauss, 1987).

To assist with axial coding, an analytic tool called the paradigm was introduced. The paradigm is a "perspective taken toward the data … an analytic stance that helps to systematically gather and order data in such a way that structure and process are integrated" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 128). By using the paradigm, the research is "purposefully looking at action/interactions and noting movement, sequence and change as well as how it evolves (changes or stays the same) in response to changes in context and conditions" (p. 167). This allows the researcher to create statements that summarise how this process unfolds in the data.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), the initial hunches a researcher has about how concepts or categories relate to each other that are developed over the course of axial coding are called hypotheses, because they are statements linking two or more concepts. These provisional hypotheses attempt to explain the what, why, where and how of a phenomenon and require repeated interrogation until a category is saturated, or no new properties and dimensions emerge. It is noteworthy that this process of axial coding has been highly criticised by Glaser (1992) and others as imposing structure on theorising that is inconsistent with notion of allowing theory to naturally emerge from the data (see Henwood & Pidgeon, pp. 151-152).

Third, I conducted coding for process, which involved considering the role of these aforementioned conditions, action/interactions and consequences, as well as investigating if these processes are impacted by changes in structural conditions. "Rather than analyzing data for properties and dimensions," stated Strauss and Corbin (1998), "we are looking at action/interactions and tracing it over time to note how and if it changes or what enables it to remain the same with changes in

structural conditions" (p. 163). In coding for process, the analyst is specifically looking for patterns and "examining the data for how action/interaction changes over time and space and in response to contingencies," (p. 168) and takes into account how contextual factors at both the macro and micro level impact the way a phenomenon manifests.

The final form of coding described by Strauss and Corbin (1998) is selective coding, in which a "central or 'core' category is selected that integrates all the other categories into an explanatory whole" (p. 146). In doing so, the analyst reduces the data from many cases into categories and sets of relational statements between categories, which generally can be used to summarise what is occurring in the phenomenon in question. When this is accomplished, a core 'story' is generated, which is a brief narrative encompassing the most important aspects of the data, subsuming all of the other categories and articulating their relationships as part of the core story (Fassinger, 2005).

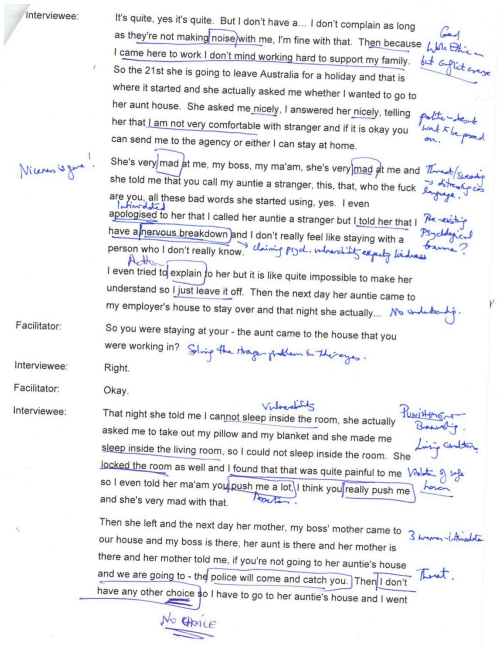
Strauss (1987) proposed six key criteria for choosing central categories:

1. It must be central – all other major categories can be related to it,
2. It must appear frequently in the data,
3. The explanation that involves relating categories to it must be logical and consistent
4. The name used to describe it must be abstract enough that it can be used to conduct research in other areas,
5. The concept is refined analytically through integration with other concepts, and
6. The concept must be able to explain the variation in the data – especially in contradictory or alternative cases.

Once a central category has been chosen, the interaction between data collection and data analysis once again comes to the fore, as theoretical sampling (see above for further explanation) can be conducted to help iteratively define its properties and dimensions. Having conducted open coding and axial coding initially, selective coding then allows the researcher to synthesise larger amounts of data. In selective coding, central categories are repeatedly tested against the data by using them to examine large sections of it until theoretical saturation is reached (Charmaz, 2008). Ultimately, a substantive theory has been created that comprises "a set of well-developed categories" that are "systematically interrelated through statements of relationships" into a "framework that explains some relevant social, psychological … or other phenomenon" and the statements of relationship must "explain who, what, when, where, why, how and with what consequences an event occurs" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 22).

My Process of Data Analysis

As noted above, after I received each transcript from the transcription company, I compared it to the original audio recording twice to ensure it had been transcribed verbatim and to familiarise myself with the data before coding. Following Strauss and Corbin's (1998) recommendations, I conducted microanalysis on the initial interview alongside my initial primary supervisor Doris. We did this manually, handwriting codes on a printed transcript together in an immersive and intersubjective manner, stopping repeatedly so we could verbally discuss our perspectives of different events and allowing me to share insights where relevant from the accompanying journals and memos I created after conducting the interview. An example of this manual hand-coding is depicted in Figure 2.1.



Interviewee: It's quite, yes it's quite. But I don't have a... I don't complain as long as they're not making noise with me, I'm fine with that. Then because I came here to work I don't mind working hard to support my family. So the 21st she is going to leave Australia for a holiday and that is where it started and she actually asked me whether I wanted to go to her aunt house. She asked me nicely, I answered her nicely, telling her that I am not very comfortable with stranger and if it is okay you can send me to the agency or either I can stay at home.

She's very mad at me, my boss, my ma'am, she's very mad at me and she told me that you call my auntie a stranger, this, that, who the fuck are you, all these bad words she started using, yes. I even apologised to her that I called her auntie a stranger but I told her that I have a nervous breakdown and I don't really feel like staying with a person who I don't really know. I even tried to explain to her but it is like quite impossible to make her understand so I just leave it off. Then the next day her auntie came to my employer's house to stay over and that night she actually...

Facilitator: So you were staying at your - the aunt came to the house that you were working in?

Interviewee: Right.

Facilitator: Okay.

Interviewee: That night she told me I cannot sleep inside the room, she actually asked me to take out my pillow and my blanket and she made me sleep inside the living room, so I could not sleep inside the room. She locked the room as well and I found that that was quite painful to me so I even told her ma'am you push me a lot, I think you really push me and she's very mad with that.

Then she left and the next day her mother, my boss' mother came to our house and my boss is there, her aunt is there and her mother is there and her mother told me, if you're not going to her auntie's house and we are going to - the police will come and catch you. Then I don't have any other choice so I have to go to her auntie's house and I went

Figure 2.1 Example of manual microanalysis of interview.

Once we agreed on our coding scheme, we then separately carried out open coding, before meeting to discuss similarities and differences between our results to enhance the reliability and reflexivity of our interpretations (Churchill, Lowery, McNally, & Rao, 1998; Eisner, 2003; Morrow, 2005). This process was eventually digitised, initially through the use of NVivo 8, which I received intensive training in. However, while I could see the ways in which it was helpful for qualitative analysis, I found it difficult to interact with and relate to, with the software functioning as a screen that prevented me from being immersed in the data. As such, I abandoned its use in favour of the original digital transcripts, with Doris and I separately introducing codes and concepts using the ‘comment’ option in Microsoft Word, as shown in Figure 2.2. We then met to discuss and verify our coding together. When we differed in our interpretations, we discussed them until we reached mutual agreement. We subsequently implemented this procedure for all the interviews that followed, with data collection and analysis alternating as much as practically possible.

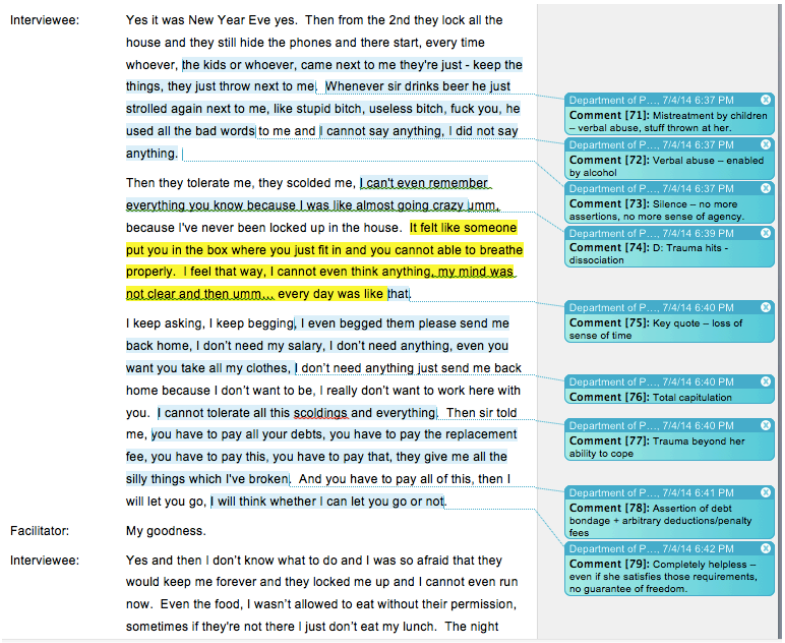


Figure 2.2 Example of digital open coding of interview.

Doris' close involvement in the coding process was a strategy specifically incorporated into my methodology to once again increase the level of trustworthiness in my research to the reader (Fassinger, 2005). Both of us were uniquely immersed in the data collected, generating separate interpretations during the analysis before meeting to ask each other questions and make comparisons. Although there was a high degree of similarity between our coding and perspectives, Doris' presence served as a counterpoint to my subjectivity, scaffolding my analytic process and enabling me to have confidence that our findings were truly reflective of what was happening in the data and not unduly influenced by my personal biases or assumptions.

After the analysis of several interviews, my method of open coding tended towards an analysis of whole sentences or even paragraphs, which Strauss and Corbin (1998) argued "is especially useful when the researcher already has several categories and wants to code specifically in relation to them" (p. 120). I then

extracted these codes into separate Word documents for each interview, where I could compare them side-by-side with the relevant memos and journals. From these documents, I conducted axial coding and coding for process, combining the codes into concepts and concepts into categories initially in written form, but then also diagrammatically. However, during this process, I experienced a lack of immersion in or perceived closeness to the data, as I felt separated by a computer screen from the phenomena I was investigating. After trying several different methods, I eventually settled upon writing each labeled concept onto a small piece of paper and sticking it onto a large whiteboard, where I could move it around, and I could draw arrows between related concepts to signify their interrelatedness in a process akin to mind mapping (see Figure 2.3). Much to the chagrin of my colleagues, my office began to take on a ‘Beautiful Mind’-like nature in which my desk became barricaded by an

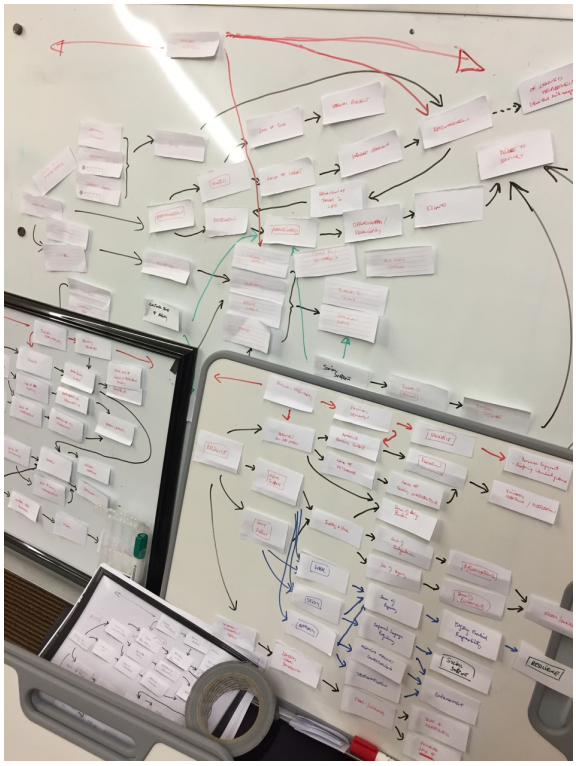


Figure 2.3 An example of axial coding and coding for process across interviews.

ever-increasing number of whiteboards. While somewhat inconvenient, I found this physical manifestation of my intellectual progress incredibly helpful and encouraging, especially as my colleagues would leave little post-it notes on certain sections they found particularly interesting.

Sadly, in November 2014, Doris was diagnosed with cancer. Dr Anthony Arcuri (who had completed his doctorate with Doris in 2007) was appointed as my adjunct supervisor to lend his considerable expertise in GT and assist temporarily with the continuation of my research. Although we hoped that Doris would recover rapidly and resume her integral role in this project, tragically, in April 2015, Doris passed away. While Professor Amanda Barnier (one of Doris' colleagues and collaborators) kindly agreed to be appointed as my new primary supervisor and Anthony generously offered to take on a more prominent and permanent role, attempts to resume my research were incredibly difficult due to our close personal and professional relationships with Doris. Her influence permeated all parts of the data analytic process, and the constant reminders of her meant that immersion in the data and the reminders of grief were essentially inseparable. Ultimately, the decision was made to take a hiatus from the project for mental health reasons.

Eventually, when I resumed data analysis in July 2016, Anthony and I were in agreement that we both needed to immerse ourselves in the data by beginning the process of coding each interview collaboratively once again. We separately conducted open and axial coding as well as coding for process, before meeting to discuss our results and decide upon our collaborative interpretations where we discovered differences. Given the similarity in our theoretical orientations, there was no surprise that our emergent concepts were highly similar to Doris and my original codes and so we combined them, bolstered by Anthony's helpful additional insights

from his extensive experience in clinical practice. Therefore, in total, I coded the data twice, and Doris and Anthony each coded it once, further enhancing its overall trustworthiness (Haverkamp, 2005).

During this process, I had difficulty at times moving from simply telling the story or getting caught up in the facts of survivors' experiences to thinking abstractly and theoretically about them. This was a not a problem unique to me, as Strauss and Corbin (1998) acknowledged that researchers can "get focused on pinning down exact facts … rather than thinking abstractly and more generally, thus moving from the particular to the general" (p. 83). I overcame this challenge by using the paradigm (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to clearly elucidate the relationships between categories, and thus make relational statements of provisional hypotheses about the phenomena in question (Arcuri, 2007). Such hypotheses comprised not just the categories developed through open and axial coding, along with their particular properties and dimensions, but also the processes of conditions, action-interactions and consequences surrounding them. By breaking survivors' experiences down into their pre-trafficking, trafficking and post-trafficking stages and comparing the impact these had on the processes outlined in these hypotheses, an initial theory began to crystallise. I then depicted this theory in diagrammatical form, and validated and elaborated it further by selective coding of other interviews. I continued to ask questions and make comparisons of the raw data, memos and journals, finding data that was initially disregarded, fleshing out underdeveloped categories and discarding excess categories that were superfluous to the developing theory. Finally, a theory that was able to explain all cases emerged, and this is presented in Chapter 3.

While this procedure could be described as an adaptation of, rather than a strict adherence to, the detailed and precise instructions outlined by Strauss and

Corbin (1998), the authors themselves acknowledge that understanding the underlying reasons behind these techniques is more important than applying them in a repetitious manner. Additionally, as flexibility and malleability are core principles of GT, the use of their methodology was open to modification as the researcher responds to various contingencies that emerge during the data collection and analysis process (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Overall, my motivation during this process was to pay homage to the underlying logic behind the creation of the GT methodology, capitalising on its strengths of capturing the complexity of survivors' experiences in a theory which I shall convey in narrative form (Cresswell, 1998). Having outlined the process and practice of GT utilised in this research project, I turn now to introduce the 12 individuals who generously and courageously agreed to participate in this project, each of whom is a survivor of international trafficking to either Australia or Singapore. Please note that I offered participants the opportunity to have their names changed for description in the project. Seven asked for names to be changed and five did not. I also changed or removed any identifying details as requested.

Description of Participants

Rose is a female in her mid 20s from India, who was trafficked into domestic servitude in Singapore for a year. The oldest of four sisters, she sought employment overseas to support her mother and siblings who were still studying after their father died of cancer. She was treated well for several months, until she objected to her employers sending her to work for a relative's family when they went on holiday. She then had her belongings thrown away, phone confiscated, food limited and movement restricted as the apartment was locked whenever a family member was

not around. Continually subject to physical and emotional abuse, she was able to escape after her trafficker forgot to lock the apartment door.

Alex is a male in his mid-30s from China who, along with his wife, was trafficked into the hospitality industry in Singapore for four and a half months. The oldest of two siblings, he took on the responsibility for running the family farm when his father was injured. After difficulties on the farm, he and his wife ignored the objections of their family and left their son in China, incurring a large debt in the process of migration. When he requested that they finally be paid so he could purchase medicine for his sick wife, they had their work permit terminated and they were evicted from their housing and left homeless for several days before finding shelter through an NGO.

Tusher is a male in his mid-20s from Bangladesh who was trafficked into the construction industry in Singapore for a period of nine months. The oldest of two siblings, he took on the responsibility for providing for his family after his father was unable to find work in the Middle East and his mother's savings were exhausted. He had two successful stints overseas prior to this, but made little money due to exorbitant fees incurred to facilitate the migration process. On his third trip to Singapore, he confronted his trafficker after nine months of working without being paid and had his work permit terminated.

Anne is a female in her early 40s from East Africa, who was trafficked into domestic servitude in Australia for three months. She became a domestic worker in Africa to support her children after political unrest and civil war resulted in her losing her mother and their home and property. When the family she worked with for several years moved to Australia, she agreed to migrate with them temporarily to help take care of their children. However, once she arrived, their relationship rapidly

deteriorated. She was locked in the house, not provided with adequate food, had no contact with the community or her children back home and worked extremely long hours. She was able to escape and seek help from a neighbour, but her employers saw her and assaulted her in the process. She was taken away by the police and referred to an NGO.

June is a female in her mid 20s from the Philippines, who was trafficked into domestic servitude in Singapore for ten months. The middle of five children, she originally became a domestic servant in the Philippines to support her mother and younger siblings, who were neglected by her alcoholic and abusive father. Her employers were initially kind, but then she became subject to extreme physical and emotional abuse for minor infractions. The most severe incidents included having bleach poured on her for missing marks while cleaning the bathroom or having her head slammed into the wall if she did not wake up on time in the morning. Fearing for her life, she managed to escape through the bedroom window of the apartment, jumping onto the balcony of the apartment below and fracturing her leg in the process.

Yan Zhi is a female in her late 20s from China, who was trafficked into the hospitality industry and subsequently the sex industry in Singapore for eight months. The middle of three siblings, she was forced to find employment to help fund medical treatment for elderly parents and a sick daughter. Upon her arrival, she was employed as a waitress and singer at a bar. Her employer used undisclosed additional charges and fines for not meeting sales quotas to coerce her into sex work to pay off her debt. Subject to physical and emotional abuse for refusing to sleep with clients, she escaped and found shelter at an NGO.

Jiao Jiao is a female in her early 30s from China, who was trafficked into the hospitality and sex industry in Singapore for six months. The oldest of three siblings, she heard that women who came to Singapore as entertainers made a good living. Desiring greater financial independence for herself and her son, she ignored the objections of her family and got a job in Singapore ostensibly as a waitress at the same bar as Yan Zhi. Subject to the same working conditions, she too was able to escape and join Yan Zhi at the shelter.

Toyin is a female in her mid 20s from Nigeria, who was trafficked into domestic servitude in Australia for six years. The youngest of five siblings, she moved to Australia as a teenager to live with distant relatives after her parents got divorced and her father was unable to support her. She was forced to work as a hairdresser at the family's shop six days a week, and as a domestic servant at night, doing all the cleaning and cooking for the family and their two children. She was not paid for her work, and had no freedom of movement or contact with her family in Nigeria. She narrowly avoided being married off to an older gentleman because she found the strength to assert her rights. She was finally able to leave when a customer at her store heard her story and referred her to an NGO.

Tina is a female in her late 20s from Malaysia, who was trafficked into the sex industry in Australia for three months. The youngest of three children, she worked three jobs to support her elderly parents and pay off a large debt incurred when she had her first child. Seeking to escape a relationship characterised by domestic violence, she was offered an opportunity to realise her dream of studying and working overseas at no upfront cost. Upon her arrival, she and the other girls she travelled with were forced to work at a brothel to pay off the debt incurred for their transportation, which only steadily increased due to arbitrary fines and exorbitant

charges for living expenses. Separated from her friends at a different brothel, she was forced to work 24 hour shifts, without the ability to choose clients, use protection or get medical attention when she was frequently sick. Eventually she was able to escape with a friend, sleeping in the park for several nights until they were found by the Australian Federal Police.

Sue is a female in her mid 30s from Malaysia, who was trafficked into the sex industry in Australia for three months. The second of three children, she worked in a factory in Malaysia and then Singapore to support her parents and her daughter. Along with Tina, she was introduced to an agent who promised her the opportunity to study and work in Australia. Forced to work at a brothel to pay off her debt, she was threatened with exposure of her participation in sex work to her family back in Malaysia if she did not cooperate. She was not paid for her work, surviving only on instant noodles for long periods. She was able to escape with Tina and was eventually discovered by the Australian Federal Police.

Sandra is a female in her 50s from the Pacific Islands, who was trafficked into domestic servitude in Australia for three years. She became a housekeeper at a hotel in the Pacific Islands to support her children after leaving her husband and a situation of domestic violence. When the family she worked for returned to Australia, they invited her to come with them with the promise of greater pay and permanent residency for her and her children. However, once she arrived, their relationship rapidly deteriorated as she was not paid for her work, was forced to hand over all her documentation, made to sleep in a room with the dogs, not provided with adequate food, and denied access to medical or dental services. She was rescued when a friend of her employer became suspicious and called the Department of Immigration.

Arun is a male in his late 20s from India, who was trafficked into the hospitality industry in Australia for a month. He sought to work overseas to support his mother, who had been a migrant worker herself, and his sister who was studying, as his father was an alcoholic and was unable to support them. Introduced by a family member to an Australian restaurant owner who was recruiting in India, he signed a contract and his migration was facilitated by an agent recommended by the restaurant owner. Upon arrival in Australia, he was met at the airport by his employer and taken to his house. He was forced to sleep on the living room floor in winter and was under constant surveillance while working from 9am to midnight seven days a week, often in more than one restaurant. He was rescued by the police and the Department of Immigration after a tip off from one of his co-workers at the restaurant who became suspicious of his long working hours and lack of pay.

This Chapter has covered the history and practice of Grounded Theory, elucidating its principles and practical execution in data collection and analysis. In subsequent chapters, I will expand on the grounded theory I generated using the process outlined above. Specifically, in Chapter 3 I will start by presenting a brief overview of my theory of the lived experiences of trafficking survivors, before, during, and after trafficking.

Chapter 3

Overview of the Grounded Theory

The primary goal of this thesis is to provide a contextualised account of survivors' trafficking experiences within their life narrative, thereby illuminating how survivors' trafficking was intricately interwoven with their life trajectory before, during and afterwards. In line with this approach, the overarching themes of survivors' experiences, along with the categories that comprise them, have been incorporated into a model created using Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The aim of this theory is to expose and interrogate the complexity of the experience of survivors in Australia and Singapore. As such, in this chapter I present a brief overview of the model, which comprises three stages addressing the pre-trafficking, trafficking and post-trafficking stages of survivors' experiences, graphically represented in Figure 3.1. Each of these stages is expanded on in greater detail in Chapters 4 to 6, with particular emphasis on how survivors described their lived experience in their own words. It is important to note that as changes in the systemic conditions occurred (i.e., survivors moved through the model from the pre-trafficking to trafficking stage or from the trafficking to post-trafficking stage), the previous stage/s became part of the preconditions for the subsequent stages, providing further contextualisation for the categories described consequently.

Within each stage, the major categories have been organised according to the paradigm outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998). As delineated in Chapter 2, their paradigm consists of conditions, action-interactions and consequences. The conditions are the reasons survivors provided for the why, when and how of the events they described, action-interactions are the actual responses they made to the events or situations that occurred, and consequences are the expected or eventual outcomes of their action-interactions (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). Additionally, the non-linear nature of survivors' experiences in the trafficking and post-trafficking stages is

accounted for with the inclusion of two dynamic categories, which impact the way other categories are experienced over time. This is depicted in Figure 3.1 where the categories are labelled as dynamic.

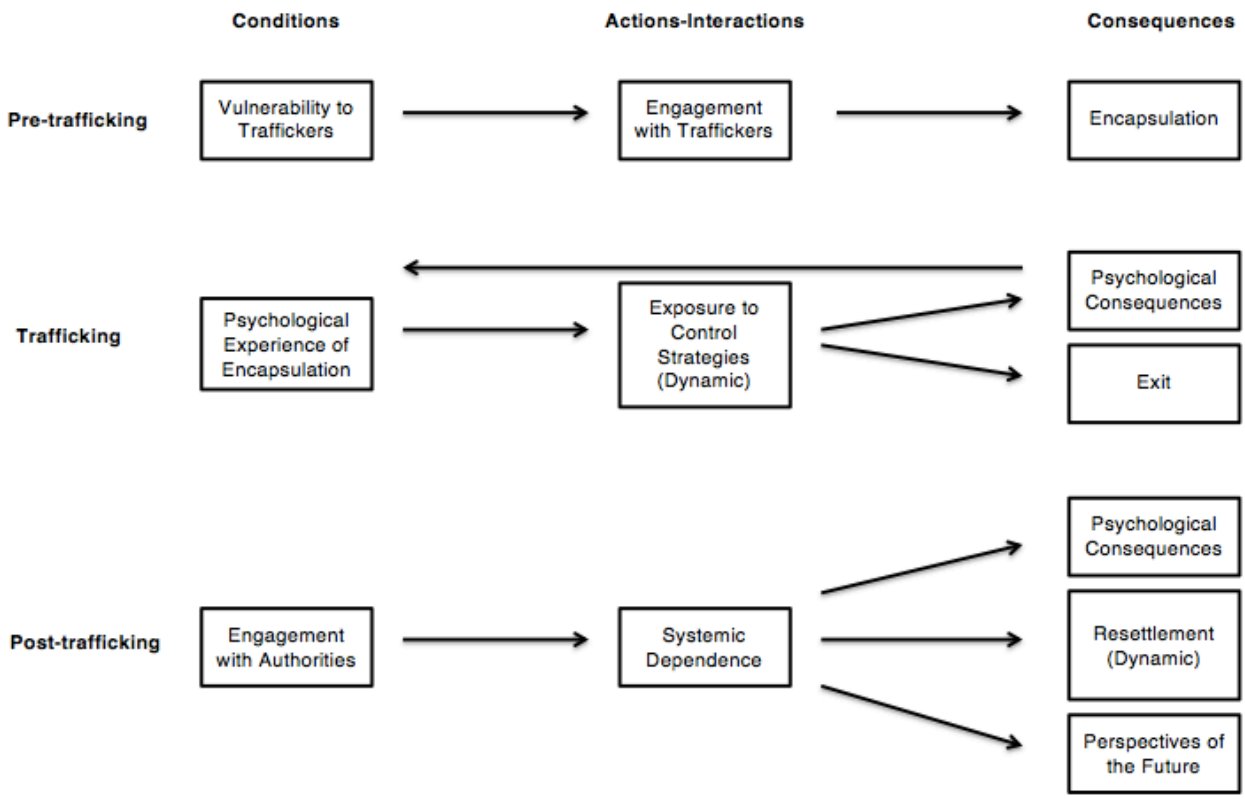


Figure 3.1 Graphical Representation of the Grounded Theory of the Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking in Australia and Singapore.

The first stage, pre-trafficking, is the most linear of the three stages in the model. Survivors described the condition of vulnerability to their traffickers. At this stage, their action-interaction patterns included processes of engaging with their traffickers, which lead to the consequence of encapsulation when they found themselves in an environment completely under their traffickers' control. The second stage, trafficking, picks up where the first stage ends, with survivors detailing the conditions of their psychological experience of being encapsulated. Their action-interactions involved the first of the dynamic categories, which is survivors' exposure

to traffickers' control strategies. This exposure resulted in certain psychological consequences, which at times fed back into and impacted action-interactions, and ultimately the strategies and sequences of events that resulted in them exiting the trafficking context. Finally, the post-trafficking stage captures the conditions of engaging with relevant authorities where survivors' sought support. They found themselves in a pattern of action-interactions with their service providers best characterised as a state of systemic dependence. This resulted in serious psychological consequences, which were either alleviated or exacerbated by their context and which impacted their perspectives of the future. These experience pathways are graphically depicted in Figure 3.1.

In the current Chapter I have explored how the theoretical model was created using Grounded Theory, and how it is applied in the rest of this thesis. In Chapters 4 to 6, I expand on the experience pathways outlined in Figure 3.1 to explore the pre-trafficking experiences of survivors. A special note is included here to orient the reader to my usage of terminology and explain the rationale behind my decision making in the rest of this thesis. In Chapter 2, in accordance with Grounded Theory conventions, I described the ways in which I analysed and coded the interview data to form concepts, which I then amalgamated at various levels of abstraction to create the central categories that make up the theory outlined above. However, as the focus of this thesis shifts from methodological procedures to my results, which detail survivors' descriptions of and reflections upon their experiences, I deemed it appropriate to similarly shift my terminology. As a result, I will use the language of variables, themes, factors and processes to bridge the gap between their phenomenological experiences and my abstracted theorising. I also made this

decision in accordance with conventions in the body of existing literature as reviewed in my Introduction (Chapter 1) and Discussion (Chapter 7).

Chapter 4

Survivors' Experiences of Pre-Trafficking

Whereas Chapter 3 provided a brief overview of the model in its entirety, this Chapter explores the first stage of the model, detailing survivors' pre-trafficking experiences in depth. This stage encompasses everything from survivors' recollections of their family backgrounds and personal histories up to the physical conditions of their encapsulated trafficking context. Survivors described the factors that they perceived to ultimately contribute to their vulnerability to their traffickers, the process of engagement with their traffickers and their shock at finding themselves trapped within a system of encapsulation. I will define what I mean by "encapsulation" in more detail and provide examples of it later in the Chapter, but essentially I mean the extent to which their environment was controlled by their traffickers. This stage of the model is presented in Figure 4.1, which presents a graphical representation of the grounded theory of survivors' pre-trafficking experiences. I refer to the model throughout this chapter.

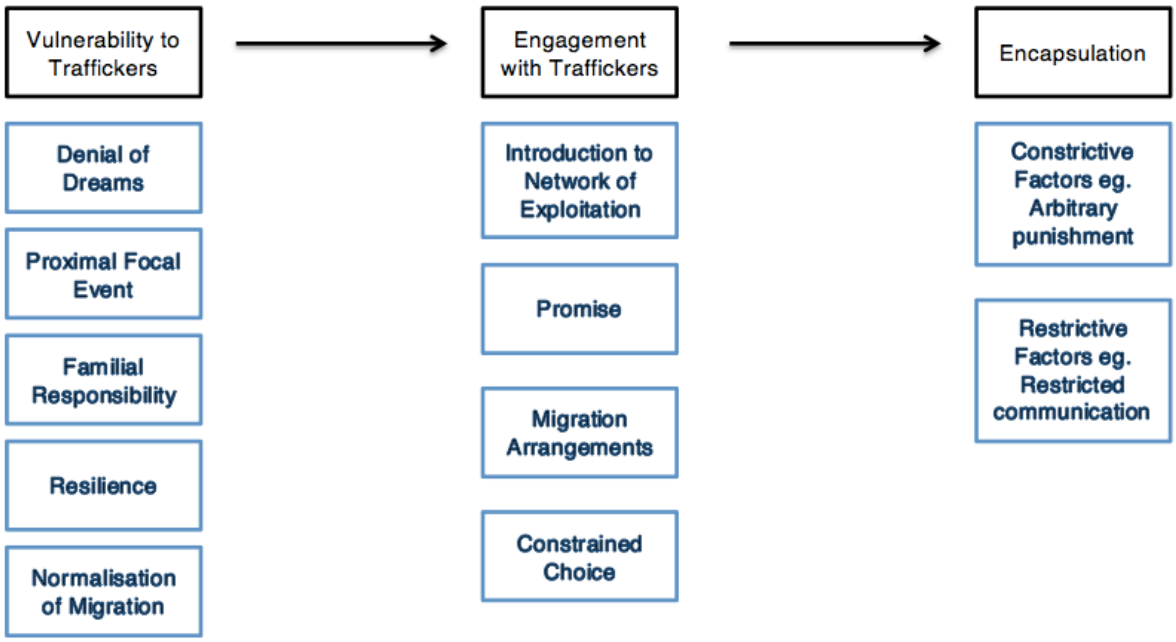


Figure 4.1 Graphical Representation of the Grounded Theory of the Pre-Trafficking Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking.

Perceived Vulnerability to Traffickers

According to the definition in Chapter 1 (United Nations, 2000), human trafficking involves the abuse of power over or the exploitation of a position of vulnerability individuals find themselves in. During their interviews, most participants disclosed childhood experiences punctuated by poverty, parental substance abuse, domestic violence and lack of education. While many studies have described how such experiences function as risk factors for trafficking (see Perry & McEwing, 2013, for a review), I was particularly interested in survivors' subjective experiences of these phenomena.

In this chapter, I investigate how such factors in the personal histories of survivors that contributed to their perceived vulnerability and made them ripe for exploitation. Specifically, denial of dreams, a proximal focal event, familial responsibility, survivors' resilience and the normalisation of migration were all factors that are believed to have contributed to survivors' vulnerability. These variables were interrelated at the sub-personal, personal and cultural levels and their impact can only truly be understood in context with each other.

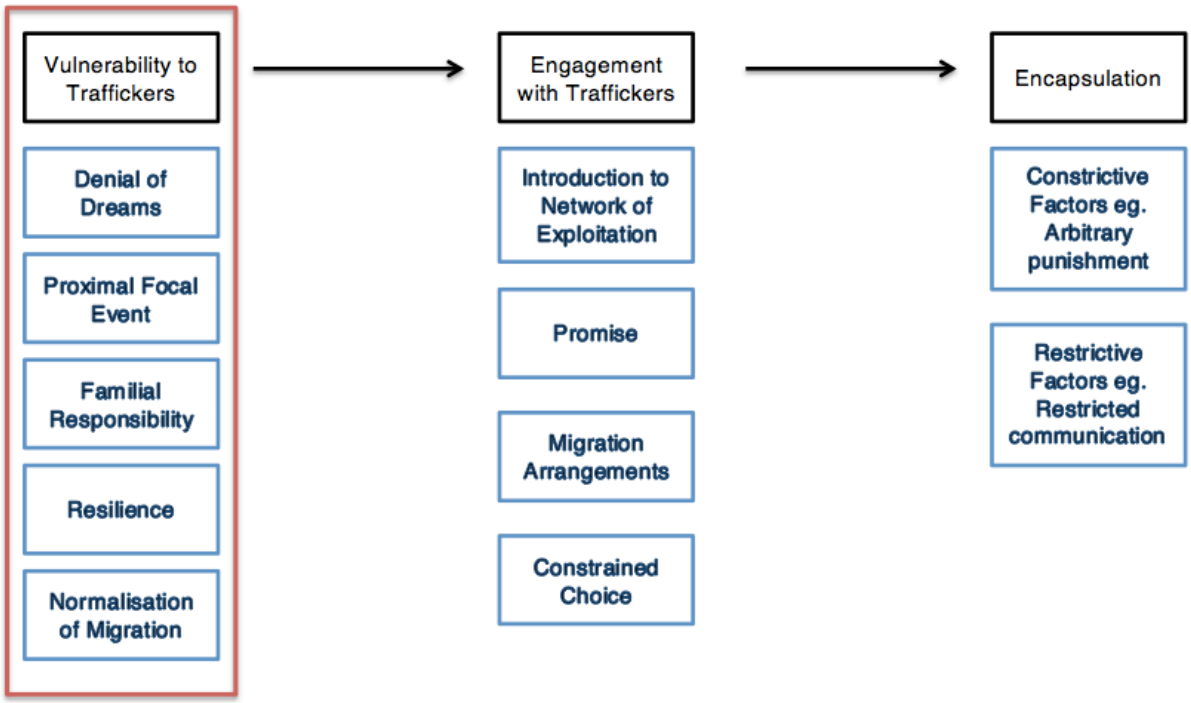


Figure 4.1 (a) Graphical Representation of the Grounded Theory of the Pre-Trafficking Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking (Vulnerability to Traffickers is highlighted).

Denial of dreams: "I can't get what I want". Previous studies have highlighted the role that risk factors such as poverty and unemployment play in creating vulnerability (e.g., Gajic-Velnajoski & Stewart, 2007; Schauer & Weaton, 2006). However, for survivors, it was not just the presence of these factors or their severity that predicted their level of vulnerability, but the lived experience of the consequences of these factors. As Sue said, *"[I come from] a really poor family. It's not luxury life like here … It's not easy. I can't get what I want."* For Sue, and other survivors like her, their personal and cultural history was one typified by the denial of their dreams and by not being able to get what they wanted. Over the course of answering general questions about their childhood and family history, survivors most often described experiencing the denial of their dreams in the areas of education and employment.

Female survivors like Sue and Toyin reported that the poverty they grew up in meant they could not pursue their educational dreams, "*It was tough times to the extent that you want to go to school but your parents cannot afford it … Even public school there you have to pay for it. And not like every family can afford it."* Toyin recalled having to leave school at 16. Sue put it even more clearly saying, "*My dream is to study and go to university and do everything, but I understand my family can't afford it."*

For Sandra, this poverty was compounded by the cultural challenge of growing up in a patriarchal society in which females were forced to give up their hopes of further education for the good of their younger male siblings, "*I always wanted to become a school teacher or a nurse … but they couldn't afford us to go to school because I had 2 younger brothers after me, and they had to go to school*." Even after making that sacrifice for her brothers, she was still unable to gain financial independence to pursue her personal dreams, "*I couldn't even go and find a job because my dad didn't allow me … We can't go out and work, without money we can't do anything, you know? That's the problem*." The combination of her cultural and socioeconomic context deprived her of a sense of agency and the ability to pursue her own dreams. These factors in turn heightened the vulnerability that her traffickers ultimately were able to take advantage of. Even after she married, Sandra still was constrained by her cultural circumstances as she "*couldn't go out and work, and with no money we can't do anything you know? I didn't have any bank accounts, nothing*."

The economic context was equally responsible for the denied dreams of male participants like Tusher. He acknowledged that, "*Of course I had a dream but in my country there is a lot of educated people that don't have jobs. Even if they are*

educated they are getting jobs as general workers only." In his home country of Bangladesh, unemployment and the lack of economic growth meant that there was little hope of finding the type of well paying job he desired even if he completed his tertiary education. Similarly, Arun dreamed of becoming an electrician but was advised that studying hospitality would increase his employment prospects in the future. As a result, migration for employment began to look increasingly attractive. However, often the cultural context impacted these dreams for migration too, as Alex encountered, "*I wanted to be a soldier but I didn't ... In our village, if a person leaves and does something, that's bad. It's bad and that's why our parents do not agree to our leaving the village*." This meant that participants felt trapped within a context where they systemically were forced to give up their dreams while being denied the opportunity to explore alternative options; their inability to explore other options reinforced the shame they felt as a perceived burden upon their families.

Proximal focal event: "That's why I came here". While the denial of survivors' dreams encompassed the historical factors that contributed to their ensuing vulnerability to trafficking, proximal focal events–recent life circumstances or incidents–that acted as the catalyst for the series of events that lead to the survivor being trafficked. Proximal focal events served to exacerbate their personal financial distress, increase their family's dependence upon them and/or threatened their lives, making migration for employment a more attractive option. Once again, these subcategories are not mutually exclusive, with all survivors except Jiao Jiao describing at least one of these experiences.

Domestic violence. Survivors who experienced domestic violence were most direct in detailing how their situation contributed to a desire to leave not just that specific relational context but also (often) their home country. For June, the

perpetrator was her father, *"My father is a drunkard, every time he goes home, he beats us and then attempted to kill us ... So that's why I come here to work."* For Sandra and Tina respectively, the repeated violence they experienced took place at the hands of their partners, sadly often right in front of their children:

> *When he hit me a few times, in front of my boys, I didn't like it. Like I really can't take that, you know. Then I left home*.
>
> *He's beating me and everything like it's no good, you know, in front of the kids. That's why I left him … He's threatening me a lot, like to burn down my house and everything*. *That's why I came here.*

In both cases, their partners were the breadwinners in the relationship, so being forced from their homes meant they found themselves in dire economic circumstances with dependent children and no source of income. It was in the process of seeking greater employment and economic opportunities that they both ended up being trafficked to Australia.

Bereavement. The bereavement of a family member, especially the breadwinner of the family, also served as a proximal focal event that lead to trafficking. Rose described probably the most startling change of prospects as a result of bereavement. Her family, which had been amongst the elite in her small community in Eastern India, suddenly found themselves almost entirely destitute due to the cost of medical treatment for her father, *"He needs to do the chemo and we have to spend all our money … our life is changing upside down."* Tragically, despite this treatment, Rose's father passed away a year later.

Articulating in a particularly heartbreaking manner the connection between bereavement and her desire for migration, Anne revealed her confronting context of conflict and loss:

> *I lost [my mum] and lost everything I had, everything was gone … I don't have anywhere to go ... Everywhere chaotic fighting and burning homes and bad stuff are going on in the city*.
>
> *There was a lot of stuff happening back home and they were making me feel afraid ... They were part of what made me come over, just to save my life … That I can escape to another world and run away from whatever is pursuing or threatening me*.

Anne eloquently gave voice to the pervasiveness of her loss, not just of her mother and all their belongings, but also her sense of security as a result of civil war. For her, the idea of migrating for employment was not just a way of securing her economic future but a way of securing her physical future as well. It provided a means of escape from her current circumstances of devastation and a hope that she would be able to rebuild her life in a new country, saying, "*So I was like, oh, I can escape to another world. And run away from whatever is pursuing me, or whatever is threatening me. So yeah."*

Injury or unemployment of the family breadwinner. While other participants did not suffer circumstances as severe as those mentioned above, injury or unemployment of the family breadwinner had similar economic consequences. For Alex, his "*father suffered a leg injury, he was injured and that meant he couldn't work*

in the field." Coming from a farming community in rural China, this meant that Alex was now solely responsible for providing for his wife and son and his parents. Despite his best efforts, "*it was really hard to make money, very difficult*," and that inspired his search for alternative employment opportunities.

In Tusher's case, his father's unemployment lead to their economic malaise, "*My father doesn't have any job now. He worked in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia before but after he came back he can't go back there anymore. So my family you can say is totally depending on me."* After spending their family's savings, it was up to Tusher to provide for their future. Similarly, while Arun's father had made good money as a chauffeur in the Middle East, changes in legislation in the countries he worked in meant he was no longer able to find employment there. To make matters worse, his father's alcoholism meant that there was little provision for their family expenses, increasing the pressure on Arun to provide.

Unexpected medical expenses. The final proximal focal event that survivors mentioned was unexpected medical expenses for themselves or family members that pushed them beyond their already limited financial capacity. For Yan Zhi, "*A family member fell sick, that's why I had to come out and work. My husband is not able to support all of us so I needed to work to support our families*." The situation for Tina was more complex in that her medical expenses were incurred as a result of the legal consequences of her pregnancy, "*In Malaysia when pregnancy, if you're not married, it's illegal. So I have to pay about $6000 for everything because I have to bribe them … For me it was too much money and I had to pay everything. I had to do it alone*."

Overall, it is evident from these examples that domestic violence, bereavement and unexpected medical expenses compounded the already desperate circumstances survivors found themselves in. It is interesting to note that in

comparison to their denied dreams, which were mentioned generally in passing as part of their family history, participants were more direct and explicit about how these proximal focal events contributed to their subsequent trafficking.

Familial responsibility: "I want to give them a beautiful life". The third key factor that contributed to survivors' vulnerability to their traffickers was familial responsibility; their recognition and acceptance of a duty and obligation to not just provide for themselves but their family as well (in some case, their extended family). This sense of familial responsibility was heavily influenced by their cultural background, with all the participants in this study coming from collectivist Asian and African countries. Notably, none of these countries have social support programs or government welfare programs that can be regularly relied on in situations like the proximal focal events described above. Sue summed up this predicament rather succinctly, "*I can't do it, and the government also cannot help us do it even though the family can't do it … It's difficult*." Participants described various pathways to accepting the mantle of familial responsibility to ensure their family's survival, but all internalised it as part of their sense of identity and purpose, made important life decisions accordingly and sacrificed their own desires for the greater good of others.

Oldest child. The most common pathway to inheriting familial responsibility was simply being the oldest child in the family. As a result of the proximal focal event, particularly in cases of bereavement or unemployment of the family breadwinner, families were now dependent upon the earning capacity of their oldest child. Vulnerability ensued when earning capacity in their home country was insufficient for their family's needs. Rose summarised most clearly the tension she felt as the oldest child between self-sufficiency and familial responsibility after her father's death, "*The money wasn't enough, the salary was not enough, it was enough for me but not my*

family … All the money was gone so that is why I chose to come here." While the income she made working in a call centre and as a manicurist was sufficient to support herself, it was not enough to provide for the needs of her family and that lead to her seeking employment opportunities elsewhere. Similarly, Jiao Jiao stated, "*I'm the eldest and that's why I wanted to come out and make some money … What I earned in China was not enough*."

This sense of responsibility stemming from being the eldest was particularly evident when survivors had younger siblings that were still in school or continuing further qualifications. As Alex shared, *"I am the eldest son at home and my younger brother was in school so I had to work on the farm*." Similarly, Tusher said, *"I am the oldest child. My sister is still studying, that's why I have to come here and work*." In his case, the pressure on him was compounded by the need to provide for the cost of his sister's university fees and living expenses as she studied to become a nurse back in Bangladesh on top of his family's day-to-day expenses. They hoped that once she completed her degree, she would be able to find a high paying job and assume her share of the familial responsibility, but until then the burden rested sorely on his shoulders. It is in cases like Tusher's that the intersection between denial of dreams and familial responsibility is most evident. His sacrifice of a dream of tertiary education so that he could work enabled the investment of limited family resources in his sister, with the hope that their family would benefit more in the long run.

Another contributing factor to the sense of familial responsibility that eldest children felt was the desire to provide for their parents. Many had witnessed the sacrifices their parents made for them over the years. Now that they had reached working age themselves they were eager to return the favour. For example, Arun said, "*I told my mum I just want to [go] overseas or somewhere so I can work and*

make money and send my family. My main thing is I want to help my mum. I don't want mum to work." This motivation was exacerbated by his desire to not be like his father, an alcoholic who neglected his family, "*Every time I look at my father, I don't want to be a bad role model. I want to make life better and help my family too … I don't want to be my dad*."

Most responsible child. In comparison to the oldest children described above, June and Tina came from families where their elder siblings were unable to provide for the family due to unemployment, being married and having their own nuclear family to provide for or simply being "not responsible". This last option was particularly interesting because it suggested that the acceptance of familial responsibility was not automatic but involved a conscious choice. For June, her challenges started with her father neglecting his responsibility, "*My father is irresponsible, he's always drunk. So he never helps my mother … I want her to take rest, not work, work, work, so that's why I came here, so that I can give her a beautiful life also*." Like Arun, June desired to provide a "beautiful life" for her mother, but she faced the added challenge of having to support her younger siblings' continuing education, "*Life in the Philippines is very tough. The salary is very low, so I need to help send some of my sisters, brothers to school … I need to earn some more money to give to my mother so that some of my brothers can go to school or college*." It is noteworthy that while she mentioned helping to support both her brothers and sisters in going to school, she only mentioned her brothers when it came to going to college; perhaps another indication of the continuing cultural impact of growing up in a patriarchal society.

In contrast to June, Tina seemed to have inherited her sense of responsibility somewhat by default, being the last child at home with her parents and the most

capable and responsible one, "*I have to support my parents because they're already old. My father's not working, everyone is so old. My brother's not responsible and my sister is not working too, so I have to afford everything*." Tina conveys such an acute sense of frustration in her language, that this was not the life she would have chosen for herself but a tremendous burden she was forced to assume to ensure her family's survival. She continued, "*I did work, but you have to pay this, this, this, this; still you have to work three jobs … I'm like so tired*."

Single parent with dependent children. In cases where participants were single mothers with dependent children, the role of familial responsibility was especially obvious. Sue summarised the mentality of familial responsibility most succinctly, "*I can't think of myself only. I have to think for my family. I have to take care of my son now*." From Anne's perspective, having children severely limited her options, "*I don't have any other choice, I can't not work, I got my three kids with me and they were young back then*." "*I am divorced and I would like to earn some money … I would like to be more financially independent to help my son*," said Jiao Jiao. For these women, the goal was financial independence not just for themselves, but to secure the economic future of their children and to provide them with opportunities they themselves never had.

In summary, survivors faced a difficult decision due to life circumstances, most of which were out of their control. Rather than abandoning their families, participants in this study chose to accept responsibility for providing for their family's ongoing needs, demonstrating their strength and resilience. However, while their economic prospects may have been sufficient for themselves, they were not sufficient for their family, and this discrepancy contributed to their vulnerability to trafficking.

Resilience: "When you go through tough times it makes you strong". I was especially struck by the ways in which participants perceived their difficult life circumstances, which I have outlined above. Rather than seeing the denial of their dreams, proximal focal events and the burden of familial responsibility as a reason to give up and live in learned helplessness or hopelessness, they saw these circumstances as additional motivation to overcome. Their experiences made them more determined to "achieve upward mobility through outward mobility" (Yea, 2012, p. 64), as they sought new avenues of generating income to fulfill their newfound responsibility. In doing so, they demonstrated high levels of resilience; what Jack Block termed "the characteristic ability to dynamically and progressively adapt to stress in specifically unrehearsed yet effective ways as required by existing circumstances" (Block, 2002, p. 4).

This attitude was most strongly demonstrated by Toyin, who repeated the phrase, "*It was hard, but we survived, it makes you strong*" often after describing challenges she experienced. When asked why she kept saying that, she explained the influence her culture and community had on her perspective of difficulty:

> *In Nigeria, when you go through these tough times it makes you strong. You want to aim higher … Where I'm coming from every situation makes you dream higher. Because you want to be better for yourself and your community. Hard work doesn't kill.*

This resilience was expressed in an expectation and willingness to work hard in the pursuit of success in the accounts of Sue, Tina, Rose, Alex and Yan Zhi. For Sue, this started with working extremely long hours even while she was still in school:

> *Even at school I just work in a normal factory as an operator … Because I want to study, I can't ask my parents more than that to help me … Morning school, evening work and then come back again sleep, do some homework and then school and work again*. [Interviewer: what were your hours like?] *School 7 o'clock, 2 o'clock start work till 10 o'clock, then school starts in the morning again*.

Tina similarly worked three exhausting jobs in an attempt to provide for her family:

> *I had to work three jobs: I work morning office and then afternoon I'm working in the Japanese restaurant and then at night time I working in the bar. Nine o'clock till 4 o'clock in the morning*.

Rose described not just a willingness to work hard, but a commitment to being acquiescent and to not being a difficult employee so long as she was treated fairly:

> *I came here to work, I don't mind working hard for my family. I don't complain as long as they're not making noise with me*.

Alex expressed a similar willingness to both work hard and suffer, based in part on his familiarity with the difficulties of working on a farm:

> *I can do most jobs. I don't mind working hard and suffering some because I came from a farm*.

Finally, Yan Zhi succinctly added, "*I was willing to work hard to make money with my hands."*

Sadly, the paradox of this resilience was that it contributed to their vulnerability and ultimately their trafficking. It was the combination of resilience with denial of their dreams, proximal focal events and their familial responsibility that led them to sacrifice their own sense of agency and personal aspirations in the hope of advancing the prospects of their family. They were willing to take disproportionate risks, ignore the concerns of well-meaning people and naively trust deceptive businessmen they had not previously met, all in the hope of a better future. As Yan Zhi stated, "*I didn't know much about it but I thought why not, just go there and see what happens*." Tusher even went so far as to explicitly acknowledge that fulfilling his familial responsibility would bring him joy even amidst hardship:

> *After we work if we get our salary, like the one our employer should pay, of course we never think how we suffer in working. We'll be happy automatically*.

Normalisation of migration. Many studies in the field of human trafficking have highlighted the role that globalisation plays as an important risk factor (Potocky, 2011). Increasingly interconnected networks of transportation that facilitate travel and migration, as well as greater exposure through media and social media to the quality of life in first world destination countries, has made developed countries attractive destinations for those in developing countries. For the participants in this study, however, the factors that helped normalise the idea of migration and made it a viable

option were much closer to home. These included prior familial and personal experience working overseas and positive impressions of the destination country.

Prior familial experience working overseas. Several of the survivors had parents themselves had generally positive experiences working overseas. As mentioned above, both Tusher's and Arun's fathers worked in the Middle East until they were unable to find further employment. Several members of June's extended family worked as domestic servants in Singapore and Hong Kong, so she believed she had a very good idea of what to expect upon her arrival in Singapore, "*I ask them what is the life like here in Singapore, what kind of work."* Jiao Jiao knew several people from her village who successfully migrated to Singapore for work from China and made money singing; this contributed to her desire to follow in their footsteps.

Interestingly, these prior familial experiences were not all positive. Arun's mother was a domestic worker in the Middle East and suffered terribly, "*My mother told me they kicked and slapped her if something went wrong*." However, her bad experience did not sufficiently dissuade him from his goal of finding a job overseas; the notion of migration for employment already had been normalised as the way he would fulfill his sense of familial responsibility.

Prior personal experience working overseas. Two of the survivors interviewed, Sue and Tusher, both had several personal experiences working overseas in Singapore prior to their trafficking. "*First I worked in Singapore, for a chemical company and then I moved to another one … I worked a few years there then back to Kuala Lumpur before coming* [to Australia]," said Sue. She reported that those jobs were positive experiences and enabled her to support her family. However, when those contracts ended she was unable to find further employment and had to move home. Similarly, Tusher worked for two companies in Singapore for a total period of

three years where he had good experiences and was generally well treated. However, because of the amount of debt he incurred to facilitate migration in the first place, he did not make any money from his time spent overseas. As a result, these prior experiences actually served to compound his, and his family's, vulnerability to trafficking by deepening instead of alleviating their financial distress.

Positive impressions of the destination country. For those without immediate family members who had worked overseas, normalisation of migration occurred through broader cultural networks that created positive impressions of the destination country. Given the economic predicament participants found themselves in, the higher wages and earning power due to comparative exchange rates often were powerful incentives. Alex and his wife heard that they could "*make money more easily*" in Singapore compared to working on their family farm in China. Likewise, Jiao Jiao said, "*I heard that one could make more money here … which means more money to spend in China*." She also highlighted the role that safety played in her decision making process, "*They said that Singapore is a developed country where a girl could be safe and not have people say that she would meet any harm*." Many of the countries that participants came from also had well established networks for migration for work, which made some destinations more appealing than others. "*There are a lot of agencies who can help us to come [to Singapore], so it's easy for us to come here and find a job … They helped me find an employer here*," said June.

For Sandra and Anne, previous employers in their home country encouraged them to migrate. They spoke glowingly about working and living conditions in Australia and ultimately facilitated the process. Of all the participants interviewed, Toyin was perhaps the least enthusiastic about the prospect of moving to Australia. As a child, she had a highly transient upbringing after her parents divorced, moving

around repeatedly. She shared that this constant transience normalised migration for her, "*You think if you move to new places, it will still be comfortable for you, so you won't mind to move anywhere."*

These positive impressions were enough to overcome what some participants reported as parental or cultural disapproval of migration, particularly for females. Jiao Jiao reported that "*my family worries about me going overseas alone being a girl, that being bad for my reputation*." Yan Zhi stated that from her parents' perspective, "*there is fear when a girl goes overseas that she will end up in a bad line of work."* This fear of the overseas unknown was not limited to female participants. As Alex shared, "*If a person leaves and does something, that's bad outside. It's bad and that's why our parents do not agree to our leaving the village*." Sadly, for these participants it was their families' fears not their positive impressions that turned out to be true.

Engagement with Traffickers

In the previous section, I detailed the factors that survivors believed contributed to their vulnerability to their traffickers. In this section, I address the process of interaction with their traffickers. To put this in the language of Grounded Theory, these are the action-interaction patterns that led to them being trafficked (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Whereas the factors discussed above are closely interrelated, the factors I consider in this section are more sequential: survivors followed a pathway from their introduction into a network of exploitation, to being made a promise, to making migration arrangements and ultimately to making decisions from a position of constrained choice.

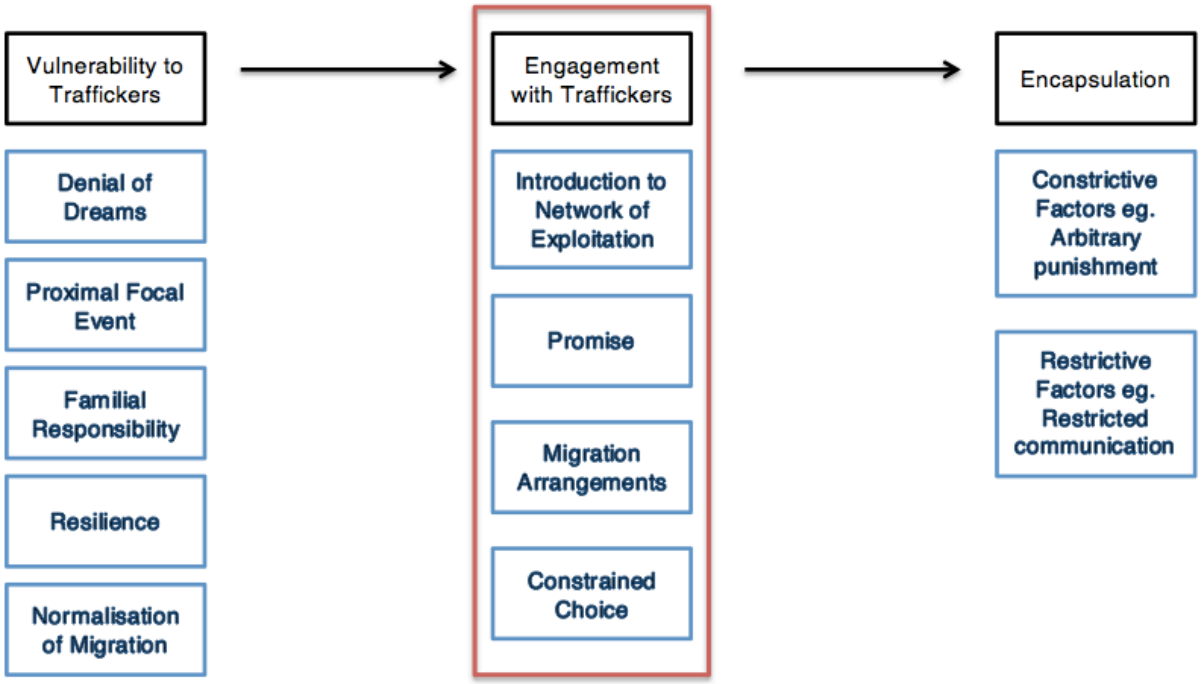


Figure 4.1 (b) Graphical Representation of the Grounded Theory of the Pre-Trafficking Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking (with Engagement with Traffickers highlighted).

Introduction to a network of exploitation. Survivors in this study all mentioned how they first came into contact with their traffickers. Their stories were not at all like the stereotypical cases often portrayed in films or the media of women abducted off the streets by organised crime syndicates and forced into slavery-like conditions. Instead, survivors shared a process of systematic coercion and deception, perpetuated by people with whom they had some degree of social connection. This included people who they previously were employed by, found themselves through agencies or advertisements or were introduced to by friends or acquaintances. This pattern is consistent with other research, which has argued that trafficking relationships are most often structured by "personal, sometimes familial sets of relationships" (Derks, 1997, p. 14), rather than criminal organisations (Simmons, O'Brien, David, & Beacroft, 2013).

Trust in previous employer: "I trusted them". For Sandra and Anne, the introduction to their traffickers came in the form of prior employers with whom they already had established, lengthy working relationships. This prior relationship involved a level of trust, which was pivotal in their decision to leave their families behind and move to Australia. Sandra explained that she worked at a hotel they owned as a housekeeper back in Fiji saying, "*I knew them for more than a year and they offered me a job as a housekeeper … They promised me a paid job and to help me with my permanent residency and I trusted them*."

Similarly, Anne recounted that she "*knew the family that hired me as a domestic helper*". She worked for them for several months in Nigeria when the husband was killed in an aircraft crash. The wife decided to return with the children to Australia and asked Anne if she would relocate temporarily to help their family get settled, "*She was like "would you mind coming for six months and then you can go back?" I was like ok, I can come over, help your kids settle … I trusted them. I was like ok, I'm in safe hands*." In both these cases, the jobs their traffickers provided in their home countries were lifelines amidst their incredibly difficult circumstances (as outlined earlier). They were reasonably well treated, and given the personal relationships they established, had no reason to expect the quality of their treatment to change once they arrived in Australia.

Found an agent themselves. Yan Zhi, Rose and June provided brief and matter-of-fact descriptions of how they personally found the agents that facilitated their migration to Singapore. Yan Zhi simply said, "*They had an advertisement saying they were an agent. I was not introduced by a friend*." It was interesting how she contrasted this process to being introduced by a friend. Similarly, June found an agent herself, highlighting how this was a relatively easy process and there were

many possible options, "*There's a lot of agencies also who can help us to come here, so it's easy for us to come here to find a job*." Finally, Rose spoke of finding an agent to help her get work in Singapore, but did not provide much detailed information about the process, preferring to focus more on the nature of her subsequent treatment by her traffickers.

Referred by an acquaintance or friend. Being referred to an agent by someone who lived in their town was a theme touched on by Alex, Tusher and Arun. According to Alex, someone from his village referred him to an agent who previously facilitated his migration to Singapore. Initially, it was Alex's wife who was first offered a job in Singapore before Alex came to join her. Tusher shared how important a role the network of agencies played in facilitating his migration to Singapore, "*When we come here, we cannot come here directly, we have to call the agent or training centre*." Speaking specifically about the person who contributed to his trafficking, he added, "*His house is near my house, you can say neighbor … He has another agent who contacted him. He said it was a good opportunity*." In Arun's case, he was approached by a man who worked with his father, who knew a man from Australia who was looking for employees for his hospitality businesses. Arun said, "*I spoke to the guy. I gave him my resume and my passport copy and he told me ok, don't worry, I will call you later*." Arun's mother even worked briefly as a domestic worker for this man's family in an attempt to gain further favour and secure his employment.

For Jiao Jiao, Tina and Sue, their introduction came through a friend. Jiao Jiao heard about job prospects through a friend who was in the process of migrating, "*I heard through a female friend who was coming over. She told me that there's money to be earned here through jobs that involved singing. I thought I would like to go overseas to make money."* She added later that*, "It was through a friend that I knew*

the agent." Such personal recommendations, particularly from others who were themselves migrating, carried much weight with survivors like Tina and Sue, who were trafficked together. Tina reported that her friend found the agent and would be migrating with them. Sue elaborated slightly, "*We knew someone from where we were working and they said people can arrange visas and everything to help us come here … I had three friends, together with a lot of dreams*."

Finally, in Toyin's case, her family in Nigeria was unable to support her, so at age 17 she was offered the opportunity to migrate, "*My other uncle*[1] *here volunteered to take over and look after me from there, so I got to immigrate here*." Although she had never met this man or his family before, he was well acquainted with other members of her extended family and she was encouraged to move to Australia.

The promise: We can have a good life, not a hard life. Aside from Toyin, all survivors mentioned the impact the promises their traffickers made to them about opportunities they would have in Australia and Singapore had on their decision making process. These promises centred on wage structure, working conditions, living conditions and other prospects they would have once they migrated. It was here that the factors that contributed to survivors' vulnerability intersected with their traffickers' ability to deceive and coerce them.

For those who had been denied further education when they were younger, the opportunity to study was an overwhelmingly attractive component of the promise. Tina epitomised this best, speaking with palpable enthusiasm when she said, "*I love study … but I don't have support in Malaysia. So when they say about study, things*

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[1] It is unclear whether this uncle was an immediate family member, distant relative or just older male from her culture, as culturally all older adults are referred to as uncles or aunts.

[2] The ministry of the Government of Singapore that is responsible for the formulation and implementation of labour policies related to the workforce in Singapore.

like that – exciting! Overseas study … you owe us the money, and then I was like, oh no need to pay anything. We know that we are working, but we don't know what." The ability to fulfill her dream of studying and travelling overseas caused her to interpret the fact that she would be in debt to her traffickers as not having to pay for the opportunity, and also caused her not to question the nature of the work she would be doing upon her arrival.

In the description of her thought process during this time, Sue contextualised the nature of the promise against the backdrop of her life experiences:

> *I came here for study with my friends. Study and work – thought we can earn money – some extra money then back to Malaysia we can have a good life, not a hard life*.

Having lived a hard life up to this point, the promise of studying and earning good money simultaneously was simply too good an offer to refuse. As Sue continued:

> *That's why we believed him and we said okay because we want to travel overseas, you know? You want - anything you want you take it because I've never been anywhere it's my first flight and first country after everything*.

When she asked her trafficker what she would be studying in Australia, she was told initially it would be business and marketing, but upon her arrival she could change her degree to anything she wanted. Again, survivors gave little thought to how this could be possible, focusing instead on the novelty of the opportunity they were presented with. Tusher was likewise attracted by the positive picture that his

traffickers painted of his prospective employment, "*He said he has a good company, salary is very good, food I have to buy but housing is free, and the house is also very good. Everything is very good.*" He then added, "*I thought I'd work here, and if there is a chance, study here. Make a life, you know*?"

For others, the promise emphasised their capacity to fulfill their familial responsibility with greater ease than in their home country, while capitalising on the factors that made migration attractive. Alex was told that as a chef in Singapore, "*we would make much more money than at home*" on a farm in China. Jiao Jiao reported, "*she told me that the pay would be at least $2000-3000 per month … I thought that was good money so I decided to come*." Similarly, Yan Zhi described how she found the pay structure at the bar she was supposed to work at attractive:

> *They showed me a document that stated that the basic pay is S$1000, which is much better than in China. That's why I came. As wait staff at a bar I would still get tips, so I didn't mind getting more or less. The pay plus tips – they told me it can be tens of thousands of dollars. So I came over here*.

June stated that she was given information regarding standard pay rates and conditions in Singapore, not the specifics about the job she would be doing, "*They give us is briefing about salary, what are you going to do there, how many months, years you are working there, that only*." Despite this lack of detailed information, she still made the decision to migrate.

For Sandra and Anne, the promise included the opportunity to reunite with their children. In Anne's case, this arrangement and her separation from her children back home would only be temporary, lasting six months, and she would be well

compensated for her efforts. What made the opportunity attractive to Sandra was the prospect of increased payment and support for permanent residency so she could bring her children to Australia, "*They said you'll earn more in Australia. Like different money, and later I can, when I get my permanent residency, you can bring your children*."

In contrast to the others, the promise that Arun received was not so overwhelmingly positive. While he was told that his salary would be far more than he earned in India, his trafficker actually warned him about how difficult his working conditions in Sydney would be:

> *He told me the life is very hard, I have to work like a machine every day. It's no break – I need to work for 365 days.* [Interviewer: And you still wanted to go?] *My mind like, I just think, I want to just help my family*.

His decision illustrated the manner in which his resilience and desire to fulfil his familial responsibility manifested in self-sacrifice, and ultimately increased his vulnerability to being trafficked.

Making migration arrangements. After agreeing to the working conditions they were promised by their traffickers, survivors then began the process of facilitated migration. As the primary method of entering both Australia and Singapore is air travel, survivors required plane tickets and the necessary immigration documents to enter the country. Survivors reported two methods of attaining these: the payment of a large upfront fee or incurring debt to their traffickers that they subsequently would work off after their arrival.

Payment of an upfront fee. Jiao Jiao, Yan Zhi, Tusher and Alex were forced to pay large upfront fees to facilitate their migration to Singapore. Jiao Jiao purchased her plane ticket herself, but paid an agent SGD$1800 and provided them with her passport information and photo in return for her work permit. Yan Zhi paid SGD$2700 for her work permit plus another SGD$900 for the airfare. Reflecting later on that exchange she said, "*I found out here that it should not have cost that much. Even the most expensive airfare was not that much*." Tusher borrowed money from his relatives in Bangladesh to make up the payment of SGD$4500 that was required by his trafficker. "*The agent told me it's a very good company that's why I need to pay, pay much also*," he said. Of all the survivors, Alex had the largest upfront fee of the equivalent of SGD$17,000 for him and his wife. He borrowed money from relatives and the bank to not only pay the agent but also incredibly to treat the agent and his friends to lavish dinners and nights out on numerous occasions.

No upfront fee. June articulated a common method of immigration to Singapore for work, in which she had a set "deduction period" in which she was not paid a salary to offset the cost of her migration. This period for her was seven months. Rose echoed her arrangement, but had a shorter deduction period of three to four months.

Arun said that he paid nothing upfront, "*Flight ticket and visa and everything - I didn't spend any money*." He detailed a process that included travelling to a nearby city to meet a travel agent, who was a friend of his trafficker, and giving him his documentation so that the visa could be arranged. Curiously, he recalled, "*I didn't sign any document form belonging to the immigration. I just signed seven times a piece of paper. I don't know how immigration accepts it*." Once again, however, this potential red flag was ignored, and Arun proceeded with the migration process.

Sue and Tina similarly ignored seemingly questionable travel arrangements. Although they provided little detail about their actual contractual agreements, other than the fact that they each incurred a debt of around AUD$8000, they described comprehensive instructions they were given by their traffickers when they travelled to Australia. Even though the three friends would be on the same flight, they were seated separately when they received their plane tickets. They were shown diagrams of the customs counters at the airport and instructed to take different counters and not talk to each other once they arrived.

Finally, Anne and Sandra both migrated to Australia alongside their traffickers, but neither of them were given any indication as to how much money they owed. Anne described how she trusted her trafficker to handle all her documentation:

> *She get everything ready for me and then we departed my country to Australia … I didn't even set an eye on my passport, to see what's written there, what the colour was because I trust them*.

Sandra told a similar story, "*They helped make my passport and visa, they paid for my plane ticket, they have done everything*."

Constrained choice. Echoing research themes that emerged in studies conducted by Sandy (2007) and Yea (2012) with other trafficking survivors, most participants in my study described making decisions from a place of constrained choice. Survivors spoke paradoxically about choosing to migrate while simultaneously describing how their options were narrowed and their hand somewhat forced by their socio-economic context. Rather than seeing themselves as helpless victims of their circumstances, "they insisted on their own ability to act, while

recognizing and articulating the factors that limited their choices" (Sandy, 2007, p. 464) and then acted from a place of "negotiated agency" (Yea, 2012, p. 43). Survivors acknowledged that they chose from a restricted range of options in the pursuit of improving their lives and fulfilling their familial responsibility, while also gaining a sense of accomplishment and value from their ability to do so. This manifested in different ways for different participants.

Prior to migration. Toyin and Sandra both described how constrained choices impacted their migration to Australia. Toyin laid out in a matter-of-fact way the extent of her choices for survival:

> *You have to maybe be house help, or work in a restaurant to survive. Go to a farm and collect for your own selves, just something to live on, because you don't want to be prostitute*.

In her home country, her only options were being a domestic helper, working in hospitality, attempting to support herself by farming or becoming a prostitute. It was no wonder that when the opportunity to migrate was presented to her, she jumped at it. In contrast, the option of migration was not as attractive initially to Sandra because she had strong family ties and did not want to leave her children:

> *The first few times I said no because I didn't want to leave my boys … But I thought what will I do because it's hard to find a job … Where will I live, and things like that*.

She went on to describe how her economic circumstances contributed to her vulnerability and constrained her choices:

> *These people just offered me a job and place to live – then I have to go do that. We always think that if we have money, we can do things, but without money you can't do anything … I said yes, ok, because I needed the money*.

Post migration. After migrating, part of the constraint survivors experienced was geographic and cultural: simply not knowing where they were, the customs of the country they found themselves in and how to navigate or find transport. As Anne said, "*I don't know what street I'm on, how to get to the shops, anything*," Likewise, Tina felt that being in a foreign country away from her support networks was in itself a constraint, "*I don't know what to say, like we can't say no, we're already here."*
For Tusher, Alex, Jiao Jiao and Yan Zhi, their choices were constrained by the large debt they already incurred to facilitate their migration. Tusher spoke about wanting to return home to Bangladesh after he arrived, but this was not a realistic option due to debt and familial responsibility:

> *Always I feel that I have to go back but when I think that I paid to my agent this money and I have to bring some money for my family and for me to do something in my country, I cannot do it. I cannot go back also because I promised my father I would do something good.*

When Tusher spoke to his agent about his dissatisfaction, he became aware of how ensnared he was in the network of exploitation, which further constrained his choices:

> *The agent in Singapore said, 'If you try to work I will ask your employer to put you in a good place … maybe I can do something good for you, so please don't go back or argue with your employer' … Then after that no choice, I just go to work*.

In Alex's case, upon their arrival, he and his wife were presented with a substitute contract that more than halved the wages they initially were promised.

> *When we came, it was said to be $2800. Then the boss said if we want to work, we had to sign the present contract. The salary now is $1200. If we don't sign, we will have to return to China*.

If they chose not to sign the contract, they would be forced to return home and have lost the large sum invested in facilitating their migration. As a result, their options were clear, "*We are both here, and have spent a lot of money to come here. We had no choice*."

Yan Zhi and Jiao Jiao were also presented with substitute contracts to sign by their trafficker. As Yan Zhi said, "*The terms of the contract were very unfair and I didn't want to sign. She made a false document for us to sign on the front page, the second page was blank ... The boss said I will be sent back and lose my agent's fee if I don't sign*." Like Tusher, when she tried to appeal to her agent for help, she discovered he was part of the network of exploitation, "*The agent said not to worry about what was written in the contract, that he's a friend of the boss, he will look after me*." Ultimately, the debt she incurred influenced her decision making process and

constrained her choice, as she acknowledged, "*The agent's fees were paid with borrowed funds, so I decided maybe I could make some money if I signed the contract*."

Encapsulation: "I Didn't Know What's Happening Outside."

Having made the decision to cooperate with their traffickers out of constrained choice, all survivors reported finding themselves trapped within a system of encapsulation. This encapsulation aimed to separate survivors from their prior sources of social support, restrict their present social networks to only those controlled by their traffickers and limit their interactions with anyone who potentially could provide them with assistance (McIlwain, 1990). The realisation that their newfound reality was markedly different to the conditions they were promised resulted in surprise, shock and ultimately horror. For example, Sue described how rapidly this shift from optimism to anguish occurred, "*First thing I arrive and everything has changed, like a nightmare ... Whatever we dreamed, it's gone*." Similarly, Yan Zhi stated, "*When I came here, things were different to what they said. It was horrible.*" For Sandra, the degree of her encapsulation and its success in isolating and insulating her from the outside world further limited her options, "*I didn't know what's happening outside, and what to do, how to do*."

While survivors experienced varying degrees of encapsulation, there were definite commonalities in their descriptions of the tactics employed by traffickers to isolate them. This section will address the immediate impact of the physical conditions survivors experienced, which I have categorised as either restrictive or constrictive factors. The ensuing psychological consequences of their encapsulation will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 5.

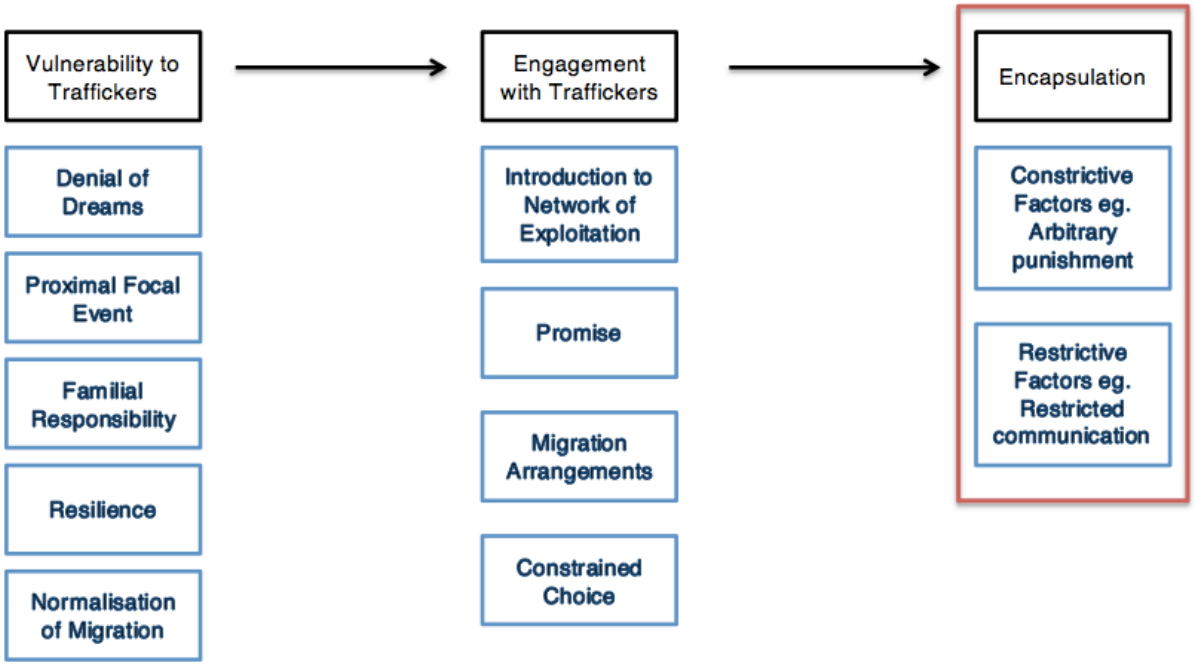

Figure 4.1 (c) Graphical Representation of the Grounded Theory of the Pre-Trafficking Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking (with Encapsulation highlighted).

Restrictive factors. Long working hours, terrible housing conditions, insufficient food, restricted movement and communication, and limited access to healthcare all emerged as contributing to survivors' sense of restriction. These factors deprived them of their strength, limited their ability to make social connections and prevented them from seeking help from others.

Long working hours. Of all the participants, Tusher had the most defined working hours, saying that "*at least working construction there are only so many hours you can work a day*," but adding that he often was forced to work on Saturdays, for which he was not compensated with overtime pay. Alex and Arun both found themselves forced to work in hospitality, with Alex working from 10am to midnight every day, and Arun from 8am to midnight split between two to three restaurant locations daily.

For Sue and Tina, the hours at the brothel they were trafficked to also were incredibly long. "*You have to be there at 11:30am to get ready and then 12 o'clock*

the work start … Then it's finished in the morning 6am, sometimes 7 o'clock and come back home, sleep for two to three hours, and then get up again," said Sue. Tina painted an even more exhausting picture of the complete loss of the distinction between work time and down time she experienced:

> *We are working like 24 hours … I sleep there on the sofa and everything. People coming, I have to wake up, stay awake because I sleep on the sofa, like I don't know when I sleep*.

Jiao Jiao and Yan Zhi reported that clients would pay for time with them for up to 24 hour periods, where they would be forced to drink, sing, dance and attend to their clients' needs both at the bar and offsite locations.

For those who found themselves in situations of domestic servitude, the hours were just as long. Anne stated, "*by 6.30 I'm already awake, just start cleaning whatever … Then going late at night like 10, because I have to do the ironing."* Sandra worked from 7am to 11pm at night without any breaks or rest: "*I just keep busy doing something. I can't sit down. 7am I'm awake I can't sit down."* Toyin found herself forced to work at a hairdresser during the day and at home in the evenings, "*I work [at the shop] Monday to Saturday, 6 days a week, 10am to 5pm … Then come home, help in the kitchen, help around the house mostly. Make sure everything is in order*." Intriguingly, when asked, Rose and June could not provide estimates of their working hours, perhaps an indication of how successful their traffickers were in encapsulating them.

Terrible housing and living conditions. Compounding the impact of long working hours were the terrible housing and living conditions survivors were forced to

return to. These conditions deprived them of their sense of security and privacy, denying them any respite from the suffering they endured. Alex, Jiao Jiao, Yan Zhi, Sue, Tina and Tusher were all housed in communal rooms or dormitories that were overcrowded. Alex and his wife lived in a storeroom above the restaurant that had no windows or ventilation and were shared with six other people. Jiao Jiao described the room she and Yan Zhi lived in as dark, dirty and disorienting; a lack of windows meant she found it impossible to gauge the passing of time. Tina described a room that had "*so many people there, and they've got a few girls there, so we sleep in like the room, like four people inside the room. We sleep like hostel, you know*." In his account, Tusher articulated how the communal nature of his living conditions and the lack of facilities and privacy were beyond his ability to comprehend:

> *I never expect that my sleeping place will be like that. There is no air con, no fan also. If I want to sleep well I need to buy myself. There is no place to hang my clothes, no cabinet for my personal things to keep safely … Bugs on the bed and no foam, only steel and plywood, no pillow. One room 27 people … There is a toilet, it don't have a door, just plastic only like a simple cover. Of course I don't want to use this one but no choice … And the place to take shower, there is no shower, it's like a hose, you take a hose and just a bucket, you know?*

While Arun, Rose and Anne were not housed in communal settings, they still described enduring humiliating and dehumanising circumstances. For instance, Arun slept on the floor in the living room of his trafficker's house even though no one was living in the bedrooms: "*He didn't offer me any mattress or bed, I had to sleep on the*

floor, similar like this, just carpet … There's a room in the back, like a metal container … I have to put my things in there." This theme of being forced to sleep in a communal area and being separated from their belongings was reinforced by Rose, who had all her personal belongings locked inside another room. Her phone and possessions were kept from her in case she attempted to escape, "*She made me take out my pillow and blanket and she made me sleep inside the living room … so I could not sleep inside the room. She locked the room as well."* In Anne's case, her living conditions were comparable to the pets she was responsible for looking after:

> *The mattress was like, they just moved the dining table and the air mattress was put under, like next to the table because the room was so small … The thing that made it worse is because the dogs used to sleep in that dining room too … So they were like on the carpet and I'm just next to them, there were a lot of fleas too*.

Insufficient food. The majority of survivors elaborated in great detail on how the withholding of food eroded their humanity and sense of value. As Jiao Jiao said, "*We had no money and we were eating leftovers from our lady boss*"; sometimes they had to resort to stealing food to survive. Yan Zhi shared that on rare occasions customers would give them food and they would "*save it and share it with each other*". For Sue, not being paid for her work meant she and Tina couldn't "*even buy food, we just have to eat the noodles, that's the only thing we can afford, just two minute noodle*," for months at a time.

Rose and June identified how the withholding of food was used as a form of punishment, with their traffickers cruelly and deliberately throwing food away instead

of giving it to them. Rose said, *"[He] gave me less food … very, very less, and very limited*," describing a small thumb-sized piece of spam and a handful of rice. "*The leftovers they throw everything away and I felt very, very bad because I was very hungry and instead of throwing it they could just give me just a little bit right? It's so cruel."* Likewise, June was given "*only a small amount of food, five spoons like that … When they are angry to me they throw away the food so I have nothing to eat*." She continued, "*When I make mistake they don't give me food. If I never finish my work I cannot eat. I need to finish first my work before I eat*." This brutality resulted in her weighing a mere 37 kg having been 48 kg when she arrived at the NGO that facilitated the interview.

Both Anne and Sandra described how food restrictions were used to demonstrate their traffickers' superiority over them. As Anne said, "*If there is a banana there and she find I've eaten the banana, she is like these bananas are meant for the kids, not for you*." She was told she could only eat a single slice of bread a day, given a measuring cup to ration how much milk she consumed and one packet of plain white rice to cook and eat:

> *I was like I can't continuing having just plain rice of breakfast, lunch and dinner. I'll take the tea without milk, skip lunch and then have the same rice now for dinner time*.

Similarly, Sandra was not given enough food and survived on meager leftovers, saying that she "*never cooked anything fresh, fresh food for me."* In fact, her second class status in the home was reinforced by the fact that she was not even allowed to eat until her traffickers were done, "*When they finished eating then I can eat. But I*

never sit down at the table with them, the boys don't want me … I was not allowed to sit with them at the table."

Restricted communication. Restricting survivors' ability to communicate with others was another frequently identified strategy that traffickers used to encapsulate them. For some, even when allowed to contact their families back home, their conversations were monitored. As Arun said:

> *I spoke to my family two times or three on his home phone … He's standing next to me. That's why I just ask my family 'how are you', that's it … I don't have a chance to tell them what's happening at that place at that moment*.

Similarly, in June's case, her ability to disclose the reality of her predicament was limited by being forced to speak in English, "*I need to speak English, but my mother cannot speak well English, so cannot talk properly … [The traffickers] are also there listening to me*."

Seizing and locking phones was a key element of this strategy. Rose's traffickers "*hid all the phones, and they took my phone, and they took whatever my belongings were that I can use for running and they don't allow me to talk to anyone*." Likewise, while Sandra had access to a phone, she could not contact anyone "*because I know they had a PIN number on the phone. I never ring, and I know she has a PIN number on the phone, that's all I know*." Perhaps even more cruelly, Anne was given a phone and a SIM card so her traffickers could contact her if they left the house. However, she was not provided with any credit, so she was unable to get in touch with her family or get help, "*I want to talk to my kids to know what they're*

doing, or what's happening to them. So they told me you don't have money to call overseas, and it's expensive."

Finally, survivors were heavily monitored when in public to limit their opportunities to get help. Anne said, "*I'm not allowed to go outside, or meet with any person, like mix with people outside*." On a rare occasion when she was allowed to leave the house, Anne's trafficker confronted her after seeing Anne talking to another man, "*She came in and she was like, who are you, and what are you talking about? I said no no no no, we are not talking about anything."* For June, merely greeting other residents in the apartment block where she was living resulted in her being punished:

> *I cannot talk to them because the grandmother is always there watching me … One time, I greet only the employer of the opposite door to ours … Then the grandmother keep asking me what I talk to that employer … I said I greet only, and then they don't believe me, and then they punish me*.

Restricted movement. Denying survivors freedom of movement also compounded the restriction of their communication. Toyin described how every day tasks that most people take for granted were not options for her at the time, "*I wasn't able to move around, go to the shops, or those sort of things … You can't go out anyhow*." Reflecting on what he went through from his current context of freedom, Arun adeptly likened his past experiences to being imprisoned:

> *[He] does not let me go outside and buy something. I always go with him … He not let me go out … I feel bad because now I feel like it's a free country and I can go anywhere, do anything I like, but at that time I'm in gaol.*

Similarly, Sue and Tina described being under constant surveillance, with Sue saying, "*We have an escort everywhere we go. Go work, someone picking us up, and finished work someone drop us. We can't go anywhere by ourselves*."
For Rose, Anne and June, the restriction of their movement was accomplished by locking the doors of the property they lived in. Rose simply said, "*They locked the house so that I cannot go anywhere*." According to June, "*They don't allow me to go out … When they go out they lock the door and then no key for me*." She added that the only time she was allowed to leave the apartment was at night, and even then she was taken down to the garage to wash the family's car under surveillance of a member of her trafficker's family. Finally, Anne added that, "*One day I was being left alone in the house and thought like can I just open the door and see what the next street is like … And I realised that the door is locked so I cannot go out*."

Limited access to healthcare. The final restrictive factor participants recounted was a lack of medical care that forced them to live with, and even work through, health issues caused by their trafficking. When Yan Zhi was sick and needed medical attention, she had to borrow money from her trafficker, increasing her debt to pay for medicine. As Sue said, "*We can't even stay home if you're sick of anything. It's not allowed.*" Or as Tina said, "*Even when I was sick I had to work*,"; she alluded to suffering sexually transmitted infections as a result of being forced into sex work. "*They just said put some ointment, rest for a bit and then go. I couldn't say no*." June was similarly upfront about the physical consequences of her trafficking and how her concerns were dismissed by her traffickers, "*I told them I need check up because my menstruation never come for how many months already but they ignore me*."

Sandra's account likewise included repeated denials of medical attention over a prolonged period. She started by outlining some of the health issues she suffered before detailing her trafficker's response. While initially promised that she indeed would be taken to a doctor, when her trafficker's realised that Sandra would not qualify for government supported healthcare, her requests were denied:

> *I was so bad in the house, my health was the worst and I couldn't think anything. I was sick – I had high blood pressure in the house, I had my tooth ache problem and I was never taken to the doctor. And my ankles here were swollen, because I walk up the stairs and working, working. She said I'll take you to the doctor, but then she told me 'oh, you don't have Medicare' … So I was never taken to the doctor. It was nearly three years*.

Constrictive factors. In contrast to restrictive factors, which isolated and insulated survivors in the trafficking context from the external world, participants described constrictive factors as those that eroded their sense of agency and reinforced their helplessness in the face of the power of their trafficker. These constrictive factors included arbitrary abuse and punishment, arbitrary deductions, excessive charges and invoking of law enforcement.

Arbitrary abuse and punishment. Of all the participants, June's account of the physical abuse she suffered at the hands of the three women who trafficked her was the most graphic and horrifying in its malevolence and cruelty. She described how they systemically exploited her fears, saying, "*They found out that I'm scared of bleach, because when the bleach is very hot, when you touch on the skin it's very hot … That's why they use it to punish me*." Whenever she made some minor mistake in

her work or her cleaning, they would "*pour bleach on my body or make me soak my hands in the toilet bowl with bleach for 10 or 15 minutes*." She endured this punishment three to four times a week while she was in domestic servitude. This was not the only kind of abuse she suffered; she described being punched, kicked and having her head hit into the wall when she was late waking up in the morning. She added that, "*sometimes they get the knife, they put here on my neck*."

The utter helplessness of the situation she found herself in was evident by the fact that, despite her best efforts, there was no way for her to escape punishment. Her traffickers deliberately set traps to ensure she would be punished, "*They need to check if I do my work properly … Especially in the toilet, they put some marks on the toilet, and if I never see that there are marks there, so punishment*." When she tried to be more vigilant and careful, she was told she was working too slowly, and that resulted in further arbitrary punishment. She lived in constant fear of punishment and under constant surveillance, "*Every time I am cleaning things they are watching me, what I am doing. When I do mistakes it's a punishment waiting there*."

While other survivors did not suffer such extreme abuse themselves, they reported witnessing others being subject to physical abuse. Yan Zhi reported that her traffickers would "*pinch, scold and push me, he scolded me a lot*." Both she and Jiao Jiao witnessed other women who were forced to work at the bar being beaten and kicked when they resisted their trafficker. This made Yan Zhi and Jiao Jiao more willing to acquiesce to his demands in order to avoid similar treatment. Likewise, Sue and Tina described seeing other women at their brothel being beaten in initiation ritual-like circumstances. Tina shared the story of seeing her friend, who was virtually blind without her glasses, having them ripped off her face and being forced into a

room with a client. Such experiences reinforced to survivors that they were entirely powerless and at the mercy of their traffickers' arbitrary wishes and desires.

Rose, Toyin, Sandra and Anne described enduring various forms of emotional and verbal abuse. For instance, Rose recounted that, "*Whenever he drinks beer, he just strolled next to me, like saying stupid bitch, useless bitch, f*** you, he used all the bad words to me*." When asked if she had been hurt by her traffickers, Toyin replied, "*Physically, no. But mentally, yes. Because every time I do something they will, they are not pleased, they are saying this, you know, a lot of mean words*." Interestingly, when asked if she could provide examples, she shared that her traffickers actually called her a slave, "*An example is them actually calling me a name like slave. 'You know you are just an ordinary slave. Who are you to disobey us.'*"

For Sandra, this verbal abuse occurred in the context of being forced to repetitively clean, particularly when her traffickers' children complained about the cleanliness of areas she already had cleaned:

> "*I have to go back in his room, take out everything from his drawers and sweep all the dust. I have to clean it again and he puts all the, everything, they put everything on the floor. And then they yell at me, call me all sorts of names*."

Rose recalled a similar incident in detail, describing how her traffickers used cleaning as an exercise in power, an activity with no natural endpoint since her best efforts were never enough:

> *Sir came to me and told me go clean the bathroom at 10pm at night … Since they're quite fussy, even a small dot they don't like, one small fingerprint not allowed. So I try my level best to clean … I spent around 1.5hrs and it was around 12 at night and I was quite tired … I brushed the kitchen floor and I finished and he said change the water and brush it again … So I did it again. And he said change the water and do it again … I said you asked me already to mop with the hot water and he said, ok go and boil the water and brush it again. It was 3 o'clock in the morning and I cannot even stand, I was going to faint, I was hungry … and I wanted to sleep."*

Arbitrary deductions. Yan Zhi succinctly acknowledged a general recognition that existed amongst survivors that traffickers used deductions or fines for minor infractions as a method of ensuring their cooperation. She described how this was impacted by her trafficker's capricious nature:

> *He has no intention of paying us much. He deceives us to make money for him … For example, if he's not happy today, he will find a reason to fine us … Even if your shoe happens to kick the leg of the table he will fine us*.

Jiao Jiao agreed with her, stating that, "*He likes to fine us. He can fine us $800-900*." Tina recalled being arbitrarily fined as well, "*If we not clean the room very well, we get fine, we have to pay. Then if there are any complaints, if they are angry with us, they say it's no good, then they deduct more money."* This tactic was particularly effective in cases where survivors incurred a large debt to facilitate their travel. It coerced them into cooperating with their traffickers because they had to work to pay

off their debt first before making money and fulfilling their familial responsibility. Both Rose and June were forced to make lists of any household items they broke while working, so that the cost of replacements could be deducted from their salary. As Rose said, "*They're searching something where I can pay so that they can make me stay longer without paying a thing.*"

For Tusher and Anne, these deductions came in the form of additional costs they were not disclosed prior to agreeing to move overseas. Tusher recalled "*a lot of unauthorized deductions … Like if we go to work we need the safety equipment. This one also our employer deducted from my salary*." Tusher also said that he was fined $30 if he refused to work on a Sunday despite that being a legally mandated day off. When Anne confronted her traffickers as to why she was yet to be paid, "*they told me there's nothing they can pay because I'm living in their house, sleeping in their house, having shower in their house. So the bills are counting."*

Excessive charges. Another factor that contributed to the constriction survivors felt was being excessively overcharged. Most commonly, like for Jiao Jiao and Yan Zhi, these charges were incurred for rent, with wildly inflated prices charged for the substandard housing conditions described above. Sue and Tina, respectively, eloquently described how such tactics rendered their hard work ultimately futile:

> *We don't get paid and whenever we work, everything they take, they said it's deduct from that money … We have to pay rent money, transport money. We are the ones cleaning the house but we have to give them cleaning money and we share a small tiny room*.

> *We hard working, even then I wouldn't get anything from the working, all our working money had to give them. We're working like crazy and got nothing. Like $150 per week, per person for that tiny room shared with other girls*.

Invoking of law enforcement as on the side of the traffickers. Survivors described various ways in which their traffickers claimed to have the authorities, specifically the police and immigration departments, on their side. They used such threats to demand survivors' cooperation. Rose was told that if she attempted to run away, "*the police will come and catch you and bring you back*," and that her traffickers would claim she had stolen from them so she would be publically charged and shamed. Yan Zhi and Jiao Jiao were told that the substitutionary contract they had been coerced to sign was legally binding, and as a result, the authorities would uphold it:

> *She told us that the law would be on their side based on the signed contract and there was nothing we could do. I thought we could not do anything about it since I signed voluntarily and the police and government will not be on my side*.

Sue was told by her trafficker that he had connections to the Immigration Department, "*He told me 'I can inform the immigration or anyone and it will be hard for you and you can't ever go to any country*.'" Tusher and Alex also reported being threatened with blacklisting from future job employment in Singapore.

It is noteworthy that, while these threats might seem farfetched upon reflection, most of the survivors pointed out that they came from countries with

widespread corruption amongst law enforcement officials. As a result, they concluded that this was also true in Australia and Singapore, and resigned themselves to the fact that there was no hope of appeal to any external source of arbitration or justice. Thus, when they were told like Rose, "*You're going to work under me your entire life, you're not going to be paid*," they believed it to be true.

Overall, survivors' descriptions of the restriction and constrictive factors indicated the severity of the encapsulation they endured. Having addressed the process by which survivors progressed from vulnerability to encapsulation in the pre-trafficking stage of the model, in the next chapter I move on to describing the experiences of survivors' during the trafficking stage, using the theoretical model to categorise and draw insights from the overarching themes that arise.

Chapter 5

Survivors' Experiences of Trafficking

Whereas Chapter 4 addressed the preconditions in survivors' histories that contributed to their trafficking and the ensuing process that lead up to their physical encapsulation, this chapter seeks to elucidate the psychological consequences of encapsulation, survivors' ongoing interactions with their traffickers, and the sequence of events that lead up to their eventual exit from the trafficking context. Given the cyclical and dynamic nature of this part of the model, I address this in two ways. First, I introduce and discuss the various categories in this stage of the model and their properties and dimensions, as depicted in Figure 5.1. Second, I narrate the various trajectories that each participant took through this stage of the model, organised in terms of the manner in which they exited from their trafficking situation. At the core of this stage of the model were survivors' attempts to navigate an encapsulated context, cope with the tactics employed by their traffickers and leverage the resources at their disposal to find a way out. However, survivors differed markedly in the way they approached this process and in this chapter I aim to provide a deeper understanding of the grounded theory of trafficking and the ways in which this theory can be applied.

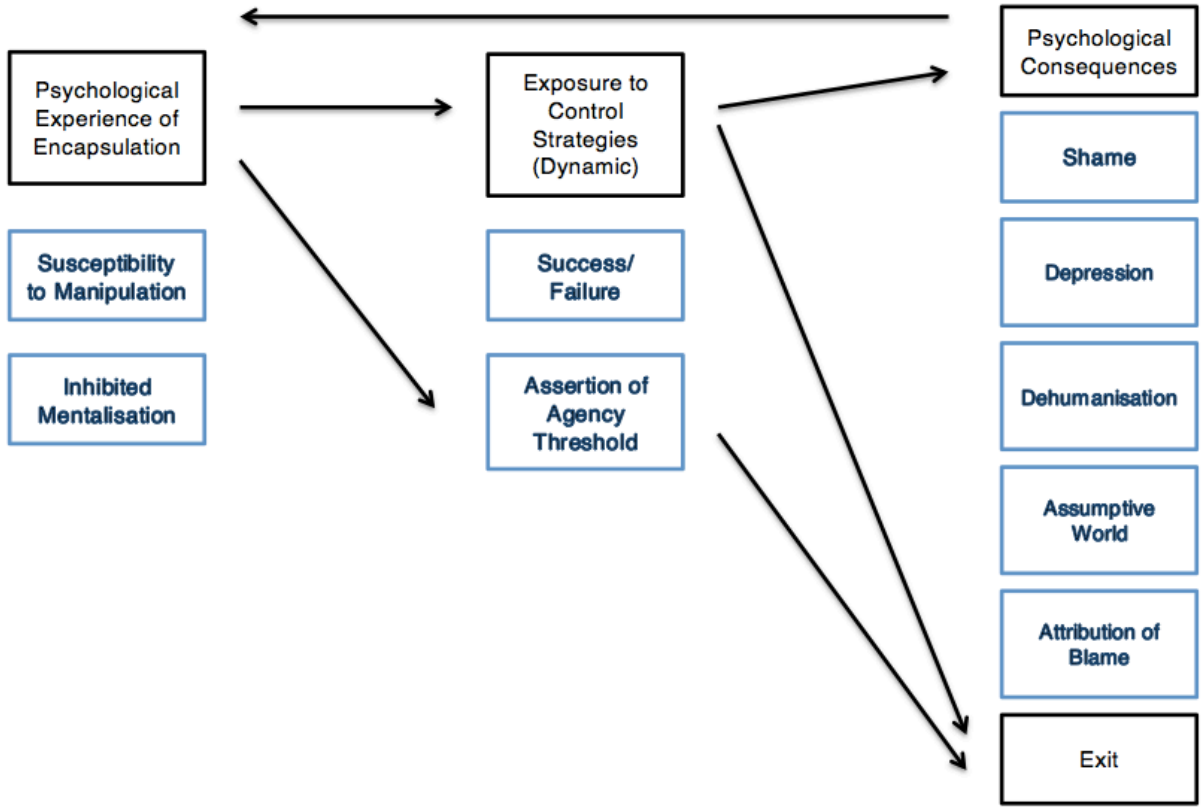

Figure 5.1 Graphical Representation of the Grounded Theory of the Trafficking Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking.

Psychological Experience of Encapsulation

The degree to which participants were susceptible to manipulation and experienced inhibition of their mentalisation capacity significantly influenced their experience of encapsulation. Survivors who were able to access social support, assert their sense of agency and maintain their mentalisation capacities were found to be more resilient to the strategies employed by their traffickers.

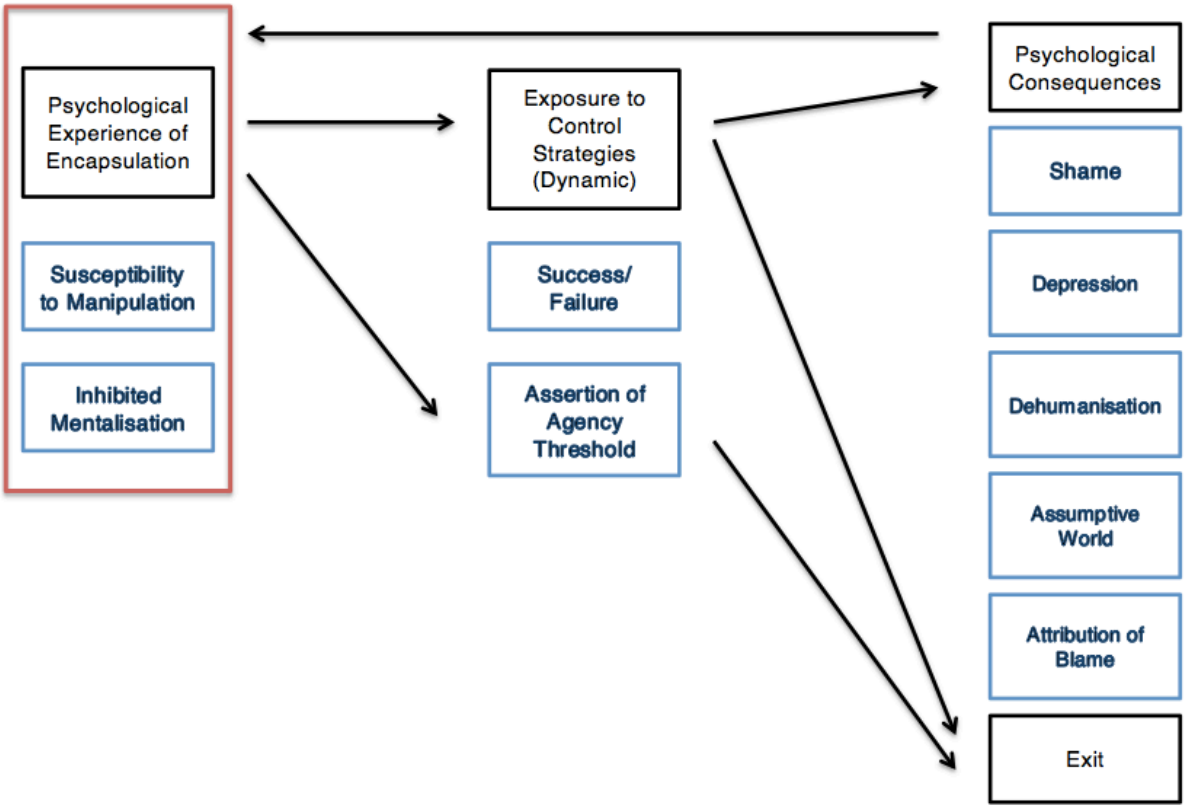

Figure 5.1 (a) Graphical Representation of the Grounded Theory of the Trafficking Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking (with Psychological Experience of Encapsulation highlighted)

Susceptibility to manipulation. The degree to which survivors felt susceptible to the manipulation of their traffickers was influenced by their sense of isolation, helplessness and loss of agency.

Isolation. Survivors disclosed a number of different ways in which isolation made them more susceptible to their traffickers' manipulation. Being from overseas itself was a source of fear for Rose who said, "*I'm very far away from my family, I don't want anything bad to happen to them or me*." Being overseas meant that Jiao Jiao did not know where or who to turn to for assistance because, as she said, "*We are from overseas, we are like fools, who are alone and know nothing and have been deceived and it was frightening*." Yan Zhi concurred with her, explaining that their sense of isolation was compounded by the fact that other women trafficked earlier to

the same bar did not warn them of the nature of their work when they first arrived from China. She acknowledged though that at least she and Jiao Jiao had each other, unlike Rose who was alone, to look to for social support, "*Since we were both being cheated, we look after each other. We were lucky*."

In a similar way, Tina and Sue were able to provide each other with social support to combat their imposed isolation. Tina described "*crying everyday in the work place, crying because we can't go out from there. Like in the prison*." However, it was the support she received from her friends that made the difference, as she continued, "*That's the thing. Like just try and talk about what you were going through."* In contrast, Tusher took the opposite approach. Despite finding himself in dormitory-like living conditions in a room with 26 other men, he chose to isolate and keep things to himself, "*I keep in my mind only because there is no one to hear and there is no benefit if I say to someone … I if say to my colleague also they are suffering the same thing, right*?"

For Sandra and Anne, isolation from their children was the most damaging. "*I just want to talk to my kids, to know what they're doing, or what's happening to them … But I can't," said Anne*. Sandra's son was sick but she was unable to regularly communicate with him to get updates on his condition, "*I was thinking of my boys … I just feel sad and stuff, keep on working, doing, crying*."

In Toyin's case, her isolation resulted from the verbal abuse she suffered that reinforced her own insecurities, as well as the cultural differences she felt from her trafficker's family:

> *My brain has always think I'm dumb, because every time they say I'm dumb, so I believe I'm dumb … [Their children] were different, they were born here. I can't compare myself because they are not brought up with the culture*.

In this environment, she had no recourse but to suffer alone saying, "*Sometimes it get too much, I feel like it will burst out … I locked myself in, I have a quiet moment … Crying if possible*."

Helplessness/loss of sense of agency. Many survivors described how the encapsulation they experienced resulted in feelings of helplessness and the loss of their sense of agency. A sense of agency here is defined as a pre-reflective awareness of themselves as the source and initiator action and capable of having causal impact on their environment (Gallagher, 2000; Jeannerod, 2003; Tsakiris, Schutz-Bosbach, & Gallagher, 2007). It is suggested that the strategies traffickers employed impacted on survivors' sense of themselves as agentic beings in control of their own actions, as reflected in the subsequent examples. Yan Zhi and Jiao Jiao both acknowledged the helplessness they felt in the face of tactics employed by their traffickers; both felt they had little hope of assistance while trapped there. Yan Zhi said, "*They deceived us from China, and forced us into this, and we have no means to retaliate*." "*We were so helpless at the time. It felt like we could call on heaven and earth but would get no help. We actually suffered*," added Jiao Jiao. Sandra found herself helpless in the face of the physical and psychological toll her responsibilities took on her saying, "*I think I was very tired of doing the work. I was so sad, I was crying, but I couldn't do anything*."

The extent to which Rose and June lost their sense of agency is seen in their eventual capitulation to the tactics employed by their traffickers. As Rose said, "*I*

even begged them please send me back home, I don't need my salary, I don't need anything, just send me back home. I cannot tolerate all this scolding and everything." She was so desperate to leave that she was willing to forgo her commitment to her familial responsibility in the hope of securing her freedom, but her traffickers refused. June's traffickers actually gave her a timeline for how long she would be forced to live under their roof and endure their horrific treatment. She explained, "*One time I asked them that I wanted to go home, because a lot of work … So I decided to ask permission from them if I can go home but they don't want me to go home. They said I will suffer there for two more years*." When asked how she responded to that, she simply said, "*I just cry*."

Sue and Tina both shared how they felt that the mere act of saying no was impossible in the face of their encapsulation. Sue went as far as naming the fact that she was seen as a slave:

> *They think we are slaves*.
>
> [Interviewer: Did you feel like slaves?]
>
> *I do think like that, because we can't make any decision by ourselves and say no. You can't say the word no, and we can't do it. The lady said you have to, and we have to - no other way you said no, I'm not doing that - no*.

Compared to Sue, Tina disclosed much more detail about the nature of the work they were forced to do in the brothel. She spoke of a quota system in which they were forced to see a certain number of clients per hour, the fact that they were not allowed to use condoms and how they were forced to accede to all of their clients'

perversions. She found herself helpless in the face of both her traffickers' wishes and her clients' demands:

> *I can't say anything like I don't want, I'm scared … The customers are different, you know, they were sometimes different, like rough. Everything, we have to … Even have job, I push myself, they have to push me to do it … He pay, I can't say anything, you have to go. Hate this work but have to do it.*

The ways in which the traffickers communicated with survivors also served to make them feel helpless. Toyin acknowledged that she was unable to give voice to her true feelings about the situation, "*I couldn't really speak my mind, I couldn't tell them how I feel*." This was because her traffickers reminded her of her vulnerability to reduce her sense of agency, telling her *"like who am I to tell them I can't do something, after all I come from a poor environment."*

For Rose, it was her utter dependence upon her traffickers that limited her sense of agency. When she attempted to appeal to them for more than the tiny amount of food she was provided to eat, she was told, "*That is enough for you, there is nothing more*." Similarly, Anne shared two anecdotes that further illustrated how, even when survivors tried to communicate their concerns, their words held no value with her traffickers. The first involved being unable to sleep during the first night in her trafficker's house because she was being bitten by fleas:

> *The next morning I told them I didn't sleep, because all over there was flea biting me. They were like where the flea coming from? I told them the dogs*

> *slept next to me. And they were like their dogs they don't have flea, so it was like ok*.

It was not until they witnessed the flea bites on their own children that her statements were believed, "*Their kids also started to be bite, they had all these red marks the next morning, so they were like ok we need to do something, it's like she's telling the truth*." Likewise, when she brought up her discovery of being locked in the house, she was told that this was not the case and perhaps, "*Maybe you just don't know how to open it*." She succinctly summarised the level of tension and intrapersonal conflict living in such an environment resulted in, saying:

> *I've never lived a life like that, so I was stressed too. Like trying to, how can I do this, I'm restricted, I can't. How can I do, I can't, I was just like put in somewhere where you don't have any option*.

Inhibited mentalisation: "I couldn't think anything". During the iterative development of the interview process, I aimed to gain an understanding of participants' thought processes while they were in captivity, and how they reflected on the circumstances they found themselves in. Surprisingly, when I actually asked participants asked what they were thinking during this portion of their interviews, they often used phrases like "I felt crazy" and "I never think". When I asked them to elaborate further on what they meant by that, they either were unable to do so or seemingly went off topic, irrespective of their English language ability. When I subsequently explored the trauma literature and discovered research on the concept

of "mentalisation" by Peter Fonagy and his colleagues, I achieved a deeper level of understanding of the phenomena I describe below.

Fonagy and Luyton (2009, p. 1357) defined mentalisation as "the imaginative mental activity that enables us to perceive and interpret human behavior in terms of intentional mental states (e.g., needs, desires, feelings, beliefs and goals)." Fonagy and colleagues conceptualised mentalisation as a form of social metacognition; the capacity to understand not only one's own behaviour, but also the behaviour of others, as the direct result of thoughts, emotions and wishes, making them meaningful and predictable (Allen, Fonagy, & Bateman, 2008; Bateman & Fonagy, 2006; Fonagy & Target, 1998). Rather than being an innate ability, this reflective awareness or "feeling of feeling" is believed to be a developmental achievement (Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist, & Target, 2002).

The development of mentalisation has been found to be related to attachment and theory of mind. Just like a secure attachment, the development of mentalisation requires a mirroring relationship in which caregivers are sufficiently attuned to the transient mental states of their infants (Fonagy, Gergely, & Target, 2007). As a result of experiencing contingent and "marked" or "metabolised" representations of their own emotional states from their caregivers, infants develop a sense of themselves as agentic beings capable of impacting the world around them as well as the capacity for affect regulation. A secure attachment to their caregiver, who functions as a safe haven and secure base, empowers them not just to explore the physical world, but the psychological world as well (Fonagy et al. 2002).

To apply these principles to the current context of trafficking survivors, their interview responses reflected how their encapsulated environment impacted their mentalisation; limiting their capacity to conceive of mental states as explanations of

their own behaviour or of the behaviour of their traffickers (Fonagy & Target, 2006). This occurred through a combination of earlier life experiences and their trafficking context. According to Fonagy and Luyton (2009, p. 1366), the "combination of early neglect, which might undermine the infant's developing capacity for affect regulation, with later maltreatment or other environmental circumstances, including adult experience of verbal, emotional, physical and sexual abuse, [is] likely to activate the attachment system chronically." In cases like these, where survivors may have had histories of insecure attachment, subsequent abuse would exacerbate the inhibition of mentalisation. Specifically, being under threat would result in trafficking victims feeling unsafe to explore their own mind and the minds of the perpetrators (Fonagy & Bateman, 2008). In other words, mentalising appeared to be inhibited when survivors' self-protective physical reactions of fight, flight or freeze were activated and began to dictate their behaviour (Fonagy & Luyton, 2009). Survivors in this study shared several ways in which they experienced inhibited mentalisation: being unable to think or remember, feeling crazy, experiencing time as distorted and resorting to concrete representations to describe abstract concepts.

Being unable to think or remember. Rose used the vivid metaphor of a box to describe her experience of the constrictive and restrictive tactics employed by her traffickers. She made references to both her physical and psychological experiences, alluding to the impact that encapsulation had on her mentalisation, "*I felt like someone put you in a box where you just fit and you cannot able to breathe properly … I cannot even think anything, my mind was not clear. Every day was like that … I can't even remember everything*."

For Sandra and June, their experience of inhibited mentalisation was related to living in a state of constant fear and preoccupation with their numerous day-to-day

tasks and responsibilities. Their degree of physical encapsulation resulted in mental encapsulation as well. Sandra said:

> *I couldn't think anything. My mind – I was so bad I think that I was just getting nothing, I don't know, I just live in the house just around the compound and in the house. And I didn't know what's happening outside - nothing. So in my mind I'm only just cooking, washing, doing everything, looking after dogs, whatever time I have time to go to bed, go to bed, and get up early, and I'm scared*.

One gets a strong sense of her isolation from the outside world and the repetitiveness of her daily tasks, which impacted her ability to find the space to take a breath, let alone think.

Similarly, June recalled the additional anxiety of desperately trying to avoid punishment, which sadly was unavoidable given the arbitrariness of her abuse. "*I never think*," she said. "*Because when I'm there, inside their house, I never think of anything. I think only how to do my work properly so that I won't get punishment by them. But it's not enough for them*." When asked how she managed to keep going through the experience, she demonstrated her lack of reflective awareness by saying, "*I don't know, I don't know how to … I'm happy already because I'm not there … I never think*." This inability to reflect on intentional mental states also applied to her traffickers, as revealed by her comment, "*Every time I think of it, I can't imagine what kind of people, why they do that to me? Why they do this to me*?"

Feeling crazy. Tina used the term 'crazy' to describe how the experience of encapsulation was so foreign and difficult for her that it felt like she was losing her

mind, "*It's too hard at that time … I'm so, I'm crazy because before – I'm like crazy … I like, I become half crazy that time*." It was noticeable during this point of the interview how much she desired to find words to describe the experience, but simply was unable to. Also voicing a similar experience was Rose, who reported that she was "*almost going crazy*." She expanded on this by relating it back to the metaphor of being stuck in a box mentioned earlier saying, "*I felt like, like I'm just going, start going crazy, you know? Because I was just so suffocate inside there, you know, I was so suffocate, I could not go out and I cannot even talk to anyone, not even my family."* This feeling of suffocation and craziness resulted in the manifestation of manic-like behavior, "*I was going to start crazy, I talked to myself, sometimes I laugh, with no reason, I laugh at myself, how stupid I am to come here*."

Experiencing time as distorted. Tina and Sue, who both were trafficked to the same brothel in Sydney, described how the nature of their work schedule and encapsulated environment impacted their sense of the passing of time. Tina, who slept on the couch in the brothel, only awakening to see clients whenever they arrived, described having no sense of time at all, not being able to go outside and not knowing whether it was night or day. Sue agreed saying, "*You know, two months is like 20 years. Not a real life. I don't think so. It's like a sick – maybe if I stayed there more than that I'll be mental, maybe somewhere in the street*." From her perspective, even though they were trafficked for what may quantitatively seem like a short period of time to some people, the nature of their encapsulation meant that time was experienced in a distorted way.

Resorting to concrete representations to describe abstract concepts. Finally, Tusher, Sandra and Anne all resorted to using concrete representations to describe abstract concepts in different ways. I interepreted this as indicative of their difficulty in

reflecting on their mental states and as an example of inhibited mentalisation. For example, Tusher raised the topic of change as a result of his experiences, saying that his family would recognise that he had been transformed by his experience, "*I'm totally changed also. I know if I go back to my house, they will say it also, that how can you change like that because before I never thought I would get into this kind of situation*." When asked to expand specifically on how he had changed, however, he launched into a detailed description of the living conditions he was forced to endure, particularly how there was no privacy, no proper shower other than a bucket of water and no separate toilet:

> *"I'll give you one example. Like there is a toilet, it don't have a door, just plastic only, or like a simple cover. Of course I don't want to use this one but no choice. One day, two days, three days, I have to use right? … There is no shower – it's like a hose, they make a hose and the water, you have to take the water… You have to use a bucket."*

It was as if, for him, he was unable to properly reflect on how he had changed, so instead relied on these concrete descriptions as symbolic representations of his experience of injustice and exploitation.

Likewise, Sandra shared how difficult it was for her to reflect on the experience. She said, "*when I think of that time, I can't, I can't know how I was. I don't think I can just live like that anymore. I can't. When I think back – no*." When asked what helped her survive the experience, she replied, "*You know, because at least I was eating*." When the question was asked in a different way, she repeated her response: "*Nothing much, just what I was eating, that's all. Whatever I had, that's all*." The notion of survival for her became limited to strictly physical, and she seemed

unable to reflect on potential psychological factors that might have enabled her survival.

For Anne, it was not so much what she had to eat that was important, but her tea. She shared how important tea was to her culturally and personally, saying "*I love my tea! And actually, like you better give me tea and tell me no food, I'll be very happy with that*." She continued to explain how tea became symbolic to her of the general violations of her freedom, and how her treatment was contrary to her level of expectations: "*So the thing that made me feel no, this is another different world, is when I'm denied my tea. I was like, now how am I going to survive?"* It was through this interaction over tea that she was able to express to extent to which she felt her rights were denied.

Overall, I suggest that mentalisation provides a useful conceptual framework for understanding survivors' experiences. They recalled being unable to think or remember, feeling crazy and having a distorted sense of time as well as represented abstract elements of their experience concretely. These themes indicated how successfully traffickers were able to encapsulate survivors, to the extent that their physical restrictions and constrictions also inhibited their minds.

Ongoing Exposure to Traffickers' Strategies

In this section, I will discuss the ongoing dynamic nature of survivors' continued actions and interactions with their traffickers. This includes the degree of success or failure of traffickers' continuing tactics of encapsulation and the threshold point beyond which survivors' sense of agency seemed to be reestablished (and the factors that contributed to it). The more encompassing the encapsulation, the more successful the traffickers' ongoing strategies were in maintaining survivors' captivity, which is represented in the model as a recursive feedback loop. I first briefly define

the concepts in this part of the model before outlining participants' trajectories through this stage.

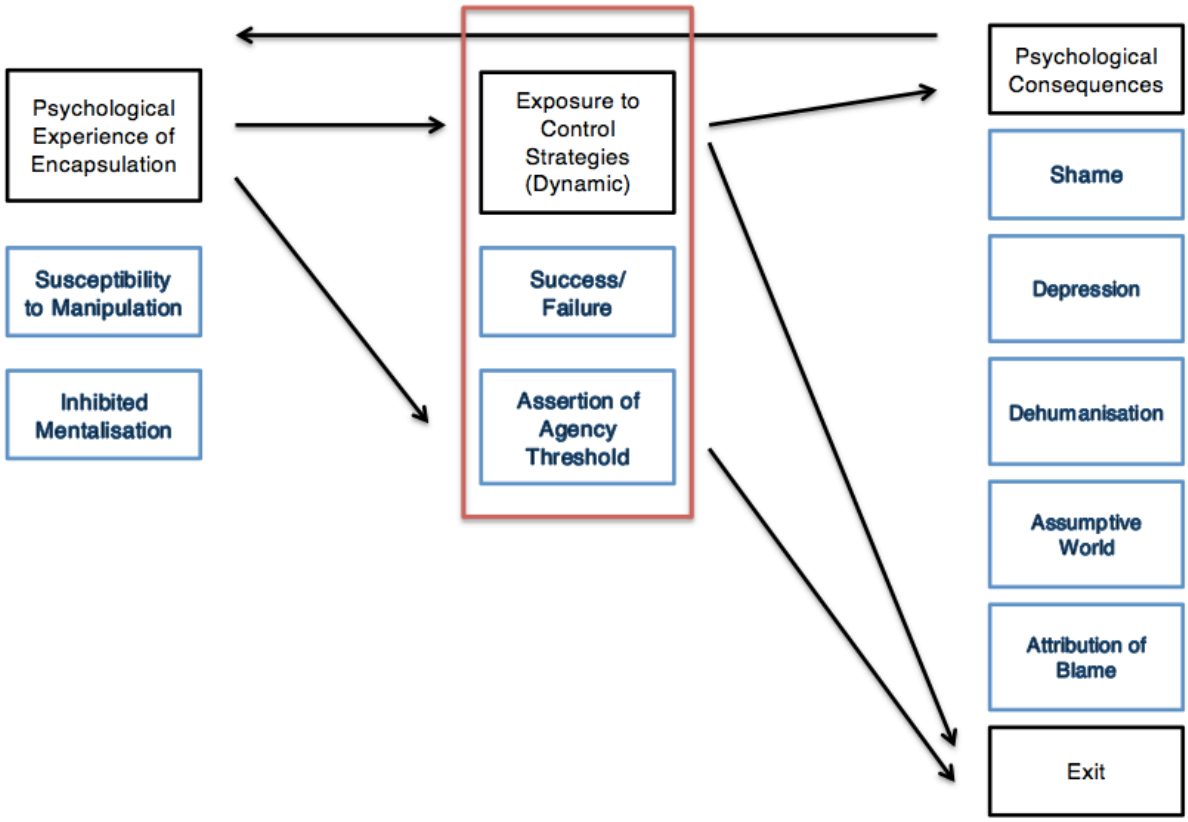

Figure 5.1 (b) Graphical Representation of the Grounded Theory of the Trafficking Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking (with Exposure to Control Strategies highlighted).

Success or failure of traffickers' strategies. Having addressed the strategies employed by traffickers in the previous section of my model, consideration of the success or failure of these tactics is included here as a process variable. This was inferred from survivors' accounts rather than explicitly described by them. Whereas traffickers were somewhat successful in encapsulating all participants initially, their tactics ultimately failed as indicated by the exit strategies that survivors recalled. This will be examined in greater detail in the descriptions of participants' trajectories later in this chapter.

Assertion of agency threshold: "I couldn't take it anymore" I was particularly interested to note that a number of survivors experienced a moment in which they regained their sense of agency, which had been steadily eroded or lost up to this point as described earlier in this chapter. June, Yan Zhi, Jiao Jiao and Toyin reported feeling a newfound strength and resolve in stark contrast to their prior acquiescence. They each spoke of a specific moment in which they drew a line in the sand and identified that they were responsible for and caused the action that followed. While this sudden recovery of their sense of agency may seem contradictory in light of the loss of agency described previously, the relationship between these will be addressed in greater detail in my General Discussion. In one example, June articulated the extent to which the abuse finally became too much for her to stand, "*I cannot take it anymore what they are doing to me, so I need to escape. Because if I cannot escape there my life would be more miserable*." She detailed the events that transpired one particular night and the decision it prompted her to make saying, "*That night they punished me from 9 o'clock to 3 o'clock, so I cannot take it anymore. So that's why I decided to run away. I don't know where to go, but I need to escape their house*." When asked to expand on her decision making process, she deflected a compliment that this decision reflected her bravery, saying instead, "*Because I cannot take it, almost every day they punish me by using the bleach, because they found out I'm scared of bleach … If I don't do that, I don't know what will happen to me the next day again*." For her, the frequency and extent of the abuse she suffered sparked a desperation that reignited her sense of agency and made her determined to find a way out.

Working as a waitress at the bar she was trafficked to, Yan Zhi described how she gradually came to terms with some of the activities she was forced to engage in,

"*Actually, I was coaxed by friends and the boss into singing and drinking with customers. I accepted that*." However, she drew a line when her trafficker wanted her to sleep with clients, "*But when they wanted me to sleep with a man who is over 60, once, twice, three times, I could not accept it.*" In her case, her sense of agency was reactivated by the threat to her sense of self and the shame she associated with sex work:

> *I felt I would be no better than a prostitute, this is the same as the bar girls and prostitutes that keep clients company in China … Since I got married at 21, till now, I have not done anything like this. I have no done this before I got married either, and my relationship with my husband has always been good. I can't accept the situation*.

Like Yan Zhi, Jiao Jiao stood firm in the face of financial penalties and deductions she faced as a result of her lack of cooperation. As she explained, "*I am only willing to sing and not go out with the men … That's why I did not get any pay*." However, she did not expand on the reasons that surrounded her decision to not cooperate.

Toyin described how her traffickers attempted to coerce her into a forced marriage to a family friend of the wife, someone who she reported was "*I think an Italian man, who is quite old*." "*They wanted me to marry somebody for the paper*," explaining that this was a way to obtain a visa for her to stay in the country. Once again, she found that this was beyond her capacity to cope and she was able to find her voice:

I just couldn't deceive myself to do it. That's only time I could say no, I don't want to do it … When I say that, they were not very pleased … But I say no … You can't force somebody to do what they don't want to do.

In sum, the two variables I have described above are dynamic in nature and highly interrelated. The success or failure of the strategies traffickers employed to control survivors was deduced from their accounts of their experiences. For example, some survivors reported that the severity of their circumstances eventually prompted a reactivation of their sense of agency, which indicated a reduction in the level of their traffickers' control. Further explanation and examples of the relationship between these variables will be provided in the descriptions of survivors' pathways below.

Psychological Consequences

Survivors' experiences of trafficking were significantly influenced by the degree to which they experienced shame, depersonalisation, depression and suicidal ideations, the collapse of their assumptive world and divergent attribution styles. These psychological consequences resulted not just from the extent of their encapsulation but also from the nature of the work they were forced to do. It is worth foreshadowing here that many of these concepts had an ongoing impact, long after the survivors were freed from their encapsulation.

Shame. Survivors repeatedly acknowledged that their experiences significantly impacted their sense of self-worth, as their inability to fulfill their obligations or the decisions they were forced to make lead to feelings of shame in various ways (Lewis, 1992). Tusher shared how the shame he felt for failing to fulfill his familial responsibility compounded isolation and limited his future options:

I know from that I cannot come back to Singapore anymore. My family will not allow me. Also I don't know what will I answer to them, what will I say to them because I come three times already … That's why my father is very angry with me that if he can spend this money on behalf of my sister that was good for him because I just waste … wasted his money.

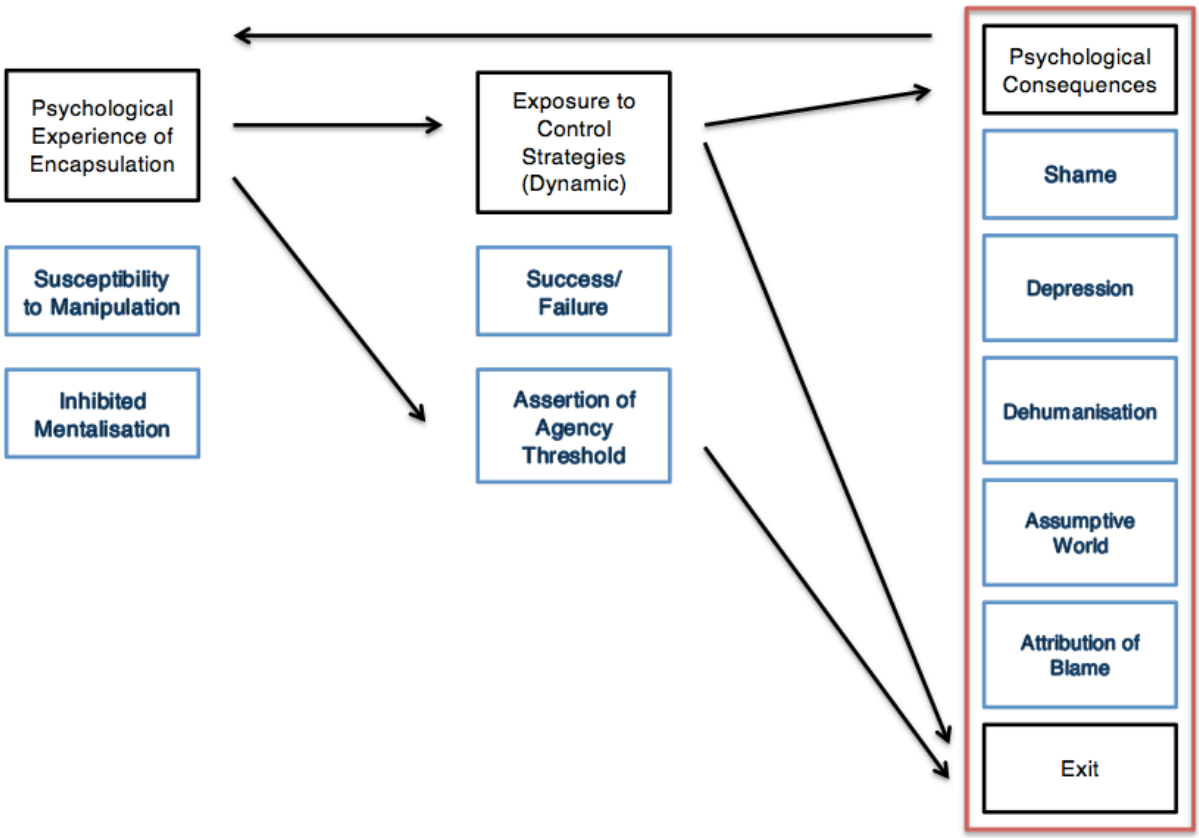

Figure 5.1 (c) Graphical Representation of the Grounded Theory of the Trafficking Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking (with psychological consequences and exit highlighted).

He repeated this sense of loss and waste, saying, "*There is a lot of money and no benefit, only loss and loss … I think we need to sell our everything now.*" His experiences came at the cost of his identity-defining social bonds and resultant sense of purpose.

For Rose, Jiao Jiao, Tina and Sue, their experiences of shame stemmed from the nature of the work they were forced to do. Rose shared how she experienced a conflict between her pride in being able to support her family and the shame of her perceived inferiority to her friends:

> *Most of my friends in India, they're like all graduates you know? I don't want them to know that I'm just a maid now. It's just that I want to support my family so I feel quite guilty. I know it's my pride, but I feel quite bad for them to know that I'm a maid, and all it is just so embarrassing*.

For Jiao Jiao, she experienced shame as a result of her perception that her actions were not in line with her values. She feared that she had ruined her reputation, particularly in the eyes of her family:

> *It has harmed me greatly because I come from a good background … My husband was my first boyfriend and since our marriage till now … I was very badly hurt. This has ruined my personal integrity and reputation … It looks like I have done things I should not have done … I am shameful, especially to face my daughter, my husband, my family*.

Both Tina and Sue spoke of the shame of being forced into sex work, which for them was compounded by their background of a highly conservative, mostly Muslim culture. They lived in fear of their families finding out what they had been forced to do, with Sue saying, "*I think my mother would heart attack if she knew*." Finally, Toyin experienced shame as a result of internalising the verbal abuse she

suffered, sharing that, "*sometimes, you couldn't look – make eye contact*." "*My cousin said you're dumb, and I wasn't able to speak very well, write like they do … So I believe I'm dumb*," she added.

Depression and/or suicidal ideations. Descriptions of darkness, sadness, depression and the desire to kill themselves abounded in survivors' accounts of trafficking. For instance, Anne said that her depression stemmed from being isolated from her children as well as disillusioned with the treatment she received from her traffickers. She said:

> *One thing I felt sad, because I couldn't talk to my kids, I couldn't talk to anyone, I couldn't talk to anyone to tell them what's happening to me. And what I was promised never came to be real, was just like, nothing was discussed or nothing has been done. … Being in such a life is … I don't know how I can describe it. It's really hard. Like you don't have any future. Like I saw like my life is all dark. And all the hope I had is all gone*."

Rose reported how her experience of encapsulation and being made 'crazy' transformed her personality. The foreignness of this feeling and recognition of the change prompted her suicidal ideations, "*I was a really positive person, and everything I think became negative and I wanted to suicide as well … Because it was so suffocating inside there … I rather die instead of staying there, I rather die*."

Tina spoke of the immense pressure she was under as a result of her familial responsibilities and how this contributed to her depression, "*Because we have to give money – we work everything we have to give to our parents. Have to support for school, my son, my bills, and everything*." She said, "*Too much pressure. I become*

crazy, that time like, I go, I'm having depression too." She eventually shared the extent of the severity of this depression:

> *Well, I want to kill myself. [laughs] Yeah almost crazy, you now, I don't know what to do. Crying everyday in the working place, every day crying. Can't imagine, every day calling my friend crying because we can't go out from there, like in the prison*.

Like her friend Tina, Sue described how the isolation she experienced made her feel, "*It really most affected is my mentality, because I think I won't even see my family. I don't even have a life. I feel like that*." She too had thoughts of committing suicide. Interestingly, however, the shame and stigma she felt from being forced into sex work and thoughts of her family actually were protective for her:

> *If I suicide there, my family will know where I died. I die in a brothel. I don't want to give that chance to them either … Maybe it was so my family can't see my body and no one can know who I am because I don't have any ID with me … I don't want to die like that in Australia. At least if I want to do something, I'll do it in Malaysia. Not any other country. I don't want to be like a, even after death, even an orphan. I don't want to be like that … I can't think for myself only. I have to think for my family and I don't have a son, I have a girl. I don't want her to think about me also bad*.

Somewhat similarly, Sandra's suicidal ideation was challenged by her belief in God and concern for her children, "*Sometimes I think I should kill myself or something, but*

I said no, God didn't make us to do that. We have to live … Because of my boys I can't harm myself … They'll lose their mother."

Dehumanisation. Survivors reported various ways in which they were made to feel less than human and treated worse than animals. For all of them, this misrecognition was extremely painful. Rose acknowledged that, "*I was treated like a pet. More than that – I was treated quite bad, worse than a dog I guess*." She questioned the nature of her treatment, asserting her humanity and her right to be respected by saying, "*As a human being they should at least not treat me that way right? I cannot respect them at all … Because they don't give me respect either, as a human being they should not treat me in that way, right*?" The contempt her traffickers had for her became evident even in the behaviour of their children, who spoke to her in derogatory terms: "*I just try to clean the room and she say you're not allowed in my room, she's just a maid, she's not allowed*." Sandra too was spoken down to on a regular basis, and treated as if she did not know social conventions:

> *He said we're going in a good restaurant, and if you go, you can't use the fork and knife and people will look at you and stuff. So I always have to stay home, they never take me, no*.

For Tusher, the treatment he endured and the fact that most of the workers were seen as disposable and interchangeable fueled his sense of dehumanisation. He said, "*We are here not as a human being. I feel that we are all here as animals and they are treating us as animals also*." He saw himself simply as another commodity being gifted or sold adding, "*This different company is giving us to another company to work. So they are selling us more – many places*."

Anne, who was literally forced to sleep on the floor with the dogs, was shocked by the difference in the treatment she experienced from her traffickers in Africa compared to in Australia. In her words, "*They knew me, so I was expecting like they can't treat me the way they did. But to my surprise it happened. Like they don't know me anymore. Like my being there is just like, they can't recognise I'm there*." Finally, according to Toyin, her loss of agency and the inhibition of her mentalisation made her feel less than human:

> *Everything they do, you have to, everything they say you have to do it. You don't have a mind of your own, you don't have choice, it's just everything they say you have to do it. You feel like you are like a robot*.

Collapse of assumptive world. Tusher, Sue and Tina all identified ways in which their experience of trafficking impacted their assumptive world, and their beliefs surrounding their sense of self, others and the world at large (Janoff-Buhlman, 1992; 1995):

> *The assumptive world is the only world we know, and it includes everything we think we know. It includes our interpretation of the past, and our expectations of the future, our plans and our prejudices* (Kauffman, 2013).

When asked about his plans for the future, Tusher replied:

> *If my father wants me to come here again, it's ok, if he wants me to stay in my country, it's up to him already, because I don't want to decide anymore for myself*.

As a result of the process of encapsulation that Tusher described earlier, he lost trust in his own ability to make decisions and determine his future; instead, he surrendered that role to his father.

For Sue and Tina, their experience of sex trafficking created a hostile worldview of others, particularly men. As Sue shared, "*It was a horrible life. It was a horrible - it is - it is. It's not a good in there. No. Now I hate men. I hate everyone*". Specifically, it was the duplicity she observed in the men who became her clients that caused this change in her:

> *For me it's like a man outside that place, they may be nice but in that place they not nice - they nasty. They're nasty. They thought because they paid, they king, they can own anything. They're not , they're not real men*.

In contrast, Tina developed more of a fear of sexual intimacy as a result of enduring the rough treatment:

> *Of course it's like mentality, you know; like sometimes I'm a bit scared with men, like because - especially in the bed or what. I feel still scared, because it injured me before, you know, injured me there, so I'm a bit scared. I say like later*.

Ultimately, the collapse of their assumptive world was clear in their willingness to consider returning to the sex industry even after they escaped their trafficking context. This reflected how trafficking had normalised sex work for them, as they definitely would not have imagined nor considered it as an option prior to their experience. Sue said that, "*Many times I think about I wanna go back into sex industry to earn money for myself, to afford my family, because this situation make like that*." For Tina, this was not just a considered option, but became a reality as a way of fulfilling her familial responsibility. She explained, "*Because even after I came back from here I'm working, still working to survive – because we can't get a job … We have to survive, you know? I have to send money to my parents*."

Attribution of blame. Survivors shared a variety of reflections about who they held responsible for their predicament, ranging from complete internalisation to total externalisation of blame. Notably, these perspectives were not mutually exclusive, with survivors often mentioning various viewpoints, often in the same sentence.

Sue had an internal attribution style, saying, "*I don't know why I trusted someone I didn't know and go*." In contrast, Alex was able to acknowledge that he was deceived by someone he trusted. But he also blamed himself for being deceived easily, "*I just feel I have been deceived by them … I feel I was cheated by a friend*." When asked if that made him angry he added, "*I won't say I'm angry. I blame myself … I was easily misled."* Jiao Jiao said, "*Maybe it's a bad year for me*." However, she also blamed herself, adding that her experiences were beyond anything she could have imagined:

> *I am regretful and I blame myself, I feel that it has cause me a lot of harm … This is something I can't think about, and could not have imagined would happen to me in my journey through life*.

Tusher and Arun both spoke of luck, with Tusher saying, "*Maybe it's my mistake or my luck, I don't know".* Arun was more certain in his proclamation that, "*It's my bad luck*". Tina too spoke of fate, but also acknowledged the interaction between her context and her trafficker's ability to deceive her:

> "*I think – I don't know – maybe it's like – it's my fate … I'm not sure why it happened to me. Maybe why would I choose this job maybe, why I'm not choose 3 jobs before and everything … People can make you stupid and everything*."

Finally, both Sandra and Rose alluded to the role that spirituality played in reflecting upon their experiences. Sandra admitted that her traffickers intentionally took advantage of her lack of familiarity with Australia, saying, "*They took advantage of me, because I can't, I didn't know anyone, where will I do, how will I live and stuff, so they knew that that's why they were doing that*." Despite this, it was her faith that enabled her to persevere, "*I just know God is there when we are born, God brought us here and he has to feed us. So that's how – I just believe in God and just … living*." She spoke of a contrast between what she believed her traffickers and God intended for her, saying, "*I think they thought I'll be deported back to my home country … They didn't know that God is helping me, will help me to live here*." Rose saw her faith as crucial to her survival, providing her with a mechanism for escaping

her encapsulation and connecting with an alternative reality. She said, "*I'm a Christian, and if my Bible is not there I will go mental already.*" When asked about the prospect of getting justice, she added, "*God knows, God will actually return all of this to you and it will come back to you*." She externalised responsibility for justice to God, refusing to participate in the legal process, "*I don't want to take any revenge, I don't want to take any case out of this but God will repay – I'm not going to pay them back but God will repay*."

In summary, survivors described the psychological consequences of their exposure to their traffickers' control strategies, which included shame, depression, dehumanisation, the collapse of their assumptive world and divergent attribution styles. The dynamic nature of this stage of the model suggests that the more complete the encapsulation survivors experienced, the longer they would have been exposed to their traffickers' control strategies, and consequently the more severe their psychological consequences would be. Examples of this are provided in the pathways section below.

Pathways to Exit

In this section, the dynamic nature of the model described thus far in this chapter will be elucidated. In this chapter I have previously described the various categories that survivors shared as relevant to their trafficking experience. I will now describe the various pathways survivors took through this stage of the model, explaining how each of them navigated these categories, grouped by the exit strategy they recalled – either termination, escape or rescue.

Termination. According to legislation surrounding migrant work in Singapore, the issuing of work permits to foreign workers ties them to the specific company that hired them (Clarke, 2012; Yea, 2015). As alluded to by participants, the debt

bondage they incurred to facilitate migration resulted in vulnerability, as it enabled their traffickers to ensure cooperation by threatening to terminate their permits. Of all the survivors, those terminated suffered the least abuse, as their traffickers were part of a network of exploitation and it was easy for them to find new workers who again would pay upfront for the opportunity to migrate to Singapore.

Alex. Overall, Alex did not provide much insight into his emotional experiences of trafficking, instead describing sequences of events and physical conditions. He did not find himself in severe encapsulation, mostly limited by the long working hours at the restaurant and terrible housing conditions he endured. He and his wife had their work permits terminated four months into their original contract when they began protesting their lack of pay. They were not given any reason for termination and were simply kicked out of their accommodation, finding themselves homeless as a result:

> *He did not provide us with any reason. We asked him for our pay and he asked us not to work anymore … He told us we had to get our things packed and then leave that night … We had nowhere to go, just on the streets*."

Tusher. Tusher provided numerous details about his housing and living conditions and the tactics employed by his tafficker, such as substitutionary contracts and arbitrary deductions as well as how they compared to two prior contracts he had in Singapore. He also shared the isolation and shame he felt as a result of his failure to fulfill his familial responsibility. The story of his termination revealed a network of exploitation that systemically practiced terminating workers to bring in new migrants who would have to pay a bond to facilitate their migration. After several months of not being paid, Tusher and his colleagues confronted their trafficker:

> *Suddenly my employer call me and say 'Hey Tusher, hey all of you, I want all of you to transfer to another company. I don't want anymore worker, it's a headache for me, all of you are very difficult … I want all of you to transfer. … The company he want us to transfer to is a different boss but this is his very good friend. So I know that the same thing will happen to us.*

Tusher refused, and instead re-emphasised his right to be paid (asserting his sense of agency), by saying, "*We never listened to him because of course this is our money, the one we work for already. He should pay. These our right.*" Like Alex, this resulted in him being thrown out of his accommodation and having his work permit terminated. He said, "*They don't want to allow us to sleep there anymore … We have to borrow money from my friends to rent a room to stay.*"

Toyin. In Toyin's case, even though she did not have a work permit that bonded her to her trafficker's family in Australia, she also was issued with an ultimatum from them that resulted in her being thrown out of the house. Of all the survivors, she spent the longest period of time with her traffickers: between six and seven years. However, she did not suffer a high degree of encapsulation, as she regularly interacted with customers at her trafficker's hairdressing and hospitality business, and was at times allowed to leave the home unsupervised. This ability to meet and connect with people was pivotal to her mental health, as she reported, "*Meeting different people is quite nice. Because it build it, it give me a bit of chance to build up my confidence, so I'm able to approach other people.*" "*I do have friends*," she added, "*But because you don't really have time for them, to catch up and those*

things, so in a way you lost them." For her, the factor that most constrained her experience was her culture:

> *As an African, as Nigerian family, we have to obey our elders. You can't go out anyhow … It's not in my position to ask … In Nigeria once somebody is older than you, you believe they know better than you, so you have to live according to their ways*.

While she was somewhat isolated, the fact that her trafficker's family had a daughter close to her age provided her with a degree of social support that enabled her to eventually assert her agency and not agree to the arranged forced marriage. Speaking of the daughter she said, "*So that give me strength, that somebody can see what I am going through."* Sadly though, the daughter also was a source of verbal abuse, repeatedly telling Toyin that she was dumb and emphasising the differences between them.

Ultimately, Toyin's relationship with her traffickers came to a head over her visa. She wanted to apply for permanent residency to stay in Australia, but they disagreed with her, afraid of attracting attention to their family:

> *My aunty and my uncle told me to move, to move out because I said I have to go to the court … They say no, they don't want me to go to the court, they want me to drop it. My aunty say if you don't want to drop the case, you have to leave my house … Because they know they are wrong, and they don't want the government to come find them*.

Thankfully, she met a fellow Nigerian who was able to connect her with an organisation that provided her with accommodation when she was forced to leave the house.

Escape. The majority of survivors shared stories of escaping the premises they were housed and/or worked in. Their escape experiences ranged from deliberate planning and action to opportunistic and fortuitous circumstances.

Yan Zhi and Jiao Jiao. Yan Zhi and Jiao Jiao described the complex system of quotas and fines for not meeting them that their trafficker used to increase survivors' desperation. This desperation sent them down a slippery slope from drinking and singing to sleeping with clients to pay off their ever-increasing debt. As Yan Zhi explained, "*The customers were mainly older men from Singapore, middle aged to old men*." Yan Zhi and Jiao Jiao felt helpless and powerless as a result of these tactics.

As mentioned above, it was the threat of prostitution to her sense of self that prompted Yan Zhi to escape first. Although she did not give much detail as to how and where she escaped from, it was evident that leaving was not a particularly difficult process for her, "*I felt that I was no different from a prostitute if I carried on so I ran away. As I did not know the law in Singapore, I hid after I ran away."* Her trafficker responded by making a police report, *"The lady boss made a false police report that I had gone to Geylang to be a prostitute, and as my permit was cancelled, I was an illegal immigrant. A friend found me someone who knew about the law and they got me help."* After she was referred to an NGO, she called Jiao Jiao, who then managed to escape and join her there.

Sue and Tina. Sue and Tina travelled to Australia with a mutual friend from Malaysia and found themselves subjected to sex trafficking. They were forced to

work for two months in a brothel in Sydney. The impact of this sex trafficking was reflected in their descriptions of the most severe psychological consequences out of all the participants, as described earlier in this chapter. Interestingly, Sue and Tina provided different accounts of the events that transpired after they escaped, which may be indicative of the impact of trauma upon their memory and mentalisation. According to Sue, she and Tina ran away together and found themselves homeless for several days until they were discovered by the Australian Federal Police:

> *We three came together and that girl [Tina] run away with me too, and sleep in the park until the Australian Federal police caught me and said they were looking for us for a few days … They say if we can give a statement they can help us*.

Tina's account started earlier, detailing the fact that, after an initial period of working alongside her friends at the first brothel, she was sent to another one because of her physical appearance. She shared that:

> *They separate me from my friends, they separate me from my friends because I can't work because I'm a big girl, you know? They send me to other brothel … Cheaper one, very cheap one … So and then I had to work like 24 hours*.

She spoke about the conditions there, saying that the other girls working at that brothel were often on drugs, she was treated terribly by her clients and was forced to compromise her religious beliefs and eat food that was not halal in order to survive. She articulated the extent to which Sue helped her escape:

> *I feel like hell, but lucky, you know, my friend was there. She's the one helped me to – because we want to run away that time, we want to run away*.

This was where her account contrasted with Sue's, with greater insight into their planned course of action and a much more immediate encounter with the authorities:

> *So we decided to go to Melbourne, we already want to buy ticket at that time, already want to purchase, go down to the stair. Then suddenly the Australian Federal Police like 'hi, how are you?' … We run to the stairs to go buy the ticket, go to supermarket, buy the ticket and then the AFP come to us*.

Furthermore, she explained that despite the tactics of encapsulation employed by their traffickers, the timing of their escape was decisive and in fact coincided with them having paid off their debt bondage:

> *Because even though we're working at that time, we have to give them commission too, so our working money also had to give them. We hard working, even I wouldn't get anything from the working. I finished the debt and then we left … Lucky we got mind to run. When I want to run, run. Just go*.

Unfortunately they had to escape without their friend who had came to Australia from Malaysia with them. They were unable to save her as she was subject to coercion not just from their traffickers but from her partner back home:

> *One is left there, because the other one, she said she still need the money, that's why she wanted to live there … Her boyfriend threatening her … saying if you don't give me money, I will tell your parents what you do there … So she had to stay there. I'm so pity of her, we can't do anything. We have to save ourselves*.

June. Although I already have covered the details of the horrifying abuse that June suffered at the hands of her traffickers in Chapter 4 and earlier in this chapter, there are a number of other pertinent points pivotal to her narrative. She reported an initial period of niceness from her traffickers, saying, "*They are kind to me, talk nicely to me at first. They asked me to sleep early, they give me enough food, and then they teach me how to do this work*." Gradually, however, her treatment worsened, and "*after three months they started to abuse me*".

As described above, June decided to run away after a night of prolonged abuse, which came 10 months into her tenure in Singapore. Given the doors of the apartment she lived in were locked, she identified the master bedroom window as her only viable option. She shared a harrowing story of leaping from the ledge beneath the window onto the balcony of the apartment below:

> *So during that time I ran away, I used the master bedroom, the window and I jumped from there … because we lived on the 6th floor so I jumped to the 5th floor*.

She described her thought process, which involved identifying a potential source of support and choosing the correct timing. This reflected her re-established sense of agency. Speaking of the domestic worker who lived in the apartment below, she said:

> *One time we talk, I know she's also Filipino. So the day I jump, I waited for her [trafficker] to go out and when she go out I jump and ask help from her [another Filipino maid] so she helped me*.

Luckily for her, a neighbour from another apartment saw her jump and also came to her aid, "*Because I stand longer here on the edge, because I was thinking I will jump or not*." She was unable to walk afterwards as she fractured both her legs in the process.

Rose. Like June, Rose too described an initial period of good treatment for the first three months while she paid off her the debt she incurred to facilitate her migration. The abuse described in Chapter 4 started when she requested to be paid. Interestingly, after the first incident of abuse, her traffickers asked her to forget what happened, an option that appealed to her given her state of isolation:

> *Ma'am asked me can you please forget – pretend that nothing happened because tomorrow is going to be New Year, and I think that is quite fine to me because I because I'm very far away from my family and I don't want bad things to happen to them or me*.

However, that was not the end of her maltreatment, and she shared how it continued until she capitulated and begged to be sent home. She was told:

> *You have to pay all your debts, you have to pay the replacement fee, you have to pay this, you have to pay that, they give me all the silly things which I've broken … Then I will think whether I can let you go or not*.

Rose's realisation that she was thoroughly encapsulated prompted a change of strategy on her part, a shift to false civility and acquiescence. She said, "*I tried to be nice to them, so they will let me go, that is what I thought. If I be nice to them, they will let me go*." But she soon discovered that there was no hope of them letting her go, so she maintained her false civility while searching for an opportunity to escape:

> *My intention is I will try to be a very good girl and as soon as I find the opportunity to run out, I'll just run out. That is what my intention. I didn't say anything, I said, I'm so sorry ma'am, and I just tried to be as nice as possible. Sir scold me, I didn't say anything, I'm sorry, sir … Whatever they say I just accept, I just agree, you know?*

Her opportunity came one morning when her traffickers made a mistake and left the door of the house unlocked, *"Then in the morning on the 7th I find the opportunity to run out … Sir was very mad at something, I don't know, and then he did not lock the door."* She interpreted this as a case of divine intervention. Fittingly, given her strongly faith, she escaped with only her Bible; her belongings still were locked in another room. As she said, "*It's by the grace of God I find that the door was not locked. So I have only my Bible with me, so I ran out with my Bible, I just ran*

down … If I stay another more week or a month, I will mentally go crazy and this is the opportunity."

Perhaps the most surprising part of her exit pathway is the fact that she took the time to write a letter of apology to her traffickers prior to escaping. Describing this stand for her humanity, she reported, "*I have time to run out and I'm so sorry for that … I still write a letter for them that mentioned that if I stay another week I will go mentally crazy, and I ran out*."

Anne. Anne's initial response to discovering the nature of her encapsulation was one of shock. Her experience of being trafficked was dominated by feeling like she was misrecognised. She could not believe how her traffickers, who treated her well prior to coming to Australia, could dehumanise her to such an extent, particularly since she left her own children behind to help them. The eventual failure of her encapsulation began prior to her escape, when she was taken to a party where she met a man from her country. Despite her trafficker's attempt to restrict their communication, she reported that he was able to provide her with the contact details of a woman who could help her. She said, "*The man came back and he was like this is the mobile number for the lady I'm telling you about, because it's like, I don't know, it's like he sensed that I'm not in a good way*."

Fortuitously, several days later she discovered that the house was unlocked and she made her escape:

> *So I went through the back door, and lucky that day it was the garbage night day, so they like, the gate was open because they were putting the garbage bins to be collected the following morning. So they didn't lock the gate. So*

> *when I find the gate was opened, and the main door, the back door was opened, I went to the neighbour*.

Her traffickers discovered where she was when the neighbour's porch light came on. They rushed over, found her and assaulted her as she desperately tried to call the contact number she had been given:

> *So when they find that like, I'm on phone, using the neighbour's phone, she came running, this Italian lady. She came running and she just twisted my arm that I couldn't hold the phone any longer, so the phone fall on the floor, and when I was just trying to get the phone, she stepped on my, on my ankle. So because of the pain, I couldn't anymore like go for the phone, do anything else, and I was like you're hurting me, and she was like I don't care*.

Having escaped her encapsulated context, she became more confident in her own reality especially after encountering the possibility of social support:

> *This is not what I deserve … I don't have a picture of anything you're saying… That you're giving me good food, and you are taking care of me … I'm not seeing anything of that, so that's why I'm trying to get help … People should not be denied their right … This is my right, I have to have it*.

Her traffickers attempted to coerce her back into their home, but she stood firm, refusing to return. Eventually the police were called, and her traffickers initially told them she was a relative, "*I overheard them telling the police that I'm the sister to her*

husband. And I went closer to the police and said no, no, no, she's lying! I'm not his sister – I just told the police can't you see, I'm black and she's white!" When her traffickers were not believed, they began throwing her luggage out of the house, scattering her clothes all over the front lawn. They claimed that she was an illegal immigrant, saying, "*We don't want her anymore, we don't want to see her anymore, she's illegal here, take her away*," and she was taken to the police station.

Rescue. Arun and Sandra were rescued after the nature of their captivity became evident to someone who took interest in their situation. This person then contacted the Australian authorities, who subsequently raided the premises of their traffickers. Both experienced a high but not complete degree of encapsulation, because someone was still able to provide them with a bridge to rescue. However, neither of them actively planned to escape, suggesting that to some extent they surrendered to their isolation and loss of agency.

Arun. Arun sought employment in Australia despite being warned by his trafficker about the hardship in store. Like Tusher, he spoke more about the nature of his encapsulation than the psychological consequences he experienced during his four months in captivity. He shared about his long working hours, poor housing conditions and restricted movement and communication. His bridge to rescue was a co-worker at a restaurant he worked at noticed his predicament, began asking questions and subsequently contacted the Immigration Department and the police:

> *My co-worker, she's a lady, every time she asked me, oh you're working hard, is he paying any money? And I was like no, he told me he was going to but he didn't pay any money now. She said oh, that's not fair. Then one day she*

> *asked me, can you write down your full name? Then I wrote down my full name but I didn't ask why she was asking*.

When the authorities raided the restaurant, Arun initially mistrusted their intentions and was very scared of deportation. He wondered, "*After I come back here, one lady is standing in front of the door in his restaurant. Then she ask me for ID or something … She's the police. The police? Why they come here? That time I was scared – why is the police here?*" Eventually, he cooperated and was taken to collect his belongings:

> *Then I told all the story how I met my ex-boss, and I'm working here harder, and working every day. Then they understand and it's like okay, just go to the home and show me where you stay and where you stay and sleep … They cancelled my working visa, they gave me bridging visa … and they took me away from that place to Sydney*.

For him, being rescued was an experience filled with uncertainty, "*At that time I felt nervous. I don't know what I'm going to do*."

Sandra. Sandra faced the most encapsulated environment upon her arrival in Sydney, as she was locked in a suburban house serving in domestic servitude and unable to leave for three years. She was instructed to make herself scarce when guests were around, while others were told she was not able to speak English so she was essentially ignored. She described the extent of her encapsulation and helplessness, by saying:

> *Like I didn't know what's happening outside and what to do, how to do, and like if I knew anything I should have – now I think I should have left the house when they were not there. But the other thing I had no money, I didn't have my passport, I didn't know whom to go and ask for help, or just go out someone will help me. Three years like this.*

Cultural differences fuelled her belief that others around and about her would not be willing to help, "*I thought it was like my country – if you go ask for help no one will help you."* As a result, she suffered inhibited mentalisation, depression, depersonalisation and suicidal ideations.

Her bridge to rescue came in the form of a family friend of her trafficker:

> *One day this lady came, she knocked on the door and she came in. She said you are just like a slave, because she comes and she sees me working everyday … She knew me, how I was … She said she's going to help me. But after that I didn't see her. After one week Immigration came in the day time … during the day, not sure if she called them but they knew information about her only someone who had been in the house would know. I was very happy when Immigration came! I thought oh they might help me!*

When her trafficker realised that the Immigration authorities were at the door, she tried to hide her in the back shed and then push her over the fence. It was in this moment that Sandra rediscovered her sense of agency and asserted herself in the hope of rescue:

> *I said no, because I heard it was Immigration. I thought whatever Immigration does at least they'll take me out of this house. I'll be out, away from this house, that's all.*

Eventually, they came around the back of the house and she was taken inside, questioned and once her identity was confirmed the authorities took her away from her trafficker:

> *They told me to go upstairs in the room, they all walked with me in my room, and whatever I had in one bag, and I just took it. That time I didn't know what to do, what to say, and whatever I had in my bag, just a few tops, that's what I carried just downstairs*."

In this chapter I discuss the psychological consequences of encapsulation, the survivors' exposure to traffickers' control strategies and the manner of survivors' exit from their trafficking context. The dynamic nature of this stage of the model proposes that survivors who experienced greater encapsulation would have endured more prolonged exposure to traffickers' control strategies. As a result they were more likely to suffer more severe psychological consequences, before their sense of agency was reactivated and they were able to exit their trafficking context. These relationships have been explored in my descriptions of participants' pathways. In the next chapter, I address the post-trafficking stage of the model, which initially includes the survivors' engagement with the relevant authorities and service providers.

Chapter 6

Survivors' Experiences of Post-Trafficking

The consequences of human trafficking do not end with freedom from encapsulation and survivors' physical trafficking context. In fact, survivors shared how exiting their trafficking context marked the beginning of what was often a much longer process than the time they spent captive. This stage of the model covers everything post-exit, including the process of their engagement with respective authorities and service providers tasked with their rehabilitation. This includes finding themselves in a state of systemic dependency, the psychological consequences of this state and how they managed the transition from dependency to resettlement and an independent life and is depicted in Figure 6.1.

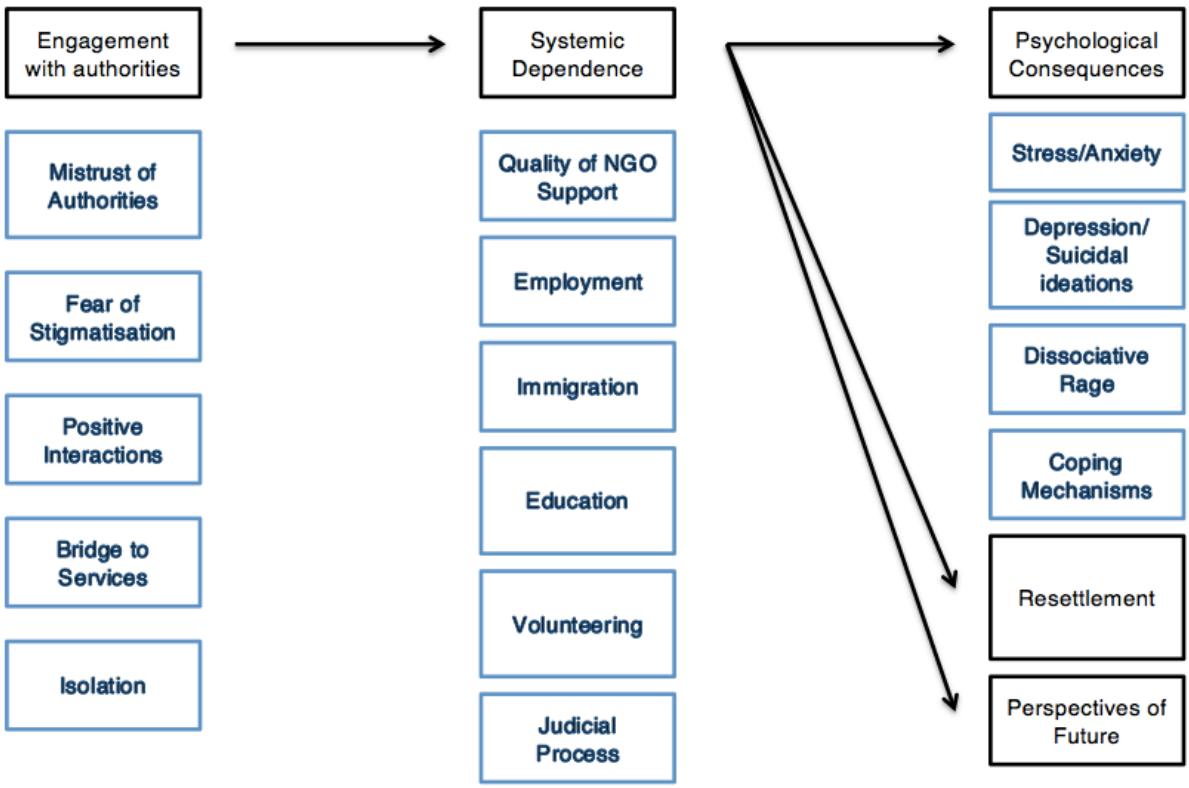

Figure 6.1 Graphical Representation of the Grounded Theory of the Post-Trafficking Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking.

Engagement with Authorities

Many survivors spoke in detail about the nature of their engagement with respective authorities in Australia and Singapore. Initial mistrust, fear of

stigmatisation and positive interactions all emerged as categories that contributed to survivors' engagement with law enforcement. These categories also influenced their overall post-trafficking experience.

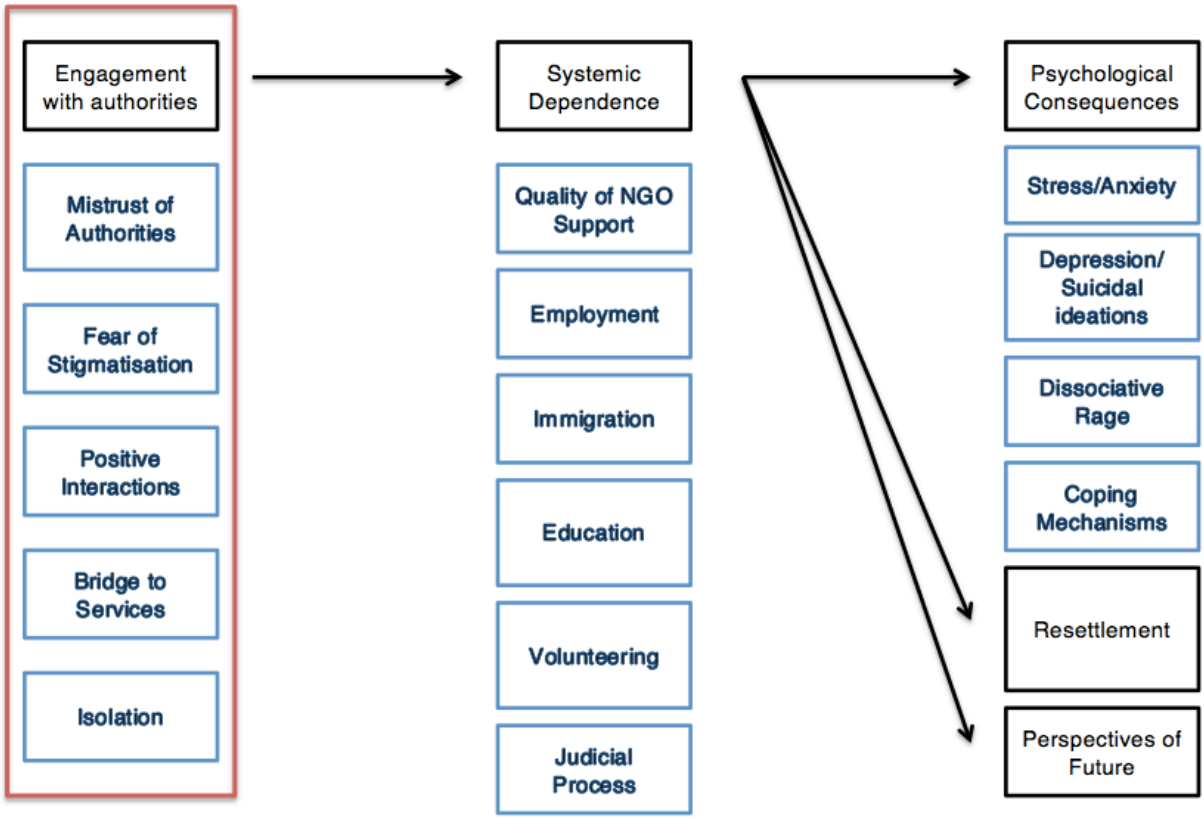

Figure 6.1 (a) Graphical Representation of the Grounded Theory of the Post-Trafficking Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking (with Engagement with Authorities highlighted).

Mistrust of authorities. As mentioned in Chapter 4 many survivors came to Australia and Singapore with the preconceived notion that authorities there (e,g., police, immigration) acted similarly to those in their home countries. As a result, they were not considered a reliable potential source of assistance, further reinforcing survivors' sense of encapsulation. After engaging with authorities post-exit, survivors shared the various ways in which they overcame these misconceptions. Arun shared how his familiarity with the Indian police impacted how he acted in Australia, saying, "*I know how the Indian police, how the Indian government work. I don't know*

anything about in Australia because he never let me go out, that's why I didn't know I could speak to someone, maybe I can know." He described how an interpreter who spoke his language played a pivotal role in reassuring him that the Australian police were in fact willing to help him:

> *Then they bring interpreter my language, but the guy asked me where are you from, what are you doing and it's my language. Do you have any problem here, just tell me the problem, I'm going to tell the police. They are going to help you, don't be scared. I was like no, no I'm scared because I've heard of the Indian police, if we do something wrong, they go to put in the gaol. The guy told me okay, don't worry, the police are not like in India, they are good police. They came here to help you, okay, don't worry*.

Having been taken away from her trafficker's house (after managing to escape), Anne spoke of how her mistrust of the police was fuelled by their interrogative behaviour. She said, "*The police were saying, how come you got one month visa but no return ticket? So even the police were like I don't understand this*." By the time they finished questioning her it was 3am and they sought a refuge to send her to for the night. She found the piece of paper with the African lady's phone number in her luggage. Explaining this, she said, "*I asked them to call this number and they were like who is this? I told them you want the contact to contact someone, why you asking all that questions! Call that number, and when they had dialled, ok bring me my piece of paper back!"* Reflecting on that night, she described how she was convinced that they were just like the corrupt police back home:

> *I thought the police coming, they would be on my side. They were not on my side! They were on the side of the family, so I was left. Like I was very disappointed with the police here. I thought ok, this is the same police like I normally have back home, you don't give them a bribe you're the one to suffer*.

However, subsequent interactions proved otherwise, and she was willing to admit that she had come to a premature conclusion, "*Anyway, I got it the wrong way because even them they didn't know what was happening because the family didn't tell them the truth … I was able to go back to that police station and I find a different constable and he was very helpful*."

Jiao Jiao also spoke of how her preconceptions were reinforced by her trafficker, and how this influenced her course of action in Singapore. She said, "*We don't know the law here and then because the government in China is more corrupt, we were told it's useless for us to seek help from the police."* Having escaped her encapsulation, she had a more positive outlook on the future. *She said, "I hope that the police can take a stand on our side*."

For Tusher, his mistrust of the Singaporean authorities was actually reinforced after attending a meeting between their Ministry of Manpower[2] (MOM) and his trafficker. He described his complaint saying, "*The reason we go to MOM, there is two reasons like short payment and non-payment of our salary and a lot of unauthorised deductions like if we … we go to work we need the safety equipment*." But Tusher described how the canniness of his trafficker left him and his fellow workers feeling even more disempowered and without a voice, "*Our employer never*

[2] The ministry of the Government of Singapore that is responsible for the formulation and implementation of labour policies related to the workforce in Singapore.

gave us any chance to say that what is our main concern, why we are here ... He never let us talk to him or talk to the MOM officer the - our main concerns … They never let us speak."

Fear of stigmatisation. Both Jiao Jiao and Yan Zhi articulated how their interactions with Singaporean police left them feeling stigmatised and unfairly judged. In Jiao Jiao's words:

> *The police suspect and questioned us about what we are doing here, whether we used the permit to work in questionable places. I hope that whether it's MOM or the police, that they would not view us in that manner and believe that we are the victims*.

Yan Zhi also spoke of how the police seemed highly suspicious of their motivations saying, "*There is an impression that girls from China are here for sleazy purposes … I hope that they would not view us in that manner and will believe that we are victims. We have not done anything wrong*."

Positive interactions. In contrast to the others, Sue, Tina, Sandra and Toyin spoke glowingly of their treatment at the hands of the Australian authorities. Sue was grateful for how proactive they were in assuring her safety saying, "*Then we started to give a statement and immediately they moved us from Sydney to here [Melbourne]. They say it's not safe in Sydney*." For Tina, the fact that the police were willing to act upon the information she and Sue provided made her more willing to trust them. She said, "*Police raided the place … I think more than, I think six, seven girls ready to go from there. So we reported a lot of things*." The willingness of the

police to go above and beyond their duties to ensure her safety was particularly evident when Tina travelled back to Malaysia to visit her family:

> *We tell to AFP [Australian Federal Police] that we come back [to Malaysia] and then someone AFP in there also look after us, so if anything happened there – because they would keep contact us while we were there … That's why I shock when I come here … The police are so good. We think like in Malaysia like so bad and they treat us – but they're so good*.

When it came time for her immigration hearing, Toyin was nervous about the potential negative outcome and the possibility of being sent home to Nigeria. However, her interactions with the judiciary helped set her mind at ease. She explained, "*I was also a bit fearing that this would be the end of me in Australia, because I don't have any things to prove that I belong here … But when we get there, to God be the glory, it was very peaceful, the judge was very nice, so it was not too much of a drama*."

In Sandra's case, officers from the Immigration Department were rapidly able to get her passport back for her. She noted that they were particularly attuned to her desires, as they assigned her to the care of the Salvation Army when she shared how she wanted to go to church:

> *They told me that someone would come and pick up and take you to a place where you can live there. So that's how I met Salvation Army … They came to pick me up and I walked to the safe house and then from that time I'm in Salvation Army. Then, because they knew I wanted to go to church and they*

told me there's a church there, Salvation Army, and so I started going to Salvation Army church.

Bridge to services. The avenue through which survivors ultimately were able to connect with the NGOs, which provided them with support, was important to their post-trafficking experience. Although survivors differed in how quickly they were able to connect with these services, their stories fell into two broad categories: encountering one of their fellow countrymen and receiving serendipitous social support.

Countrymen. Encountering someone from his or her own country was pivotal to the experiences of Toyin, Alex, Arun and Anne. For them, meeting someone who was from their country and who spoke their language made them willing to build rapport and trust as well as communicate their needs in the hope of gaining assistance. Toyin, for instance, described how her bridge to services came in the form of a Nigerian priest-in-training who visited the store where she was forced to work. Although he was not able to personally assist her, he introduced her to a woman who could. She said, "*One of my countrymen is studying to be a father [priest]. So he came to buy food at my shop. So we're talking and I told him my situation and he said ok, he can't help, but he knows somebody that can help*." When she was forced to leave her traffickers' house, this woman helped her find permanent housing, "*So he spoke to her and she came to visit my place of work … I moved to my friend's house for three weeks, just to manage. Then she found a place for me*."

For Alex and his wife, their bridge to services came in the form of two men who were from China. Having been forced to leave when their work permits were terminated, they found themselves homeless. His wife also was sick, physically weak

and unable to walk. Alex said, "*We did not have a choice. She has difficulty walking because I had to carry the suitcase and help her as well. It was really difficult then.*" They were homeless for three days until they met the first man from China who was willing to help them:

> *I asked him if I could … I do not have any money now, can I leave my wife here first to stay, rest awhile. If I manage to borrow some money, I will pay him rent. After that he said it was alright. He is also Chinese. We stayed there for about five days*.

During this period, Alex repeatedly visited the Ministry of Manpower in the hope of appealing against the termination of their permits. On one visit, he met another countryman who referred them to the NGO that eventually housed them. In his words, "*There was a guy also at Ministry of Manpower from China. He told me about this place*. *They helped us*."

Arun similarly described two men who spoke his language as crucial bridges that enabled him to access services. As mentioned above, the police provided an interpreter who spoke Arun's language and assured him that they could be trusted and were not like corrupt police in India. Having been assigned to the Red Cross for accommodation and support, Arun also was introduced to the Salvation Army. He said, "*They came with one guy, who spoke my language, and said we're going to help you. I said, ok, good … That time I had English problem, she always arranged someone to speak to me. The guy is a nice guy."*

In Anne's case, her bridge to services was the Nigerian woman whose phone number she was given. After speaking briefly to Anne at the neighbour's house (just

before Anne was assaulted by her traffickers), the woman became aware of Anne's situation. When the police contacted her again later, she made arrangements for Anne to stay with a friend and then to pick her up in the morning. As Anne said, "*The following morning she was there … I was taken to a women's' shelter, and that centre, that's where they contacted Salvation Army*." Anne spoke of how the mere moment of seeing the woman's number made her feel relief:

> *I felt relieved when I saw that paper and that contact, I was relieved. I said oh thank God. Actually I was relieved. I was happy. I felt another joy, just making me forget what I've passed in that two or three hours. But seeing this contact was like this gonna save me*.

From her perspective, the most salient factor that fuelled her sense of relief was the woman's nationality:

> *I don't mind this lady how she looks like, how she's gonna take it, but at least I've talked to someone. Someone knows, that somebody somewhere. Somebody from my country, somebody who speaks my language, she knows that somebody stuck somewhere. So she gonna try*.

Serendipitous social support. Others discussed how receiving serendipitous social support from a stranger was crucial to them accessing NGO assistance. Rose kept a pamphlet with the relevant NGO helplines in her Bible, but had no phone with which to contact them. After escaping her trafficker's apartment, she ran into a

neighbour in her building who was willing to help her make the call and provided money for transport to the shelter:

> *I just don't know anything, I was like so confused, and so scared. I just say, can you just call for me … I have the letter, the flyers from MOM … I saw the 24 hour helpline and I said can you please call me this number … The girl who answer give me the location and this guy gave me $8.50 to get there. They give me food, they give me clothes, they give me everything, even the comfort*.

Similarly, June's dramatic apartment escape was witnessed by a neighbour, who came to the apartment she had jumped to and offered assistance:

> *Somebody saw me on the other block and then she doorbelled the 5th floor one and then she asked 'Somebody jumped there on your balcony'. … This lady is the one who knows about HOME. So she called Sister Bridget. She asked some volunteers to pick me up because I cannot walk already because I have fractures on my leg … So after some volunteers picked me up and bring me here and then Sister Bridget call ambulance and then they bring me to hospital*.

A woman running an outreach program for migrant workers near where Tusher lived referred him to HOME: "*It's near our office, the office of our employer, near our house also … She told us that you better go to HOME*." Likewise, the examples in Chapter 5 of the family friend of the trafficker and fellow co-worker

provided by Sandra and Arun, respectively, serve to reinforce the role of serendipitous social support.

Isolation. All survivors, except Rose and Anne, shared how the sense of isolation they felt while encapsulated often did not end once they exited the trafficking context. This primarily was due to a lack of willingness to fully disclose their experiences to their family or various contextual factors.

Lack of disclosure. Alex and his wife explained his reasoning for their non-disclosure to their respective parents in China, saying, "*I did not tell them ... I am afraid that they will worry."* Jiao Jiao and Yan Zhi both shared how they did not tell their families the full nature of their employment or circumstances. Jiao Jiao said, "*My family does not know about my situation here. I kept things from them. … My husband thinks I am bar tending. I told them that because they kept our pay, we are suing the boss and MOM is investigating their treatment of me. I didn't tell them about those incidents*." This non-disclosure also was motivated by a desire not to cause worry, "*I don't want them to worry about me.*" Yan Zhi succinctly described her communication with her family saying, "*I just told them I was a cleaner, and the boss was ill-treating us, and now has been arrested, and MOM is helping us*." Sandra also minimised the extent of her suffering, telling her children only that, "*I was not paid, but I didn't tell them all the stuff. Because they'll be worried, angry you know? I just tell them I was not paid. That's all*."

June expressed her perspective that different members of her family were able to handle varying levels of disclosure depending on her perceived need to protect them. She said, "*I never talk this whole story to my mother, because I know what she feels, so I only talk a little bit to her*." When it came to her siblings, however, she gave them more details, but still not the entire story, "*I tell them also what happened to me*

but not all. I don't want them to worry." Regarding other family members or friends who also were working in Singapore at the time, she spared them the details saying, "*They ask me how am I here, I told them I'm ok I'm ok, so that they won't be worried*."

Tina spoke of how her fear of being sent back to Malaysia stemmed from the possibility of her family realising that she had not been studying in Australia as claimed, and having to disclose what she had been involved in. She said, "*We bit scared before if they send us because if they send us, we got problem with family because they know that we study everything here – just only study*." For Sue, she was unable to disclose her experiences to her teen daughter who she left in Malaysia, partly as a result of the impact her migration had on their relationship. She said, "*She's doesn't know anything, because I don't think she can understand if I say it because anything I say, she laugh*."

Contextual factors. For Alex, Arun, Toyin and Tusher, there were additional contextual factors that impacted their sense of isolation. Alex articulated how he experienced a lack of social support, in that he and his wife knew other people employed in Singapore but, even in their circumstances, they were unwilling to provide help:

> *We did know some people. Knowing our position, they will not help us. If you want to borrow, they won't dare to lend you because in this situation you have to go home and won't repay them. So no one is willing to help you*.

Physical distance from family deeply affected Arun's sense of isolation. He expressed how family and a sense of life were intimately interconnected for him,

stating, "*I feel like no one here, what a life here. I thought that life maybe like this*." He expanded on this subsequently by saying, "*After I come here, I'm like why I come here because no one here, no family … I can't see anyone, no family, no friends, no happiness*." This sense of isolation was compounded by the fact that after Arun was rescued, his trafficker coerced his parents in India into signing a letter saying he did not do anything wrong. Arun's parents also attempted to convince him to return to work:

> *They said like, Oh Arun, don't stay with the police, just go back to your workplace because my ex-boss went to India … They got some sign from my parents. I mean like a letter, they're getting a letter from my parents saying this guy is good, he didn't do anything wrong*.

Despite this pressure, he asserted his agency and continued cooperating with the authorities:

> *I said no, the police good, I promised the police I'm going to help them, they will help me. I'm not going back to that place*.

Tusher experienced a similar level of pressure from his family, but in the form of financial demands. His isolation was self-enforced, resulting from his inability to fulfill his familial responsibility:

> *I cannot talk to my family also because they're - of course they are asking for money - and if I cannot send money what will I talk to them? That's why I just ... sometimes I just close my phone, sometimes I never answer their call*.

The pressure he faced was unrelenting, as he described receiving messages the day of the interview asking for more money, and having to ask others for help:

> *Today also my father keeps on sending SMS … If possible send some money that he need to pay the interest of bank and need to give some money to my sister for her … I don't have anything. I just call one of my friends. I don't know if he can do it or not*.

He summarised the state of his relationship with his parents by saying, "*I cannot call my father and mother because of I cannot do anything for them*."

Finally, for Toyin it was the contrast between cultures that made her feel isolated; specifically, the difference between the more individualistic Australian communities and collectivist Nigerian practices:

> *I came from a place where you are free to talk to your neighbor at any time, to knock on their doors, gather together. But come here you have to be on your own most of the time. So it's a bit challenging staying at home*.

She said she had infrequent contact with her family back home, ostensibly because of the cost of calling Nigeria, but also perhaps because they were unable or unwilling

to support her. This was in stark contrast to the other participants, who were trafficked as a result of a desire to fulfill their familial responsibility.

Overall, in this section I have explored the process of survivors' engagement with authorities. Having been referred to services by someone they trusted, they navigated a complex process that required them to overcome their mistrust of the authorities and a fear of stigmatisation. This resulted in them finding themselves in a state of systemic dependence, which I will now define and describe.

Systemic Dependence

In this section, I will discuss the ongoing dynamic nature of survivors' actions and interactions with respective authorities and NGOs tasked with their support. Survivors spoke of finding themselves amidst a context of systemic dependence, the nature and intricacies of which were highly foreign to them. The quality of NGO support, establishing familial relationships, involvement in employment, education, and advocacy, and interactions with immigration and the legal and justice system emerged as significantly interrelated concepts that impacted their post-trafficking experience.

Quality of NGO support. Having suffered from dehumanisation as a result of their trafficking and encapsulation, the social support and attuned responsiveness that survivors received helped them feel rehumanised. This was most beautifully summarised in the words of Rose, who felt like she was returned to her former self, which was her better self, "*They changed me into who I am again, they changed me into a better person*."

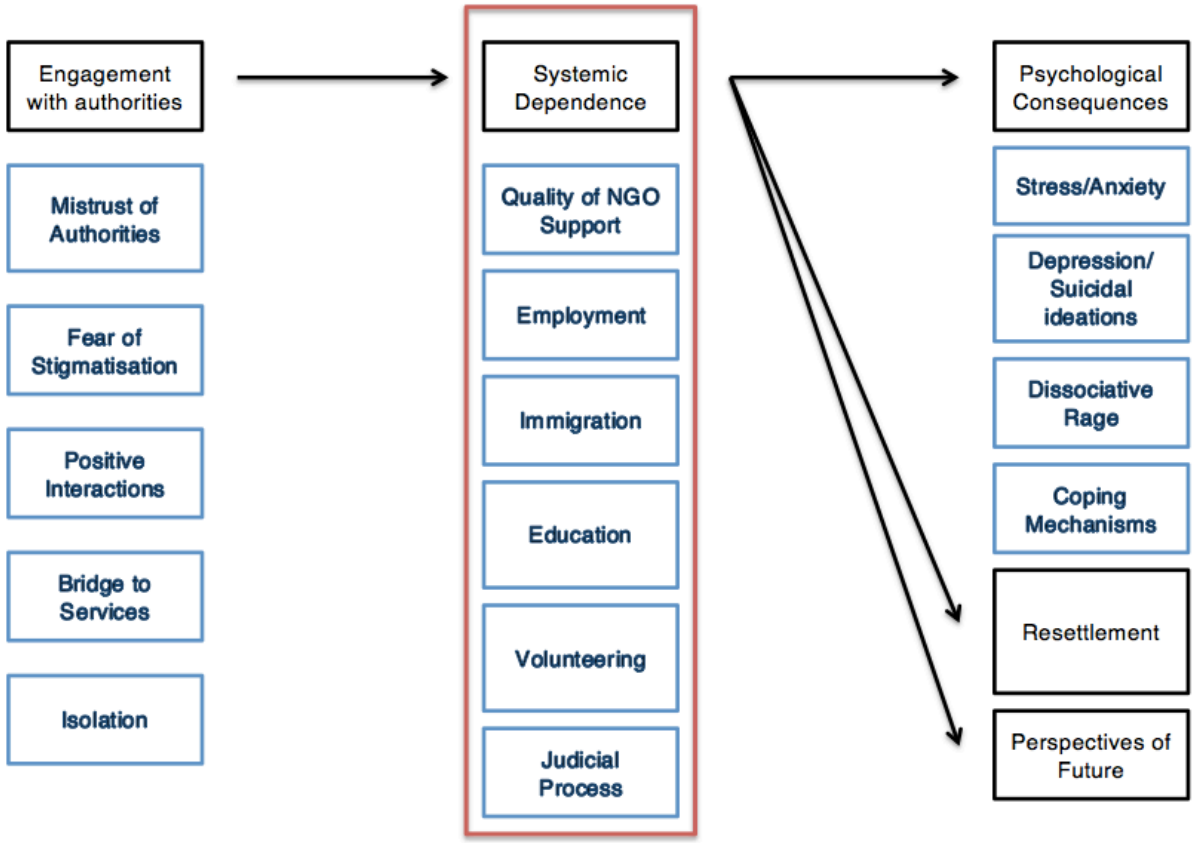

Figure 6.1 (b) Graphical Representation of the Grounded Theory of the Post-Trafficking Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking (with Systemic Dependence highlighted).

Social support. For Tina, the support she received provided her with a sense of direction and countered the potential impact of her ongoing isolation. She said, "*In this country alone, you don't know what to do, even with this support, someone like us, you need support*." Speaking hypothetically about what life would look like if she did not have this support she added, "*If you left them alone, they would become more worse. Maybe I'm still working, maybe I'm still not studying, maybe I'm still an alcoholic, like that.*" It was evident that, from her perspective, the social support she received from the NGO underpinned the efficacy of her post-trafficking progress.

Tusher spoke in similar ways of how HOME provided him with direction and a crucial ally in his interactions with Singaporean authorities. He too shared with me the

choice he would have made had he not received this support; he said he would have resigned himself to his fate and simply returned home:

> *After we meet with him we know what to do, how to do, and I'm sure if he's not with us, maybe we are all of us back in our country already. Because we cannot decide what we're going to do*.

He described how this social support included practical assistance, such as monetary support and connection to other community events, "*He gave us bus money and then gave us money for food also. One day we go to East coast also for a party. Also there's food*." Overall this gave him a sense of hope, which he was particularly grateful for. He said, "*I want to say thanks to Mr Jolovan, Ms Debbie Fordyce because they help us a lot and we hope still we will get good news from our case from MOM*."

Anne articulated how social support re-energised her. She emphasised that, even in cases where services were unable to provide her with the resources she required, their mere presence and willingness to listen was in itself reinvigorating since she felt she was no longer alone:

> *But the thing that was making me have that energy to go on was because I had someone to talk to, someone I can be just this is what has happening. So the thing that matters most like is when you have someone you can share stuff with - that really helps a lot. It doesn't matter whatever you're giving me but at least I can share, this is what's in my head, this is what's bothering me, so you don't feel like you're just in the world alone*.

Like Anne, Sandra described how the social support she received helped her to accept wherever she was in the process of rebuilding her life. She used the vivid metaphor of "*running with*" someone, saying, "*They helped me a lot with running with me, with the visa and stuff, so I'm happy with that, whatever I am*."

Attuned responsiveness vs perceived uselessness. At the other end of the spectrum, Sue and Arun were the only survivors who spoke negatively of the support they received in Australia. Both their complaints came specifically from an economic standpoint, focusing on their Centrelink or social welfare payments and their ability to afford rent. Sue acknowledged the ways in which the NGO had been helpful, while also highlighting the way in which decisions that were made regarding her housing, even if not intended that way, caused her further restrictions:

> *The Red Cross is a bit useless … Because they help us, I don't say no when I came here, clothes and everything they provide, and they provided a house, but we still have to pay rent through Centrelink, and it's not much. The rent is $1200 a month, so full Centrelink money go there and bills and nothing for us for food*.

For Arun, the fact that government-mandated Red Cross support was only available until the end of his court case caused him great distress. Once the case was completed he was told he was on his own and he felt abandoned:

> *After the court case, Red Cross told me, the lady told me sorry we can't help you anymore*. … *We only help before the court case, after they can't do*

> *anything, that's your life, getting the money from Centrelink, your money, your life, no more help*.

He spoke of how he felt the Red Cross support he received was delayed, and contrasted it with the immediacy of support from the Salvation Army:

> *When I get the problem from Centrelink, Red Cross, they said ok, don't worry I'm going to fix it tomorrow or two days later … Then the same time I called Jenny, told Jenny I had problem with Centrelink, I need to pay my rent, and she's like okay, well don't worry, then she fix the problem right away*.

This attuned responsiveness resulted in an enduring trust and sense of security. As Arun said, "*Jenny is not like that one. She told me if I need help she does. Still if I need anything now I know*."

Shame of dependence. Several participants spoke of the shame they felt being in a system in which they were completely dependent on NGOs or the government for support. This was not surprising, given that they came from backgrounds where government social welfare systems did not exist, and they already had experienced the consequences of being a burden upon their families' limited resources. For instance, when I asked whether she had been able to make contact with her family, Rose said she had not as her mobile phone was still in her trafficker's possession. When I suggested that the NGO could help her contact them, she intimated that she perceived herself as already as a burden saying, "*I don't want to ask for help because I was such a trouble already, so I cannot ask for more help*." This view was shared by Toyin who said, when speaking of the woman she stayed

with initially after being thrown out of her trafficker's house, "*She's a single mother and have her own children, so I don't want to be a burden to her*."

In contrast, Alex's struggle with dependence was reflected much more subtly. He spoke repeatedly about how he wanted and was willing to work hard for financial reward, but was just not able to. When asked about the nature of his interactions with the NGO, (unlike other participants) he minimised the importance of the support he currently was receiving, simply stating, "*At present we are helped by HOME … at least our food problem is resolved*."

For Arun, the state of dependency in which he found himself challenged his core values and pride in achieving self-sufficiency, fuelled by a desire to not be like his father. His anger at his father's inability to provide for his family can be seen in the way he said, "*My father is an idiot because he never helped me, he didn't buy any land, he didn't go to my sister's marriage*." He spoke candidly about his plans for the future, emphasising that these were goals that he wanted to achieve on his own, "*It's not like every time you're looking all the time the government to give money, no*." Likewise, Sue summarised her feelings by saying, "*I don't want free money. No, I want to do, do something*."

Employment. Employment was a strong theme in survivors' descriptions of their post-trafficking experience as it served as a way out of systemic dependence. They spoke both of challenges to their desire to gain employment as well as their pride when they finally were successful in finding work, and the impact this had on their sense of agency.

Challenges to employment. For Arun, his lack of employment opportunities meant ongoing dependence upon Centrelink payouts, which continued to restrict his options and caused him stress. When he originally tried to get a job, he was

hampered by a lack of English proficiency. He shared, "*I tried job in restaurant but then they told, like not enough English so they didn't give me job*." He continued, saying, "*Because I don't have a job, if I have a job, I'm not going to – ok, I'm going to get the on week pay, just pay the rent. That time I had no job*."

Similarly, Sue described her struggle with being forced to live on government welfare as a result of her involvement in the legal process. She said, "*So scared and can't get a job because our profile is locked for safety reasons. Have to stay in Centrelink but no we don't want. I couldn't get a job for three years here.*" While she did not go into further detail as to what those specific safety reasons were, she was vehement in declaring her perspective on these restrictions, "*I don't want Centrelink money. I want to work. Tell them to give me a job!*" Eventually an NGO was able to get her a temporary contract at a company. However, she suffered stigmatisation from her new colleagues as the job came through a program that was supposed to be for former drug addicts. She said, "*They didn't even want me to go across to them. If I sneeze or cough they thought I have a virus. It's been a hard life for nine months*." At the end of that contract, once again she was forced to confront how disempowered she still felt even years after being trafficked:

> *Even look for job I have to ask other people help me, I can't get a job by myself. No way can I say I feel like I wanna do something. No, I can't. Can't do anything at the moment …You can't get work. It's not easy at all. 3 years I'm living you know?*

For Rose and Alex, the psychological consequences of their exploitation, rather than systemic challenges, limited their employment opportunities. Rose shared

how she could not cope with the thought of further employment as a domestic worker, sharing how it would be retraumatising for her, "*I cannot work here as a maid anymore. … I cannot take all that tolerance or whatever, you know? I cannot go through the same thing which I've gone through*." Likewise, Alex worked only briefly at a garment factory, quitting after just one day because he was hyper-vigilant to the prospect of being exploited again. He shared how he quit, "*Because what they said when they hired me was not what I had to do … That's why I didn't work … So I felt they were also deceiving me."* Despite this, he still planned to search for more opportunities in Singapore adding, "*I think I would like to stay here if I can find a good job … I don't know what kind. In any case, I can do most jobs. I don't mind working hard and suffering because I came from a farm*."

Like Alex, June also articulated how she was planning to stay in Singapore, as she had no employment prospects back home. She said, "*If I go home to the Philippines I have nothing to do there also. There's no job there waiting for me."*

Successful employment. After their escape, both Yan Zhi and Jiao Jiao were allowed to switch jobs in Singapore and had their work permits reactivated. Yan Zhi spoke of how "*working at a café, working in the eatery*" helped her feel less isolated because she was able to be in contact with her family regularly and even have pride in her working conditions:

> *The Singapore government has allowed me to switch jobs now. I have worked for a few months at a job which is for half a year … Because I am now in a valid proper business, I am in contact with them regularly. Sometimes I take photos of my working place to show them*.

Jiao Jiao worked in a similar business, but her contract recently had ended, "*Because my contract is finished, I am looking for a new job. I was working in a coffee shop, in the kitchen*."

In Australia, both Toyin and Sandra were able to find jobs in the aged care sector. Toyin spoke of her love of old people, sharing both how they challenged her but how she also learned a great deal from them:

> *I work as a carer for old people. Old people are the best. Sometime you find it a bit hard to stay with them, care for them, they free with you to share their past with you and then they also teach you how to be brave… They challenge you also is good*.

For Sandra, finding a job was the final step in creating a new life for herself in Australia, "*At last I got the job. That was my last something that I had to do … Now I'm very busy with my work so that's very good … five days, aged care*."

Immigration. Given the nature of the temporary working permits provided for employment in Singapore, survivors trafficked there knew that there was little possibility of permanent migration. Their only options were to seek repatriation to their country of origin, as has been addressed previously in the cases of Rose and Tusher, or seek to be granted a new work permit for a new employer, as had been granted to Jiao Jiao and Yan Zhi and was desired by Alex and June.

In contrast, Arun, Tina, Toyin and Anne articulated the significance and sense of security provided by the prospect of permanent immigration to Australia. Arun described the overall process of becoming a citizen of Australia as, "*too much headache … They took 4.5 years to get the PR [permanent residency]. Then, I wait*

for one more year to get the citizenship here." He provided a practical example of how the temporary visa he initially was granted when he was rescued compounded his sense of isolation as he was not allowed to leave the country:

> *I got more stress and I feel like I want to see my family. That time they gave me a temporary visa, for three years. They gave me a letter like I have to stay here for two years … If I leave the country, they think 'oh he went to India that means he's safe there, why he need a permanent visa here'*.

However, when his immigration status ultimately was resolved and he was granted citizenship, it provided a sense of security and protection that he otherwise would never have had:

> *Before worry too much about my permanent visa, once done that one I feel like I'm not worried that thing. Once that's done I feel like I'm not worried ... It's no problem, I can stay in the country forever my life long*.

For many survivors, the length of time it took for their immigration status to be resolved extended their suffering. According to Anne, "*Even by getting residency in this country I went through a lot, that was not the end of the pain. I went through a lot before getting my residency*." Toyin acknowledged that the uncertainty around her immigration status for seven long years prevented her from truly feeling settled in Australia and making firm decisions about her future. She said, "*If everything work out very well, because nowadays no a lot. If I get my papers, if I maybe more settle, then maybe I could, but not right now … It's going to be seven years now*." Tina had

just received her permanent residency when I interviewed her but not her full citizenship, "*So I just got the visa, waiting for the visa, so I got it now. It's good … Oh I'm waiting for, they say another year to get citizenship*."

Education. Education was a strong theme in the descriptions of survivors engaging with services tasked with their support. This was particularly true for those who experienced denial of their dreams to pursue further education when they were younger. They experienced varying levels of success in pursuing their studies, resulting in a range of responses from shame to a stronger sense of agency.

For example, Tina shared how she finally was able to pursue her love of business studies, although this was interrupted when she fell pregnant. Despite this, she was determined to pursue her education, taking a series of short courses that would allow her to graduate soon:

> *I like business. Just do certificate, like second language English school, business admin. I do it halfway because I get pregnant that time, so I just, I continue now … Short course, you know? Because with kids, it's too hard for me to go to school. Even when I study, also I have to wait for him to sleep. I'm almost finished. Two months to go*.

She found out, however, that her options for tertiary education were limited by her lack of proficiency in English. She chose business because it did not require a large number of written assignments, but she still struggled with the oral presentations:

> *That why I study business, because I can't study like other things, like so many assignments I can't do it … That's why I chose this one, like admin got*

> *so many I can't because the second language English thing … When I do presentations they laugh at me in the back because they are young girl, you know? So I just feel like - I feel not good. Maybe because I'm thinking, oh I'm different or I don't know how speak English*.

Sadly, her experience with education did not increase her sense of self-efficacy, instead compounding the shame, marginalisation and inferiority she felt as a result of her trafficking experience.

Sue listed the courses she completed, admitting they were difficult, "*I did my barista, bartender certificate, hospitality – I don't know, it's not easy at all."* She shared how, despite her qualifications, she still was unable to find a good job. Arun bemoaned the constantly changing eligibility for tertiary English courses that he was taking. He said, "*I was studying English course, I stated at a basic level at TAFE … Then they changed the rules or something. They said on your visa you can't study, you need to pay the money*." Thankfully, these issues were resolved, "*Then I study English, literacy, numeracy in preparation for work, and retail course. Now I'm studying English Certificate II*." Advancing his education gave Arun a sense of confidence and expertise and allowed him to meet and make friends that increased his sense of social support, "*It's fun, it's good. I see a lot of friends and fun, it's good*."

Toyin shared how crucial her educational experience was in discovering she was not who her traffickers said she was and in elevating her sense of self-efficacy. She contrasted her experience studying and working in aged care with constantly being called dumb by her traffickers:

[Was there a moment where you realised you weren't dumb? That you could actually do this?]

Uhh, now. Now I'm beginning to believe it … Because working at aged care, there's some education you have to do every two to three months. I start doing that by myself and I'm seeing the results are good. So I can do it … It makes me feel good that I'm not who I think I was.

Finally, for Anne, education served as a way of achieving short-term security for herself and her children while planning her long-term future. This reflected her sense of agency:

I went on and do Certificate 3 in aged care, but that was not the end. I was like this is just a stepping stone, at least I can get a job, make me be able to earn some money to be able to support my kids back home. But my field was still in a social work. Being in a community somewhere.

Volunteering. Some survivors identified being involved in volunteering or advocacy for the NGO that was supporting them as a way of helping them contextualise their experiences. At the time I interviewed her, Jiao Jiao had volunteered with HOME for a month and had become aware of other women in similar situations:

I would like to share and let others know about the situation we have been through so they won't be deceived. I have found many similar cases in

> *Singapore when I did volunteer work for a month here. There are many like us*.

June described how volunteering allowed her to fulfill some of her familial responsibilities and give back to those who were helping her:

> *Because nothing to do there in the shelter, we have no salary also, we're waiting on the case to finish, so they allow us to volunteer somewhere so we can get some allowance … Then at the same time every month I can send also a little amount to my mother … I'm happily working here. Because they're helping me also, so I need to help them. I work at the reception during office hours, from Monday to Friday*.

According to Rose, "*Working here, helping here, makes me feel alive. It makes me feel that now I am human being again*." The ability to be productive and help those helping her enlivened her, and served as part of her rehumanisation process. However, it came with the downside that the stories she heard had the potential to be retraumatising and leave her in a state of helpless anguish. "*I have cried many times after I work here*," she said. "*Hearing all their stories and not being able to help. That just makes me cry*." She admitted that as someone with a keen sense of justice, being unable to help others was difficult for her, "*I wanted to fight for their rights, I just wanted to fight for them. I just can't see people who suffering, you know?*"

For Arun, being involved in advocacy allowed him the opportunity to travel and tell his story to members of the Australian Federal government, which he greatly

enjoyed, "*I like to thank to the main thing, mainly Salvation Army … because even like victim advocacy project and went to Canberra, yeah, it's nice. I want to go again! It's fun!*" Similarly, Sue reported how being able to tell her story gave her a way of making meaning from her experience and motivated her to overcome her desire to isolate herself. She said, "*They also interviewed me some stuff in the beginning, online also*. … *I want to do something, I don't want to end up just stay at home*."

Involvement in the judicial process. The final post-trafficking interaction that survivors described was their perspectives and experiences of being involved in the legal process.

Receiving justice. June shared how she was filled with joy that the three women in the family who trafficked her were charged with abuse. She was happy at the prospect of soon feeling a sense of justice, "*three of them charged already in the court so I'm happy to hear that! I'm happy because maybe in a few months I have justice already*!" Similarly, Tina shared how pleased she felt when her trafficker was sentenced to six years in prison and how overall she had a positive experience of the legal process, "*She's already in jail … Just last year I go to the court to finish it, so she already six years … I see her crying and everything, lots of things, so yeah, good experience for me to go to the court. So I feel good, you know?"*

Surprisingly, Sue expressed a degree of empathy for her female trafficker, since she took the fall for Sue's other, male trafficker: "*The lady is in prison now for 18 months I think?" [How did that make you feel?] "Oh I feel upset, but I'm thinking she's a woman also. The guy escaped because he's smart, he put everything under her name*." It was noteworthy also that, even though she was trafficked with Tina, they provided differing accounts of the sentence their trafficker received.

Stuck in limbo. Jiao Jiao, Alex, Tusher and Rose were all still involved in the legal process and shared a common desire for rapid resolution and to simply be rewarded with what was rightfully theirs. For instance, Jiao Jiao conveyed her hope that she would receive the money she was owed, her name would be cleared and a pathway provided for her to seek further employment in Singapore:

> *My hope is that the government, the police and MOM can obtain justice for me. I have not hurt anyone, but have been badly hurt and did not earn any money, did not receive any money. I hope that the MOM can give me the opportunity to work at a proper job, hope the police can seek justice for me, and clear my name of all the false accusations against me*.

When asked how his case was progressing, Alex said, "*We went to the Ministry of Manpower and told them the boss owed us the salary that was not paid. Anyway, it still has dragged on till now*." Likewise, Tusher expressed his disillusionment with the legal process and a lack of certainty about whether the outcome ultimately would be in his favour. He said, "*Because we are very disappointed also, we don't know also what is going to happen to us because MOM also is not giving us a like decision that we can still get our money or not*." He also expressed his frustration at the length of time it had taken thus far, particularly in light of his inability to fulfill his familial responsibility in the meantime:

> *How many days you can be a patient for this because we are here to make money for our family, we have to continue long time. So I don't know why they*

cannot be familiar with us or cannot do the right things for us. We are not asking a lot, we just want our – like they should do.

Rose articulated that she had little or no interest in pursuing further legal action other than securing the payment of the salary owed to her because she just wanted to return home to her family, "*I just want my case to be done as soon as possible and just go back home, yeah. They don't pay my salary still, until now*."

Fear of retribution. Even though their traffickers already had been convicted, Arun, Sue and Tina still expressed a fear of retribution from their traffickers' contacts and broader network of exploitation. Arun spoke of his desire not be perceived as an enemy. He said, "*I thought those things. Still he's going to feel like I'm the enemy or something, you know?*" Sue was afraid to visit her family because her trafficker still had connections in Malaysia, including the agent who facilitated their migration, "*I'm scared to go to Malaysia also, because the lady is in prison now*." Tina added that this fear was not just for her own safety but that of her family too. She said, "*If we go, we've got problems because the agents still are in Malaysia too. Maybe they can do something to our family. That's the thing. That's much thinking … They still have got other people outside*."

The fear of retribution motivated Anne's decision not to pursue legal action against her traffickers, at least temporarily, until she secured the safety of her children. She spoke of how her personal history of bereavement made her determined not to suffer any further loss:

So I was like afraid, because my kids are still back home, and they knew, and they can send, they can pay anyone to go and trace and, you know? Like no

no, I can't put them on any charge until I got my kids here to know that now my kids are here, I don't want to lose anyone else. I've lost enough now I don't want to lose them too so I didn't want to press any charges until my kids comes here.

Alternative perspectives on trafficking. Interestingly, not all survivors spoke entirely negatively about their traffickers, with both Arun and Toyin expressing gratitude to them for the opportunities they ultimately provided. Arun spoke in a highly empathic manner about his trafficker and his family. He said, *"I'm not thinking like oh he did something wrong to me that's why he went to jail … Maybe he's going to lose the business, what about his family?*" He even went as far as expressing gratitude to him for facilitating his migration:

I felt like he brought me here in Australia, if he didn't come to India who was going to bring me here? [Even though he treated you badly, you were grateful you were still here?] Yeah, I felt like that.

In Toyin's case, she disagreed with those who characterised her experience as abuse, instead emphasising the importance of beng grateful to them, but gradually moving towards independence:

People say that what they've done to me is like child abuse. You can sue them or anything. But I will tell them no, because they also help you to start your life somewhere, just to give them a bit of appreciation, leave then, tell them you are grateful but also look for a way through for yourself.

When I asked why she did not consider her treatment a form of abuse she replied, "*They tried their best … They gave me shelter, clothing, but in life you need more than that, and respect more … I didn't achieve anything apart from sleeping, waking up.*"

In summary, survivors' experiences of systemic dependence have been addressed above. The variables that determined the quality of service provision they received and the degree to which they achieved their employment, immigration, education, volunteering, and justice goals have been described. I turn now to consider the psychological consequences of their dependency and the process of resettlement and transitioning towards independence.

Consequences of Post-Trafficking Experiences

Survivors' accounts of the consequences of their post-trafficking experiences focused primarily on of the psychological impact of their interactions with systemic dependency, and the degree to which they had achieved resettlement. This either alleviated or exacerbated their psychological symptoms. Survivors also reflected on their experience of freedom and their plans for the future.

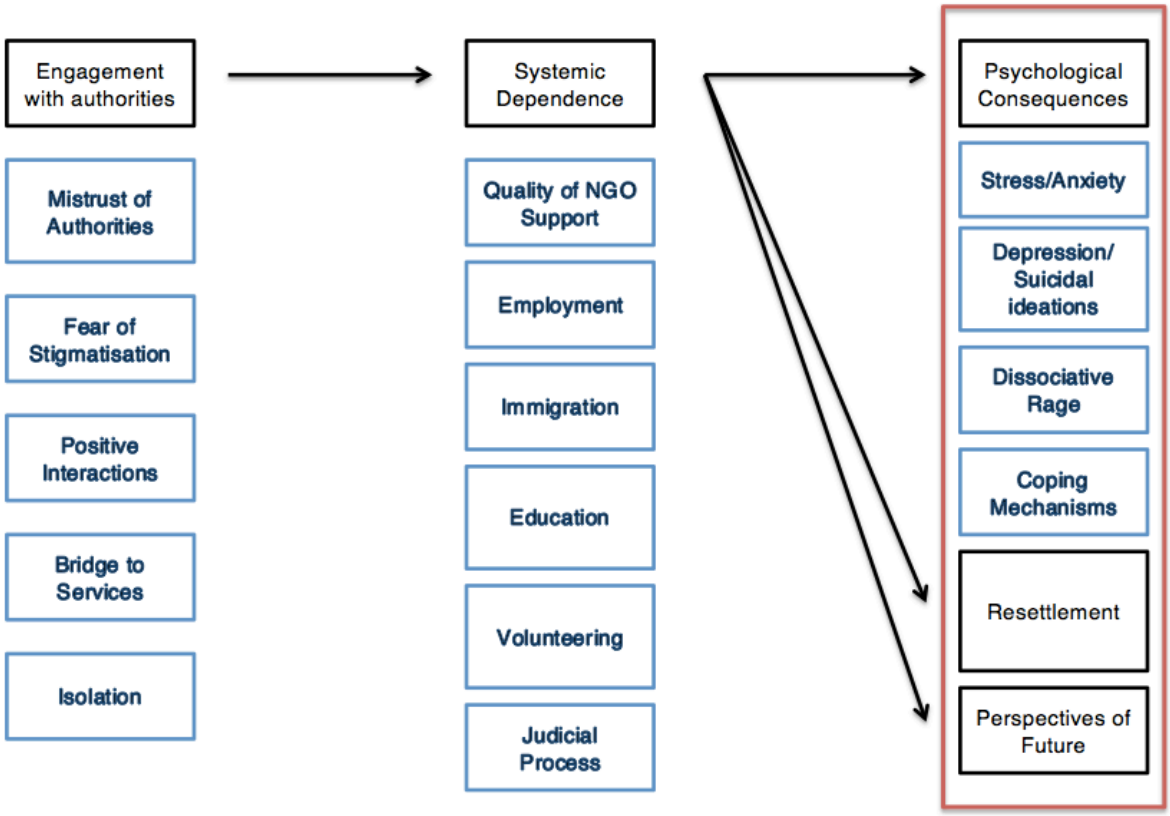

Figure 6.1 (c) Graphical Representation of the Grounded Theory of the Post-Trafficking Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking (with Psycholological Consequences highlighted).

Psychological consequences. In this section I will address stress and anxiety, depression and suicidal ideations, dissociative rage and the coping mechanisms that survivors employed to deal with these symptoms. These psychological consequences were highly inter-related and often mirrored those resulting from encapsulation (and discussed in Chapter 5), indicating the long-term impact of being trafficked.

Stress and anxiety. Alex, Arun, Sue and Tina spoke of the ongoing level of stress and fear they each felt. For Alex, this stress was due to his ongoing familial and financial predicament. He said, "*I feel a lot of stress, the stress is heavy. With my family. All the money*." Similarly, Arun said elaborated on how his systemic dependence on government and NGO support contributed to his stress and anxiety:

> "*Before I always worry, like job, study, and too many worries ...I'm thinking what's going to happen tomorrow? I need to pay rent, if they kick me out what can I do? Those things … What am I going to do about the future or something? I left like so much, too much, I got too much stress*.

This was compounded by repeated problems accessing services, which included issues with his visa that led to problems enrolling in TAFE as well as accessing government welfare and healthcare due to changes in eligibility criteria. As a result, he experienced his level of dependency as retraumatising because of the apparently arbitrary nature of his support, which mirrored the constrictive factors he experienced during trafficking (as outlined in Chapter 4):

> *That time, I had no job, I'm just looking for the Centrelink money. Sometime for no reason they stop the money, they making a lot of drama, oh we didn't receive the money. It just adds to the stress and the worry. I don't know what to do.*

His anxiety manifested in somatic symptoms including pounding in his chest and headaches. He said, "*I felt like more fear, my heart like bump too much. Like I get more stress and too much headache*."

In contrast, Sue's description reflected her social anxiety that manifested for a prolonged period of time. This anxiety was accompanied by anger that, even after being freed from her trafficking context, she still found herself so dependent upon services and prevented from living the life she desired:

> *The three years I hide myself, just in the house, and I don't want to see anyone. I'm scared to see anyone. What's happened in the past has made me sometime angry, and then when I come out from that life, and I want to do something, and I didn't get an opportunity to do it*.

For her, this dependency resulted in a sense of dehumanisation that was coupled with fear of suffering physical consequences from her sex trafficking. In her words, "*I don't even have a life. I feel like that. Another thing I think I don't want to get sick. Especially I don't want to die with HIV or AIDS*."

Like Sue, Tina suffered from social anxiety and isolation, which she self-medicated through alcohol, "*I'm always lonely and like always in the room, when I already come out there, always stay in the room alone, and then too much drinking before.*" Her drinking further reflected the collapse of her assumptive world (mentioned in Chapter 5), as alcohol is prohibited for Muslim women. Elaborating on the causes of her anxiety, Tina shared a specific anecdote of how she felt seeing her trafficker or someone who looked like him while walking on the streets of Sydney:

> *Because suddenly that day, my friend, when we walked, suddenly we see someone like our agent – we too scared but he didn't see us … We are too scared, you know, like phobia*.

It was this incident that prompted the Australian Federal Police to move them to Melbourne for their safety.

Finally, Tina described suffering stress because of domestic violence issues with her partner:

> *I've got family problem before, like my husband also drinking, go to child protection, so many go court again. He was drunk and put a knife on me and I'm like more stressed, you know? I ran in the night time, to save him and then I run, I knock on the neighbour's house and called the police*.

Despite this, she chose to see the best in him, saying, "*They say that my husband is no good, but he's good, but sometimes people are not perfect, you know, they make mistakes*."

Depression and suicidal ideations. The second psychological consequence mentioned by survivors was depression and suicidal ideations. June conveyed her sadness at her inability to fulfill her familial responsibility and support her mother saying, "*I feel sad because I cannot help her. I need to wait until my case finish so I can start work again*." As alluded to earlier in this chapter, the length of time it was taking for her case to be resolved contributed to her depression.

Both Arun and Sue also expressed how their feelings of depression and suicidal ideation stemmed from an inability to fulfill familial responsibility and provide for their relatives. "*I want to suicide, like what's the life here, no English, no job, no money*," said Arun. "*I came here to help my family, I can't do anything much for my family, better to suicide*." He shared how he had been hospitalised twice after attempting to commit suicide with sleeping pills saying, "*I got the depression, then I put in hospital two times, that time I just felt like I want to suicide."* Sue described suffering from depressionas well as social anxiety, because she could not afford to send money home to her family while she was dependent on Centrelink:

> *In the end I'm being so depressed for this because I have a family, I have a daughter I have to send money, and the money which I'm receiving here, I can't afford myself … When I'm first here alone, and hide myself just in the room and I don't want to see anyone, I don't want to do anything*.

Ultimately, this resulted in attempting suicide with sleeping pills like Arun, and she was not expected to survive:

> "*One day, I take that and I couldn't sleep and I sad and cried. It's fine now, I take three, but I am having 14 and the housemate took me to the hospital. Everyone came, they thought I would die*."

Despite the severity of her symptoms, she refused psychiatric treatment, saying, "*I don't want to be in a mental hospital. I stay for two weeks. I told the lady no, I'm not going, I'm not doing, let me stay at home*."

Tina alluded to her prior description of feeling "crazy" when she was encapsulated (as noted in Chapter 5), sharing how that feeling continued even after she was free. She said, "*I become crazy, that time like, I go, I take the depression, you know? I'm having depression too*." Thankfully for her, these symptoms slowly dissipated, adding rather poetically, "*But yeah everything is alright now, softly softy, a bit a bit, it's alright*."

Dissociative rage. Expanding on her earlier assertion (noted above) that anger underpinned her anxiety, Sue spoke of an incident in which her anger resulted in dissociative rage toward her partner. For Sue, being angry felt like an out of body

experience during which she was unaware of her actions; and expressed gratitude that she did not actually harm him:

> *I take a knife, when I get angry I don't know what I'm doing. Especially I hate anything – anyone around me. He ran to the room and close the door, and I run in the street … Thank God I didn't kill him, you know? He also scared I would stab him. One minute I realised he closed the door and I did something. I run in the street with the knife, and I throw the knife in the street, because I'm scared already. Why you did that because I didn't realize why I'm doing that, and what I'm doing when I get angry*.

Sadly, when she went to the doctor, she was told there was nothing they could do for her. She was forced to cope on her own, but thankfully had not suffered a second incident. She said, "*Maybe for six months it's not happened*. … *I went to the doctor I said please help me to treat me like this. No one can do anything, they said. I had to cope with it and this is what I'm doing. Hopefully I'm doing well*."

Coping mechanisms. In the face of these aforementioned psychological consequences, survivors employed various coping mechanisms in an attempt to lessen their symptoms. Rose, Tina and June shared how they sought to avoid thinking about and desired to forget their abuse. "*I don't even want to think back. I don't even want to think it back*," Rose repeated. "*I just wanted to leave it behind … I just prefer to forgive and forget*." Likewise, Tina's prolonged desire to forget was related to her experience with counselling, saying, "*Very long already so I tried to forget, because I go to counselling and everything for this and they try to advise me everything and lots of things*."

June spoke of how her motivation to avoid thinking about her experiences was related to her desire to be happy. She associated happiness with forgetting:

> *I never think of that already because I need to be happy also, I need to forget what they do to me, because it's in the past already so I forget … I want to forget what is past already. Because if I think all the problems how can I be happy if I always think of all the problems?"*

She shared how thinking about her experiences made her cry adding, "*I don't want to think about that anymore, because every time I think it, it makes me cry. I don't want to repeat and repeat again telling everybody that I undergo this type of situation before. I want to forget already*."

In contrast, Sue coped with her symptoms by calling a mental health helpline and walking. She walked for hours on multiple occasions, requiring her partner to drive around their neighbourhood to try and find her to bring her home:

> *If sometime I'm stressed, sometime have still I feel like depressed, I ring Lifeline. … I walk as far as I can. I walk after 1 or 2 o'clock, and he coming after me to bring me back. Sometimes bring the car and sleep in the car and come after and say come back home. So that's … that's too many time*.

In this section, I have addressed the ongoing psychological consequences survivors experienced as a result of both their trafficking and their systemic dependency and the strategies they employed to cope with them. These consequences included stress and anxiety, depression and suicidal ideations and

dissociative rage. My attention will now turn to the factors that dynamically influenced the survivors' psychological consequences over time.

Degree of Resettlement

Whereas above I addressed the psychological consequences of survivors' interactions with systemic dependency and the authorities, for this part of the model I will discuss how the resolution of the broader systemic factors (detailed earlier in the chapter) impacted their symptomology. Apart from Rose and Tusher, who were to be repatriated to their country of origin (I will address these exceptions in more detail later in the chapter), most survivors desired the opportunity to rebuild their lives and take advantage of the opportunities available to them by resettling in Australia permanently or in Singapore temporarily. In this study, resettlement was defined as the extent to which they had attained independent control of their life trajectory. While survivors were all at different stages of the resettlement process when I interviewed them, several key themes were evident across their various contexts. While these themes were highly interrelated, I have broadly categorised them as related to achievement, community, resilience and contextualisation. This section will address the role these themes played in alleviating survivors' psychological symptoms.

Achievement. Thankfully for Arun, the conditions that caused him stress were only temporary and he was able to accomplish life goals that saw his symptoms diminish. He described the process of rebuildling his life somewhat like a checklist of important achievements:

> *I'm working, studying, married. Now I feel like this life is happy, no more trouble … I feel like I've settled down. But still like small goal, I want to just*

keep going. [What are your goals?] Better job. Or the next level of my job and buy a car. I bought a car before, you know?

These achievements were not just about his personal progress but also fulfillment of his familial responsibility. Arun spoke with a tremendous sense of pride about the level of self-sufficiency he had achieved, which was exemplified in his ability to build an investment property for his parents to provide them a passive income. Despite this, he still harboured an ambition to do more:

I spent a little bit of money and build a small house, I told my mum just give it for rent, can get the money every month … It's my property and this one is in my name, and one is in my mum's name. [*You've done well, you've provided for your family. That's what you wanted to do.] Yeah, I did … I want to build one more house*.

For Toyin, her educational and employment accomplishments served as signposts of her progress, as she was finally able to do something after seven years in which she said she had "*no achievement"*. It helped her overcome her sense of inferiority to her traffickers and her colleagues, and reinforced her capacity to overcome:

I just think I can't do this before. I have limitation like I can't do that. Even to get my Certificate 3, I can't do that because, I have to face this, I have faced these like challenges … I always feel like I'm not going to be something, because I cannot even read, I cannot write proper. But now I go to work, I can

see that I'm among people of educations, I can see that I'm getting better than the way I was.

Likewise, Sandra shared that her desire to become a 'soldier' in the Salvation Army was a symbolic mark of her progress and freedom. She said, "*I thought of becoming a soldier*. *Just to attend this course and become a soldier, do something because I was really happy to do something and just move forward*."

Community: "My people". The second alleviating factor that Arun, Sue, Tina, June and Sandra all described was finding community, which helped them to overcome their sense of isolation. Arun accomplished this by asking his parents to arrange a marriage for him to a girl in India. He said, "*Because I always feel lonely here, so I went to bring someone here*. *After that I'm not going to feel like I'm lonely*." Once again, he expressed his pride in being self-sufficient enough to afford all the costs that this involved. In his words, "*I build a house, I spend all the money for my marriage and I spend the money for my wife Visa. I didn't ask any money from my wife's family*."

Likewise, Sue and Tina referenced their partners and children as major sources of support. This nuclear community was so pivotal to Sue that she was unable to consider any other alternative saying, "*I have a nice daughter and a nice partner, they always help me. And maybe because of that, I'm ok, otherwise I don't know*." Tina shared how she was eagerly awaiting the arrival of her son from Malaysia now that his immigration finally was approved, "*I've got two kids on me, one in Malaysia and one here, so I'm waiting for him to come here next week … Then I married already like two years with my husband*." She added that her husband played a pivotal role in removing her from the sex work context she returned to even after

she had escaped with Sue saying, "*Then I met him and then he taking me out from there, from the working place, so no need to work anymore. So he looked after me a lot. After that good. Don't need to go there anymore*."

June and Sandra spoke enthusiastically about the social support they received from their friends. June said, "*I have friends who are always there with me smiling so I'm happy."* Sandra again referenced the importance that being part of the Salvation Army community played in her mental health saying "*I was happy that I could meet some people, make friend, and go to church and talk to people, you know?"* For her, this freedom of communication was pivotally important and provided her with a sense of social support and belonging:

> *Like now I'm free, my life is free, and I have a small place to live, I have a good job, and a lot of friends. And I've built a community, like in the church, my people, they're supporting me*.

She contrasted her prior experience of isolation with her present context of community and expressed joy at the opportunities she now was afforded as a result:

> *Like, if you're by yourself and you're around the people, so many difference, you know? And from that time like I've seen a lot of places, a lot of places and I was so happy to go out and do things*.

Resilience: "softly softly, a bit a bit". The level of resilience many survivors displayed, which was discussed in Chapter 4, came to the fore once again and was reflected in their willingness to adapt to their newfound contexts. Arun was able to

reduce his level of stress and anxiety by shifting his perspective and adopting a more relaxed mindset: "*Every time something happens, I'm thinking ok, maybe it's going to be alright. Why I need to worry too much? Now, I take it easy*."

Toyin's resilience manifested in her ability to acknowledge that her circumstances presented an opportunity for further growth and strength. She said, "*It's not a really good experience*. *It's just something to build up, to make you strong, I think*." She also tried to remind herself to be patient and hopeful, acknowledging that her present circumstances did not define her identity:

> *Number one, to be a bit, to be endurance in every situation … Hope for the best … And don't let your present pull you, determine who you are*.

Likewise, Anne's resilience was showcased by her relentless belief in her own agency and refusal to let others' opinions of her affect her:

> *My capabilities are not what people see in me, it's me who wants to achieve it. It's up to me. So people looking down on you or you can't do that, that's too much for you. It's up to you. Don't listen, don't - whatever people are saying you, it's not you. Be you and go for whatever you want to do, because it's you.*

Sue spoke in similar ways of the importance of persistence and hope, saying, "*Don't give up. Whatever happen in any situation, don't ever give up and don't ever think life is over. Somewhere have something waiting for you, something you know?*" She exhibited self-compassion in regards to her own experiences, and self-

awareness of the lingering impact that it had on her mental health. This was illustrated by her contrasting feelings of tiredness with 'running again':

> *I do sometimes in here, because maybe I've gone through a lot things, and sometime I feel like I'm enough, I'm tired. Maybe for one day, two days. And after that I say "No!" I have a lot of things to do. I'll go again, I run again, and then few weeks, few days and then again low, you know?*

Tina also was able to acknowledge the impact of her experiences and demonstrate self-compassion for the fact that the road to recovery was a gradual process. "*We survived everything*," she said. "*Everything is alright now, softly softly. A bit, a bit. It's alright."*

Contextualisation. Finally, survivors alluded to the importance of being able to contextualise and make meaning from their experiences relative to those of others who had been trafficked. In her role as a receptionist at HOME, Rose heard enough stories to conclude that, "*Not only my employer, but lot a lot of employers does this to their helper*." These stories led her to wonder what it was that motivated traffickers to exploit people like her, "*What if they can be a bit … just a bit not so cruel to other people? Was it so difficult to be nice to other person?*" Jiao Jiao said something similar, reporting that she had "*met many girls who have been deceived, and I hope Singapore will have a legal process to deal with these people who use deception*."

Arun was able to contextualise his experiences as less severe than those of others saying "*I find out there a lot happening to other people too. It's not only me. Then I felt like oh it's nothing, there's other people that have a different problem, maybe something more*." Likewise, Tina, having suffered the horrors of sex

trafficking, considered the fact that others may have had to endure far worse conditions for longer periods than she did. She said, "*For me like, maybe it's not like worse, like I got more than worse. I think than other girls maybe more worse than me, in there longer*."

Yan Zhi and Sue displayed a willingness to share their stories in the hope of preventing others from being deceived. In Yan Zhi's words, "*I would like to share and let others know about the situation we have been through so they won't be deceived*." Sue even went as far as to say she eventually wanted to write a book about her life saying, "*I want to share my experience with other people, whoever have a life like me. Yeah, some of the story. It's really sad. But one day I will write a book – I will write a book when I have money. Now I can't afford it*." Toyin also expressed a desire to use her experiences for good saying, "*I want to help people. People maybe like me. Study psychology maybe?"* Lastly, Tusher described his desire to ensure that no one would suffer like he had:

> *I always hope that no one will be suffer like that. I don't want any people, not only from my country, any country, any worker come to here they should have their right and at least they can sleep well and they can go to work with their fresh mind so that maybe I hope they will not be in trouble and they will not get injured, like that*.

Overall, it was survivors' attainment of life achievements, development of community, capacity for resilience and ability to contextualise their experiences that determined the degree to which they felt resettled and secure. This strongly

contributed to the alleviation of the psychological consequences originally caused by their systemic dependency.

Perspectives on the Future: "I want a Beautiful Life"

The final theme that emerged from survivors' accounts of progressing from living in complete dependency was their perspective of the future. When asked about his plans moving forward, Alex said, "*I think I would like to stay here if I can find a good job … I don't know what kind. In any case, I can do most jobs. I don't mind working hard and suffering because I came from a farm*." As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Alex shared how he managed to secure illegal employment in a garment factory but quit after just a day, with the ongoing impact of trafficking having made him hypervigilant of being exploited.

June, Rose and Tusher all spoke in general terms about the future. June desired to have a beautiful life and to fulfill her familial responsibility, but did not provide specifics as to how she planned to do so:

> *I want to be, of course I want to be successful in life also. I want to earn money here so that I can help my family. I want also a beautiful life someday. I want a beautiful life.*

Rose wanted to return home, but did not know what she would do upon her return. She said, "*I don't know, I wanted to go back to India, and I don't know what I am going to do*." Unlike Rose, Tusher expressed a fear of returning home due to an uncertain future, saying, "*I'm just scared to go back my country because what will I do after I reach there?"* Despite his fear, he was resigned to obeying his father's

wishes as his experiences had undermined his sense of agency and his belief in his capacity to choose saying "*It's up to him already because I don't want to decide anymore for myself*."

In contrast, Arun, Sandra and Anne spoke glowingly about their experience of freedom and perspective of the future. "*We need the freedom, we want to go sometimes to work and maybe whatever*," said Arun, who emphasised the importance of freedom of employment. He contrasted this with how he felt both when he was still physically encapsulated, and then dependent upon government services, "*It's not like you're in gaol, no. We want the freedom, we want the free life. It's a free country*."

For Sandra, the feeling of having a life was closely related to the freedom to do all the things she had been restricted from doing. "*We know we have some freedom*," she said, excitedly. "*We just cook whatever we want to cook and eat we cook and eat and we go out, do shopping and things and go have coffee with friends – the life!"* She also expressed a deep sense of loss, not just of time, but of her earning capacity during the time she was encapsulated in her trafficking context, saying, *"Three years I just had nothing, I just lost my three years, I didn't do anything, I didn't earn any money, nothing."* However, her perspective on her future was bright now that she was free to choose her own social networks and activities:

> *So I thought now and I was happy that I could meet some people, make friends, and go to church and talk to people, you know? I was free to – and then I knew we are free, we can do anything, can wear nice clothes and whatever and wear nice clothes and buy something and eat*.

For Anne, freedom and hope for the future were interconnected, "*Everything is going to work and the future is there! I'm looking forward with great hope, yeah*." When asked why she had such hope, she expounded further, bringing up once again the example of tea she discussed earlier in her interview (as I described in Chapter 5):

> *Ah, much hope! Because now at least I can go wherever I want to go, I can talk to anyone I want to talk to, I can do whatever I want to do. That's the freedom! Yeah. That's the freedom. I'm not locked in the house. So I feel good. I can drink whichever much tea I want!*

Like Arun, Anne's perception of freedom involved a sense of agency and empowerment, in which she now had complete control and responsibility for her future:

> *Greater hopes, yeah. And at least now I can work, study, whatever now. Whatever vision I had, at least I have time, I have room, it's up to me to make stuff work for me. Yeah. How extra miles I want to run I can run. Yeah! No one will tell you no no you can't run beyond that. It's just whatever I have, the potential I have, I got time to utilise them in a good way*.

In summary, survivors shared how they suffered from anxiety, depression, suicidal ideations and dissociative rage as part of their post-trafficking experience. The coping mechanisms they employed and their eventual transition from dependency to resettlement and independence alleviated some of those

psychological consequences. As a result, most of them were able to truly experience and express their sense of freedom and hope for the future. Having described the lived experiences of survivors of human trafficking in the preceding three Chapters, I turn to a discussion of how my theory relates to the existing literature in the field, applies to service provision and legislation and suggests directions for future research.

Chapter 7

Discussion

The aim of this thesis was to investigate the lived experiences of survivors of human trafficking in Australia and Singapore and, in particular, address the research question of how they reflect upon their experiences and contextualise them within their life narratives. This exploration facilitated the development of a grounded theory, which encompasses the interpersonal, dynamic, and contextualised nature of the phenomenon in question. As demonstrated in the throughout this thesis, I collected diverse, rich and complex qualitative data from 12 survivors in Australia and Singapore, which served as the grounding for the theory that I have outlined. For clarity of communication, I segmented the process that this theory describes into three main stages: pre-trafficking (Chapter 4), trafficking (Chapter 5) and post-trafficking (Chapter 6). By encompassing both the phenomenology and the mechanisms of trafficking, the current research project has added to the existing knowledge base and highlighted a number of novel areas, which I will now summarise.

Summary of Findings

As I outlined in Chapter 1, the factors that contribute to survivors' vulnerability to their traffickers have been documented across many academic disciplines, along with the conditions they endured and the physical and psychological consequences they suffer, even after they are freed. However, although researchers have laboured to form a body of research dedicated to understanding these issues, as a whole, it was evident that the relevant literature conceptually underdeveloped, empirically fragmented and methodologically piecemeal. While progress has been made in mapping the prevalence rates of various risk factors and their consequences, in Chapter 1, I argued that we know very little about how survivors experience the

interpersonal, contextualised and dynamic nature of their entry to, time within, exit from and life after human trafficking.

In Chapter 2, I introduced the methodology of Grounded Theory (GT – Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) that I used to investigate the experiences of survivors of human trafficking in this thesis. I outlined the history and tenets of GT and explained why I selected it as the most appropriate methodology for this research. I compared the procedures suggested by its creators for its implementation with to the actual processes developed and used in this program and research; I evaluated the potential impact of differences between these recommendations and my implementation. Finally, I introduced the reader to participants in my research via a series of short profiles.

In Chapters 3 to 6, I presented my grounded theory of the experience of survivors of human trafficking in Australia and Singapore. In Chapter 3, I offered an overview of the overall model, including its three main stages and the principles underlying its structure. In Chapter 4, I described the concepts that influenced survivors' vulnerability to their traffickers, their process of engagement with their traffickers, and characteristics of their encapsulation. Their vulnerability resulted from the unique constellation of experiences including denial of their dreams, a proximal focal event that caused economic stress, acceptance of familial responsibility, their inherent resilience and normalisation of migration for employment. Their interactions with their traffickers were impacted by their state of constrained choice, agreement to the contractual conditions they were promised and the travel arrangements they made. As a result, they found themselves in a context of complete encapsulation by their traffickers, in which they were subjected to both constrictive and restrictive conditions.

In Chapter 5, I detailed the psychological consequences of encapsulation, survivors' attempts to cope with the strategies employed by their traffickers and the manner of their exit. Their encapsulation resulted in survivors experiencing a profound sense of isolation, loss of their personal agency, and inhibition of their mentalisation capacity. It was here that the dynamic nature of their trafficking experiences came to the fore. Survivors who were more severely encapsulated remained more susceptible to their traffickers strategies in a recursive feedback loop. As a result they experienced more severe psychological consequences such as shame, depression and suicidal ideations, dehumanisation, and the collapse of their assumptive worlds. They did not escape until they reached an assertion of agency threshold, where the severity of their circumstances and the reality of the threat posed to their lives kickstarted their sense of agency and determination to find a way out. I concluded this chapter with descriptions of the separate trajectories taken by each survivor through this stage of the model, categorised by the manner of their exit: escape, rescue, or termination of their working arrangement.

In Chapter 6, I addressed survivors' post-trafficking experience, beginning with the process of engagement with the respective authorities and service providers in Australia and Singapore. I then discussed survivors' experiences of finding themselves in a state of systemic dependence, and the resultant impact on their mental health state was discussed next. I concluded this chapter by focusing on survivors' experiences of resettlement and their plans for the future as they transitioned towards independence. Survivors' ability to fulfill their familial responsibility resulted in the alleviation of many psychological consequences, exemplifying their resilience.

In this concluding chapter, first I will discuss the key psychological themes that emerged at each stage of the model. Second, I will consider how this newly developed theory relates to, and further develops, our theoretical understanding of human trafficking. Third, I will discuss broader implications of the model especially for best practice in service provision and relevant legislation. Finally, I will acknowledge the limitations of my research and propose directions for future research. To assist the reader's understanding of this chapter, I include a graphical overview of the model in its entirety below (see Figure 7.1), with the relevant subsections of the model preceding each of the three stages -- pre-trafficking, trafficking and post-trafficking -- as I discuss them in detail.

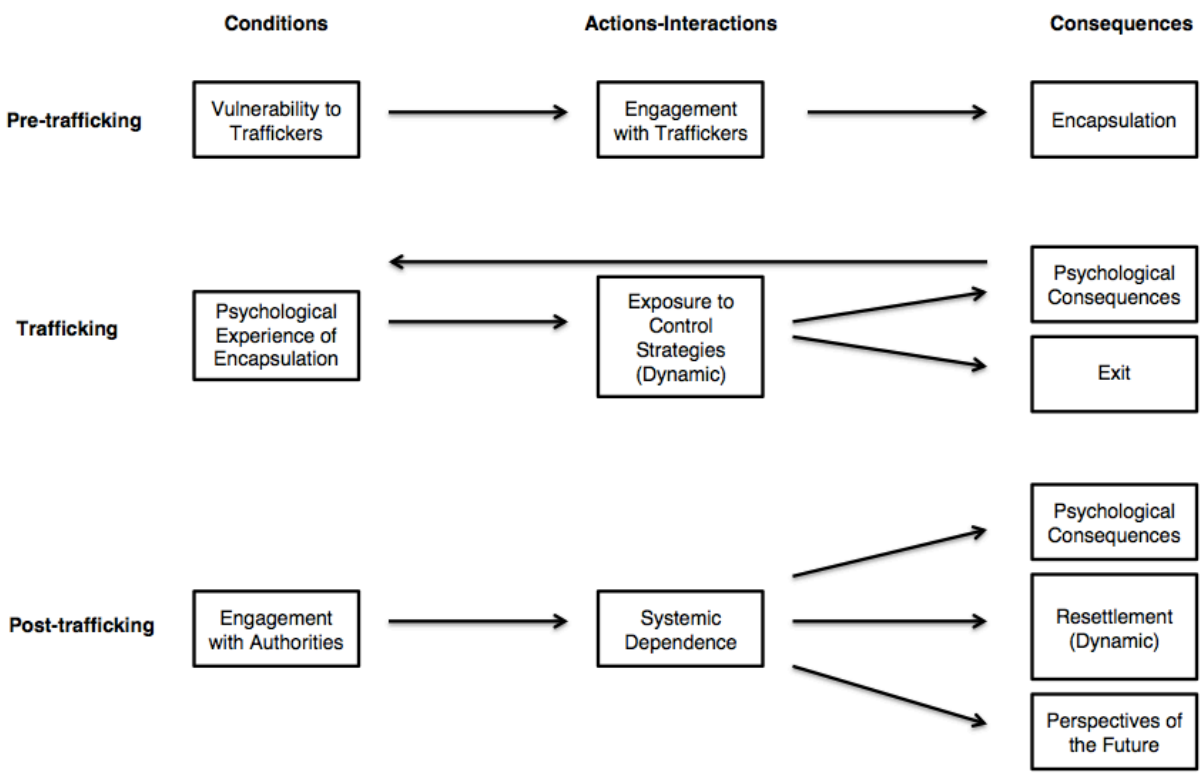

Figure 7.1 Graphical Representation of the Grounded Theory of the Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking in Australia and Singapore.

Pre-Trafficking

As I covered in Chapter 4, the pre-trafficking section of the model provided a detailed explanation of the processes by which survivors became encapsulated within a context carefully constructed by their traffickers. The interview process began with the recounting of their early life and family history. Although survivors varied in their country of origin, age, gender and socio-economic status, their narratives were united by the recurrence of three key categories pivotal to understanding their experiences of human trafficking: the concepts that contributed to their vulnerability to trafficking; the dynamic process of constrained choice and the importance of incurred debt; and the conditions of their encapsulation (see Figure 7.2).

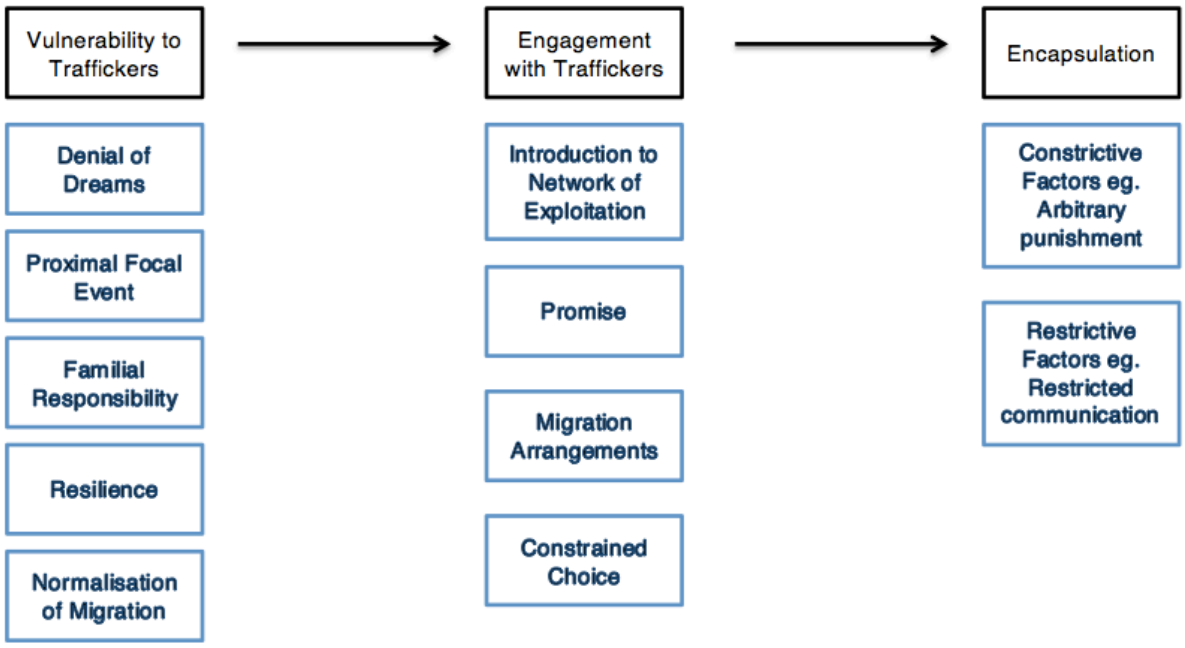

Figure 7.2 Graphical Representation of the Grounded Theory of the Pre-Trafficking Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking.

Vulnerability to trafficking. The ways in which survivors reflected upon their lived experiences suggested that a unique interaction amongst aspects of their personal history, personal characteristics and life circumstances contributed to their

trafficking. This manifested itself conceptually in the data in the form of survivors' accounts of denied dreams, a proximal focal event that compounded their economic predicament, their acceptance of familial responsibility and the manifestation of an inherent resilience that together ultimately contributed to their perceived vulnerability. Although existing literature has examined the influences of several survivor characteristics that contribute to the likelihood of being trafficked, most notably poverty, gender, age and prior abuse history (Zimmerman, Hossain, & Watts, 2011), none of these studies have integrated these four factors to form a coherent understanding of the process from the perspective of survivors. In fact, no available earlier studies have demonstrated the role this unique constellation of factors plays in the process.

First, survivors' experience of the denial of their dreams, which were primarily educational and employment related, contributed to their vulnerability to trafficking. They were either forced or chose to defer their personal goals and interests due to their family's lack of resources to fulfill those desires or the lack of viable employment prospects. As a result, participants felt trapped in a context in which they were forced by their familial and economic circumstances to make significant personal sacrifices to pursue collective goals that would advance their family as a whole.

Second, survivors endured proximal focal events that acted as catalysts for the sequence of steps that ultimately resulted in their trafficking. Experiences such as domestic violence, bereavement, injury, unemployment of the family breadwinner or unexpected medical expenses exacerbated their already desperate personal and familial economic prospects and threatened both their livelihood and their lives. This resulted in them actively looking for a way out, becoming increasingly desperate and

willing to take a risk on migration for employment prospects that they otherwise would not have considered.

Third, survivors demonstrated a sense of familial responsibility, which was defined in this study as the recognition and acceptance of their duty and obligation not just to provide for themselves but their family as well. They spoke of their familial responsibility as a duty they were required to accept, which subsequently became part of their identity and purpose for living. This was noteworthy as several survivors mentioned other family members who were deemed irresponsible because they did not accept such roles when given the chance. Survivors repeatedly placed the collective good of their family above their own personal desires; for example, by assuming a self-sacrificial role so that younger siblings or dependent family members did not have to similarly experience the denial of their dreams. Instead, survivors aimed to provide them with the economic and educational opportunities they themselves never had.

The fourth and final factor that emerged as contributing to survivors' vulnerability was the paradox of their resilience. While the literature surrounding resilience typically considers it to always have a positive outcome (see Bonanno, Westphal, & Mancini, 2011, for a review), in this case, survivors' resilience unfortunately contributed to their vulnerability. Survivors expressed an expectation and willingness to work hard, coupled with an innate belief in their capability, which meant that they were willing to take disproportionate risks and see opportunities that others may have considered too hard or not worth the potential danger. As discussed above, survivors often described a history of suffering and sacrificing their personal ambitions for the collective good, so the requirement that they endure ongoing suffering in the hope of providing for their families was not seen as prohibitive.

Taken together, the constellation of these four factors contextualises survivors' perceived vulnerability to trafficking. Survivors would not have been as vulnerable to trafficking without each of these interrelated factors co-occurring. For example, while many people may experience denial of their dreams or ambitious due to life circumstances, they may be able to achieve a relatively comfortable existence in the absence of a proximal focal event that causes them additional economic stress and requires them to accept greater familial responsibility. Additionally, had survivors not experienced such life hardships, they would not have displayed or developed the resilience they demonstrated in the face of adversity. It was this resilience that resulted in them seeking "upward mobility through outward mobility" (Yea, 2012, p. 64) and ultimately their trafficking.

Overall, this investigation of survivors' vulnerability to trafficking at the level of their lived experience may help to clarify the apparently contradictory results of studies investigating risk factors to trafficking discussed in Chapter 1. For example, while poverty and low socio-economic status are believed to contribute to the likelihood of being trafficked (Logan, Walker, & Hunt, 2009; Ugarte, Zarate, & Farley, 2000; Zimmerman et al., 2003), other researchers have argued that the poorest of the poor do not tend to migrate. They instead claim that it is those who desire most to advance their economic situation who are at greatest risk (Molland, 2010; Perry & McEwing, 2013). In my research, the survivors I interviewed came from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. While some like June, Tina and Toyin came from impoverished circumstances, others like Arun and Tusher had parents who were migrant workers, and Rose's father was ruler in their local community, making them relatively wealthy in comparison to their peers. My model suggests that it is not so much survivors' poverty itself that resulted in their vulnerability, but the consequences

of their poverty -- denial of their dreams -- that they shared in common. This, combined with a proximal focal event, such as sickness, bereavement of the family breadwinner, an additional financial burden or a threat to their lives, resulted in a significant change in their level of socio-economic status, and it was this change that ultimately resulted in their perceived vulnerability.

Constrained choice. The second category that emerged from survivors' pre-trafficking experiences was the dynamic process of constrained choice including the important role of incurred debt. This section of my model built on research conducted with sex trafficking survivors in Cambodia (Sandy, 2007), Singapore and Australia (Yea, 2012), in which survivors spoke paradoxically about both choosing to migrate for employment-related reasons, while also acknowledging the pressure and constraints placed upon their decision making process by broader contextual factors. Survivors shared similar narratives in this research project, revealing commonalities in the experiences of sex trafficking, labour trafficking and domestic servitude, thus deepening our understanding of the phenomenon in question.

Survivors spoke of three factors that contributed to their perception of being faced with a constrained choice: their level of vulnerability to trafficking; the promises made to them by their traffickers; and the amount of debt they incurred to facilitate their migration. Importantly, this process of constrained decision making was dynamic in nature, as survivors' "choices are not made as one-off decisions, or at only one point in their migration trajectory" (Yea, 2012, p. 43). Instead, the process entailed a series of decisions, each of which was constrained by the factors mentioned above, from searching for employment opportunities, engaging with their traffickers, agreeing to the terms of employment and organising the logistics for their travel.

While the first factor, their level of vulnerability to their traffickers, has been discussed extensively in the previous section, the second factor was the promises their traffickers made to them regarding what their lives would look like in the destination country. These promises included the nature of their education prospects, favourable wage structure, working conditions, living conditions and other opportunities they would have upon their migration, such as the potential for their family members ultimately to migrate to in their destination country as well. Survivors shared how the promises made to them gave voice to their desires that hitherto remained unsatisfied. Migration offered the opportunity to have the best of both worlds -- to be able to satisfy their previously denied personal dreams and ambitions and explore the world, while fulfilling their familial responsibilities with greater ease than in their home countries. This level of wish fulfillment meant they barely considered the possibility that such opportunities might be too good to be true, and they ignored potential red flags in light of the novelty of the promise presented.

The most poignant examples of this were Sue and Tina, who, along with their friend, were offered the opportunity to travel to Australia and work and study there without any upfront costs. They shared how they did not even ask for the specifics of work they would have to do to pay off their incurred debts because they saw the opportunity as too good to pass up. Even in cases where participants described assessing the level of risk entailed by their traffickers' promises, they perceived any sacrifices required (such as leaving young children behind) as worth the potential benefits. Trust played a crucial role in mitigating their fear of the unknown, be it trust developed by a prior employment history with their traffickers in the cases of Sandra and Anne, or trust in the person who first introduced them to their traffickers, as in the cases of Alex and Arun.

Having agreed to the conditions promised, survivors found themselves burdened by the third factor that constrained their choice: large debts that were generated through one of two arrangements. The first involved paying traffickers a large upfront recruitment fee to facilitate their migration, which they generated by a combination of their own savings, borrowing from friends and extended family members or loans from financial institutions. The second was entering a debt bondage arrangement, in which they agreed to work for their trafficker without being paid a salary in their destination country for a period of time to offset the costs incurred.

Similar arrangements have been described by researchers investigating human trafficking, who also have considered the issue in the broader global context of international migration for employment. The charging of high recruitment fees and/or the employment of debt bondage are common place in extensive studies of migration patterns and labour trafficking in Australia (Schloenhaldt & Loong, 2011), South-East Asia (Belanger, 2014; Molland, 2010), Nepal (Aronowitz & Dahal, 2014) and the United States (Owens, et al., 2014). Belanger (2014) argued that such arrangements are the “cornerstone whereby abuse, coercion, forced labour and trafficking are more likely to occur” (p. 95) as, having already incurred a large debt, migrants discover that their permits to work and live in the destination country are specifically bonded to a single employer. Their resultant lack of mobility in the labour market, dependency on their employers for housing and basic needs and lack of knowledge of their rights as migrant workers creates a precarious situation of severely constrained options.

In my research, survivors described how the amount of debt they incurred was significantly higher than their earning potential in their home country. As a result, they

were entirely reliant upon the veracity of their traffickers' promises to fulfill both their familial responsibility and their newfound financial obligations. Sadly, even when they realised that their traffickers had little intention of fulfilling their promises to them, survivors were severely constrained by the economic and legislative context they found themselves in as migrants. As a result, acquiescing to their traffickers often was deemed the most attractive course of action in a situation bereft of viable alternatives. Overall, through this investigation of constrained choice and the concepts underlying this dynamic process, my theoretical model offers a greater understanding of survivors' experiences of the deceptive and coercive tactics that their traffickers employed and how these tactics subsequently influenced survivors' decision making process.

Conditions of their encapsulation. The final theme that emerged from my analysis of survivors' pre-trafficking experiences was the conditions of encapsulation in an environment completely controlled by their traffickers. Survivors recounted enduring a plethora of restrictive and constrictive strategies after arrival in their destination country, which traffickers employed to erode their sense of agency. Long working hours, terrible housing conditions, insufficient food, restricted movement and communication and limited access to healthcare combined to reinforce survivors' sense of restriction. These conditions deprived survivors of their strength, limited their ability to make social connections and prevented them from finding potential sources of assistance. Survivors were further constricted by experiences of arbitrary abuse and punishment, arbitrary deductions and excessive charges. These constrictive tactics served to prolong survivors' period of debt bondage and consequently perpetuated their acquiescence by constraining their choices.

These conditions that survivors recalled suffering were very similar to those previously and widely documented in the human trafficking literature (e.g., Batstone, 2010; Hossain et al., 2010; Shelley, 2010). This provides a degree of confidence that their experiences were typical of survivors of trafficking in other countries. I believe, however, that my model provides additional insight at the level of the lived experiences of survivors, which was one of encapsulation (McIlwain, 1990). Survivors felt separated from their prior sources of social support, restricted in their communication to only their trafficker and prevented from interacting with anyone who potentially might render assistance. They found themselves in an environment entirely constructed by their traffickers, where they were subject to their demands. Also, they found themselves devoid of hope of appeal to any external source of justice, as their traffickers convinced them that the authorities would not be on their side.

Considered together, survivors' experiences during this pre-trafficking period demonstrated the importance of investigating the phenomena at the level of lived experiences. While the majority of prior research has concentrated on documenting the risk factors surrounding trafficking, this work has neglected the richness and dynamic complexity of survivors' experiences. By expounding on the constellation of concepts that contributed to their vulnerability, the dynamic nature of constrained choice and the conditions surrounding their encapsulation, this stage of my model significantly contributes to the theoretical understanding of survivors' pre-trafficking experiences.

Trafficking

In Chapter 5, I introduced and examined in detail the trafficking stage of the model. This stage sought to elucidate the psychological consequences of encapsulation for survivors, the impact of their ongoing interactions with their traffickers and the sequence of events that culminated in their eventual exit from their trafficking context. While survivors differed in the level of encapsulation they experienced, all shared their strategies for navigating this encapsulated context, coping with their traffickers' machinations and leveraging the limited resources at their disposal to find a way out. During this stage, the categories of inhibited mentalisation, sense of agency and psychological consequences were of pivotal importance to understanding the phenomenon of human trafficking, as shown in Figure 7.3.

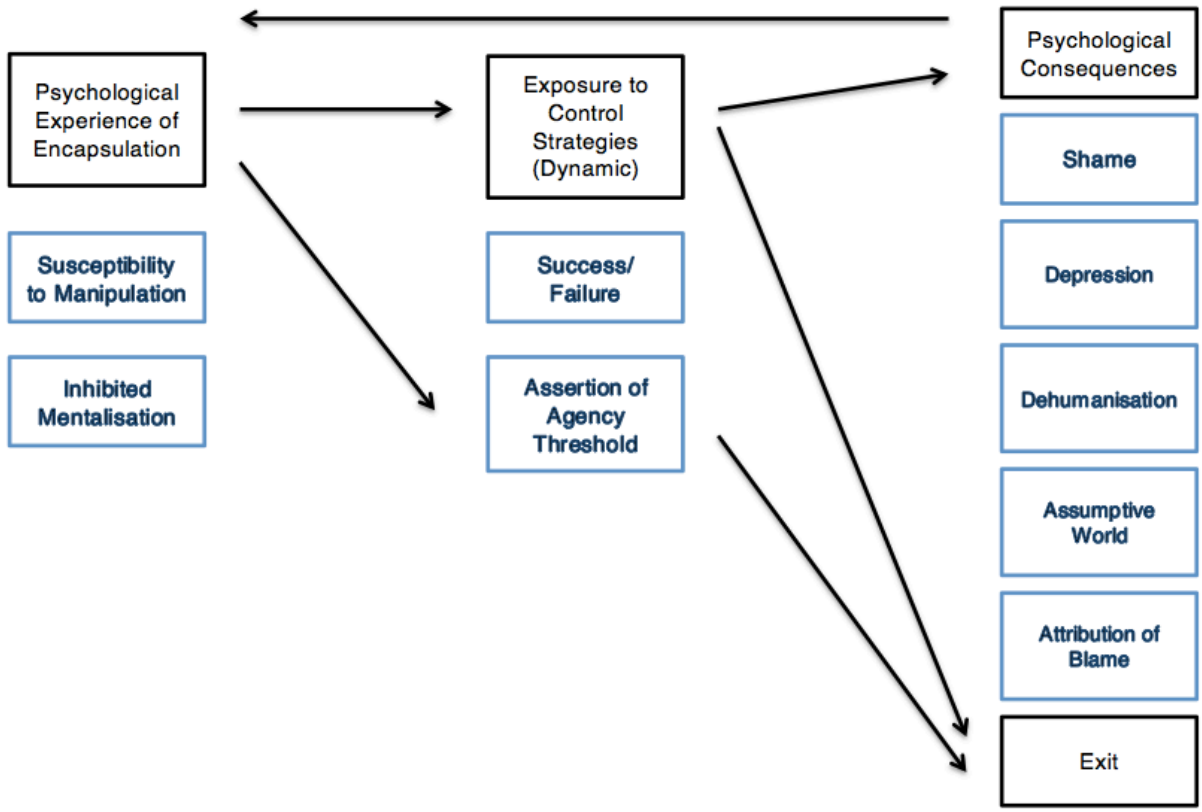

Figure 7.3 Graphical Representation of the Grounded Theory of the Trafficking Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking.

Inhibition of mentalisation. The impact that encapsulation had on survivors' capacity for mentalisation was an important theme that was evident from their accounts of trafficking. As I outlined in Chapter 5, mentalisation has been defined as "the imaginative mental activity that enables us to perceive and interpret human behaviour in terms of intentional mental states (e.g., needs, desires, feelings, beliefs, and goals)" (Fonagy & Luyton, 2009, p. 1357). Mentalisation has been characterised as a form of social metacognition, the capacity to understand one's own behaviour and that of others as the consequences of thoughts, emotions and wishes, rendering them meaningful and predictable (Allen, Fonagy, & Bateman, 2008; Bateman & Fonagy, 2006). Fonagy and colleagues claimed that this capacity for mentalisation may become inhibited when one is under threat and when flight, fight or freeze responses are activated, particularly when an individual has a history of abuse or neglect (Fonagy & Luyton, 2009). This deactivation fulfills an adaptive function, as inhibiting one's insight into the mental states of self and others when they are malevolently aggressive and intentionally mistreating you can reduce the level of psychological distress (Fonagy & Bateman, 2008).

In the case of human trafficking, survivors found themselves in an encapsulated environment constructed and controlled by their traffickers. In this environment they were completely isolated, had no sense of agency and could not appeal to any external sense of reality or justice (Contreras, Kallivayalil, & Herman, 2017; Logan, Walker, & Hunt, 2009). The inhibited mentalisation that survivors demonstrated as a result of their encapsulation is an example of how the traffickers succeeded in controlling survivors' mental capacity by constraining their physical state. This resulted in survivors being unable to think or recall experiences while

trafficked, feeling crazy, existing in an altered state of reality, having a distorted sense of time because they lived in an eternal present dominated by fear, and resorting to concrete representations to describe more abstract concepts. To my knowledge, this is the first study that has examined the role of mentalisation in the context of human trafficking.

The language used by survivors to describe their experience of inhibited mentalisation was particularly interesting. Survivors most commonly used phrases like “I could not think” or “I did not think anything”. However, despite being in this state of ‘not thinking’ while they were encapsulated, they were able to provide detailed accounts of a variety of conditions and experiences they endured. Therefore, I believe that survivors used such terminology not to refer to a complete absence of thought, but rather to the experience of not being free to allocate their attention, lacking reflective awareness and conscious control of their thinking. Survivors expressed feeling like they did not have ownership of their mental capacity; they were fixated on avoiding (the inevitable) arbitrary punishment and ultimately were resigned to acquiescence and meeting their traffickers’ demands. It is noteworthy that this inhibition of their mentalisation had consequences not just psychologically but also psychosomatically. For example, Rose provided the poignant metaphor of feeling like she had been locked in a box that she barely fit in and feeling unable to breathe. Another potential explanation for survivors’ descriptions of not being able to think was that their capacity for mentalisation, which was inhibited while they were trafficked, had gradually was restored by their post-trafficking context. As a result, they were now able to retrospectively reflect on their inability to think while they were trafficked. Over the course of their interviews, they were then able to communicate both the

events they experienced, and the experience of not being able to think as if it were an experience itself.

Both of these explanations suggest that inhibition of their mentalisation was not a permanent state, but a dynamic process that was related to their level of encapsulation. Echoing the work of Gould (2014), the level of encapsulation, deception and coercion required to inhibit survivors' mentalisation was difficult to sustain for a prolonged period. As a result, survivors shared several factors that enabled them to regain their capacity for mentalisation, which ultimately contributed to their successful exit from the trafficking context. For Rose and Anne, they were able to reflect upon and recall events and stories from their past where they demonstrated high levels of personal agency and self-efficacy; they reminded themselves that they were not who they traffickers told them they were. For Sue and Tina, Jiao Jiao and Yan Zhi, and Alex and his wife, the social support they received from friends and family they were trafficked with allowed them to reestablish confidence in their perception of reality, find a source of encouragement and comfort and work together to find a way out. Finally, June, Toyin and Rose all described a threshold-like moment when their desperation overcame their level of inhibited mentalisation and they found the strength to assert themselves in the face of their encapsulation. Taken together, the construct of mentalisation and its relationship to encapsulation provides a fresh and intriguing perspective on the lived experiences of trafficking that can accompany and further elucidate the descriptions of force, deception and coercion that have been widely documented in prior research (Hossain et al., 2010; Muftic & Finn, 2013; Oram et al., 2012; Owens et al., 2014; Pocock et al., 2016; Yea, 2012; Zimmerman et al., 2008).

Sense of agency. The second theme that arose as being important to survivors' trafficking experiences was their sense of agency, which involves both the "sense of oneself as an actor" and "feeling responsible for actions that are one's own" (Marcel, 2003, p. 54). Survivors described contexts in which they lacked agency due to the extent of the restrictive and constrictive nature of the encapsulation experienced, but also seemed to recover their agentic capacity when their lives were threatened or they reached a threshold of desperation. While these findings may seem paradoxical at first glance, the research into a sense of agency from the perspective of cognitive science may provide some possible explanations (Gallagher, 2000; Jaennerod, 2003; Tsakiris, Schutz-Bosbach, & Gallagher, 2007). According to Marcel (2003), a large body of experimental literature suggests that one's sense of agency for action is based on what precedes the action in question, specifically the neurological process of translating that intention into action. Given that survivors found themselves unable to translate their intention into action because of the control strategies their traffickers employed, it was no surprise that they reported feelings of helplessness and a loss of agency. Additionally, Marcel (2003, p. 51) proposed a distinction between a long-term agency and an occurrent sense of agency. The first involves "a sense of oneself as an agent apart from any particular action, for example, as causally effective over time; the latter is the sense of oneself as performing a particular action at or around the time it is performed." I suggest that survivors' experiences of encapsulation may have resulted in a diminished sense of long-term agency by reinforcing their helplessness and inability to influence their environment. However, the level of perceived threat or desperation may have subsequently activated survivors' occurrent sense of agency that enabled them to finally stand up for themselves in spite of their encapsulation. This occurrent sense of

agency makes particular sense given the nature of the trafficking context and the fact that many survivors reported being isolated from social support, distrustful of the authorities and fearful of deportation. Survivors may have come to the realisation that they were the only ones who could change their dire circumstances and acted accordingly.

Psychological consequences. Apart from inhibited mentalisation and sense of agency, another theme that emerged from survivors' account of their captivity was broader psychological consequences, which included shame, dehumanisation and the collapse of their assumptive worlds. Focusing my research at the level of their lived experiences provided the opportunity to connect these psychological consequences to specific facets of their encapsulation. This offered an additional level of insight that has not previously been considered, as most of the research into the mental health consequences of human trafficking has focused on measuring levels of symptomology after survivors are freed (eg. Abas et al., 2013; Kiss et al., 2015; Muftic & Linn, 2013; Oram et al., 2012; Ostrovschi et al., 2011).

The first psychological consequence survivors that mentioned was shame, which has been widely documented in the existing literature (Clawson et al., 2008). Survivors' sense of shame stemmed from both the nature of work they were forced to undertake while they were trafficked, particularly in cases of sexual exploitation, and failure to fulfill their familial responsibility, as they were not paid during that period. They were fearful of judgement, primarily from their family and friends, and that they would be shunned and rejected if they ever revealed the details of their ordeal (Contreras, Kallivayalil, & Herman, 2017). Paralleling the work of Belanger (2014), survivors' perceptions of failure and shame often were more traumatising than their experience of the abuse, deception and coercion itself.

The second psychological consequence that survivors recalled was dehumanisation, as they often were made to feel less than human or like robots. In cases of domestic servitude, survivors repeatedly were spoken down to and derided. They were treated similar to or even worse than their traffickers' pets which they were responsible for caring for; for example, having to sleep in the same room as the dogs. In cases of labour trafficking, survivors were told they were disposable, interchangeable and easily replaceable, and as a result held little value to their traffickers. This dehumanisation contributed to their descriptions of living in a state of darkness and sadness while they were trafficked, and resulted in symptoms of depression and suicidal ideations. Such symptoms again were related to their inability to fulfill their familial responsibility, as well as their prolonged isolation from and lack of communication with family and friends. However, I note that this association may not apply to all survivors across all cases. For example, one participant in the current research, Sue, indicated that shame actually prevented her from acting on her suicidal ideation because she did not want her family to know what she had become involved in and the conditions she was forced to endure.

The final psychological consequence survivors suffered, captured in this stage of the model, was the collapse of their assumptive world; specifically, their beliefs about their sense of self, others and the world in general (Janoff-Buhlman, 1992, 1995). Survivors spoke of their shock and horror upon realising the true nature of their encapsulation, how their experiences were beyond anything they could imagine and the ways in which they internalised the abuse they suffered. They lost their belief in their own capacity to make good decisions and plan for a successful future, and developed a hostile worldview towards the world (and men in particular in cases of sex trafficking). The long-term impact of suffering the collapse of their assumptive

worlds was seen in the examples of Rose and Tusher, who both desired to be repatriated to their countries of origin. For Rose, her choice to return home was fuelled by her desire to reestablish her sense of community and belonging, and the fact that her trafficking experiences made the thought of continuing to be a domestic worker in Singapore re-traumatising. Likewise, Tusher's acceptance of repatriation was due to a loss of confidence and self-efficacy since his choices repeatedly resulted in poor financial outcomes. Both of these examples demonstrate the detrimental long-term impact that their experiences of trafficking had on their life trajectory.

Overall, the key categories in this stage of the model addressed the psychological consequences for survivors of finding themselves in an encapsulated context. Their descriptions of inhibited mentalisation, shame, dehumanisation, depression and the collapse of their assumptive world were vivid, dynamic and complex in nature. I will address the implications of these consequences for service providers later in this chapter. For now, I would argue that the grounded theory approach I have adopted in this thesis offers greater explanatory power for the consequences of trafficking at the level of phenomenology -- what this experience is like for the survivor -- than alternative approaches used in much of the existing research, which has documented only the factual characteristics and conditions that survivors endured. I will now shift my focus to survivors' post-trafficking experiences.

Post-Trafficking

In Chapter 6, I described the third and final stage of my model, post-trafficking, which encompasses everything that survivors experienced after exiting their trafficking context (see Figure 7.4). This stage first considered survivors' initial

process of engagement with the authorities and service providers, then addressed the psychological impact of this process and concluded with their plans and perspectives for the future as they transitioned towards independence. Although participants differed in their experiences of service provision and the psychological symptoms they suffered, survivors' experiences in this stage of the model were characterised by two major categories that were highly interrelated: systemic dependence and the degree of resettlement.

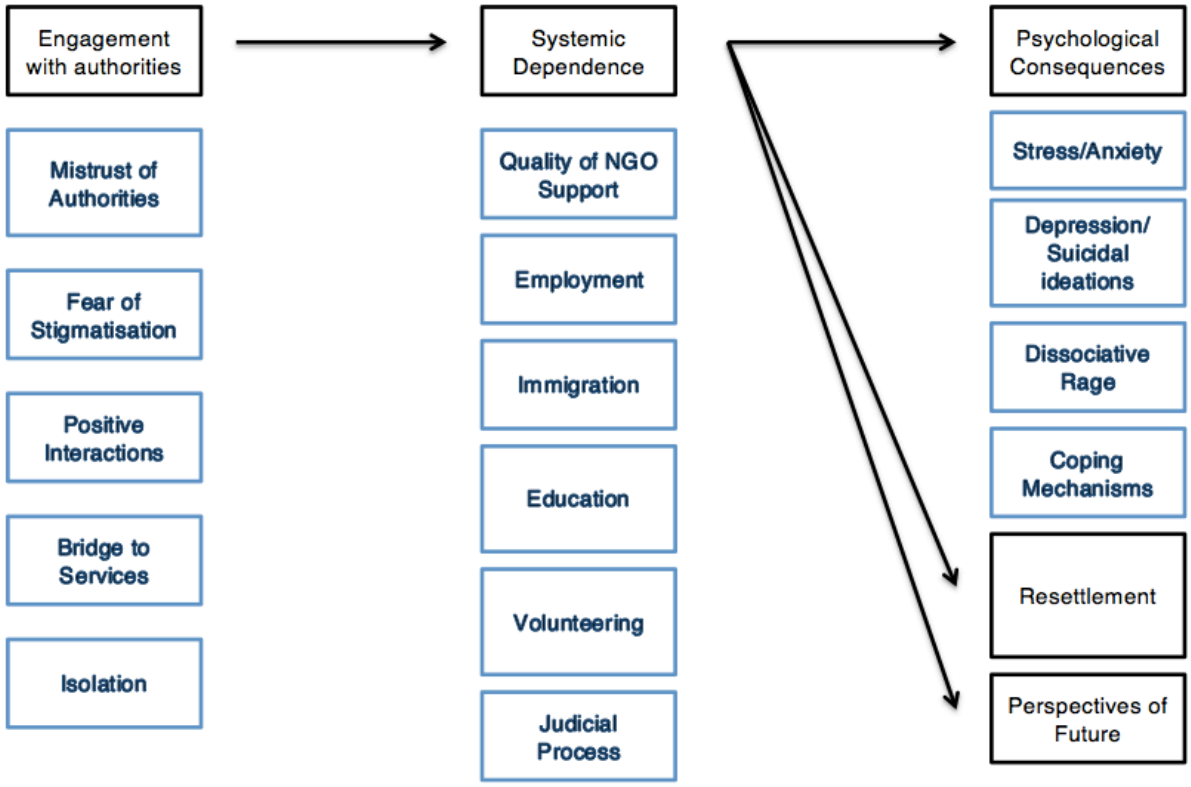

Figure 7.4 Graphical representation of the grounded theory of the post-trafficking experiences of survivors of human trafficking.

Systemic dependence. Having gained freedom from their traffickers either by being rescued, escaping or having their working arrangements terminated, survivors then began a process of engagement with the respective authorities in Australia and Singapore, and the respective service providers and non-government organisations

(NGOs) that they were referred to for support. Survivors found themselves in a state of systemic dependence upon either an NGO's generosity or government-supported

welfare program, as they themselves had few resources at their disposal.[3] Prior research indicates that survivors have many immediate needs including food, healthcare, mental health support, legal advocacy and housing (Aron, Zweig, & Newmart, 2006; Macy & Johns, 2011). Understanding survivors' experiences of systemic dependence was crucial to determining why, although participants ostensibly were free from their traffickers, they still spoke of an ongoing sense of frustration and developed the psychological symptoms that they displayed.

Given their pre-trafficking history of denied dreams, proximal focal events and familial responsibility, it was no surprise that survivors had little experience of receiving aid or any form of government social welfare. They came from communities where they were accustomed to having to work hard, be resilient and sacrifice to provide for themselves and their families. There was a dichotomous sense in which one was either contributing to the family's ongoing welfare or a burden on their limited resources; being a burden was a source of shame as it entailed consuming resources that could be used to benefit someone else.

While shame and mistrust have been recognised as obstacles to survivors engaging in various types of services in other studies (e.g., Brunovskis & Surtees, 2012; Clawson et al., 2008; Gajic-Veljanoski & Stewart, 2007), shame in this study actually resulted from survivors' engagement with service provision and their ensuing

[3] In Australia, legal status as a survivor of trafficking grants them temporary residency and makes them eligible for a range of social services funded by the government (Perry & McEwing, 2013). In Singapore, survivors are not supported by the government, but by privately funded NGOs primarily through shelters where they are provided accommodation, food and some basic health services (Yea, 2015).

systemic dependence. Survivors continued to express their shame at having to receive support in the first place; they perceived their systemic dependence as indicative of their failure to fulfill their familial responsibility. Their shame contributed to both a lack of communication with their families and a lack of disclosure of their experiences that intensified their sense of isolation and exacerbated their depression.

Survivors repeatedly emphasised that they did not want the ‘free money’ that they perceived government support to be. All they desired was to be able to do what they initially aimed to do -- work to support their families. They could not comprehend why their state of systemic dependence precluded them from working due to legislation and restrictions regarding their eligibility. They saw themselves as the ones who had been victimised, been told they were now free, but still were not free to do as they desired. My findings are reminiscent of earlier work suggesting that survivors who choose to engage with service providers long-term may only decide to do so because they have few alternative options or social networks to rely on for support (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2007; Lam & Skrivankova, 2009). Survivors in my study were motivated to engage with available services in the hope that they could win a degree of justice and be permitted to stay in their destination country and fulfill their familial responsibility.

In addition to depression due to their isolation and inability to fulfill their famililal responsibility, survivors also spoke of experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety. This primarily resulted from the need to repay the large amounts of debt they incurred to facilitate their migration. Their ability to repay these debts was compounded by their systemic context. Survivors in Australia experienced anxiety as a result of complications surrounding their eligibility for government support, as they were told on several occasions that their access to social welfare would be

prematurely terminated. Their stress and anxiety were exacerbated by changes in government policy and confusion surrounding what services they were eligible for. Such interactions meant that systemic dependence was experienced as retraumatising and anxiety inducing; the lack of communication and explanation of these issues re-evoked the arbitrariness of their treatment by their traffickers. Finally, survivors shared how expenses such as rent often consumed the entirety of their government welfare payments. This caused them immense stress, as they were unable to provide for themselves, let alone their families as well.

Survivors also recalled experiencing suicidal ideation, with two of them requiring hospitalisation after excessive consumption of sleeping tablets. Additionally, some recalled incidents of dissociative rage and social anxiety that may be indicative of post-traumatic stress disorder. Taken together, survivors' experiences, although not assessed using diagnostic measures, were indicative of the types of severe depressive, anxiety and PTSD symptomology that have been documented in the existing research literature (Abas et al, 2013; Kiss et al., 2015; Muftic & Linn, 2013; Oram et al., 2012; Ostrovschi et al., 2011; Rimal & Papadopoulos, 2016; Tsutsumi et al., 2008; Zimmerman et al., 2006). Overall, my consideration of survivors' experiences of systemic dependence offers additional insight into how the psychological impact of trafficking extends well beyond the point of being freed from the trafficking context (Abas et al., 2013). Survivors' experiences suggest that the systems and support services that have been designed to assist them in their time of greatest need have the potential to perpetuate the very psychological symptomology they aim to alleviate due to their restrictiveness. This once again reinforces the importance of consulting survivors about their own needs (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2012; Yea, 2015).

Degree of resettlement. Whereas the previous section highlighted the impact of systemic dependence on survivors' mental health, the second major category that emerged in the post-trafficking stage of my model was the degree to which survivors were successfully resettled. Survivors shared how their long-term trajectory and perspectives of the future were impacted by how well the process of transitioning from their interim state of systemic dependence to independence was managed. At the time I interviewed them, survivors either were awaiting repatriation to their country of origin, in the process of being resettled in the country they were trafficked to or successfully resettled in the country they were trafficked to. My findings suggest that incomplete or unsuccessfully managed resettlement has a detrimental impact on survivors' psychological health, which in turn undermines their sense of security and ability to move on from their trafficking experiences.

The majority of survivors desired the opportunity to build a new life and resettle in Australia and Singapore; they wished for a life where they could satisfy their denied dreams, take advantage of economic opportunities and fulfill their familial responsibilities. Their decision to resettle also was impacted by the lack of prospective job opportunities in their country of origin, and the fact that returning home would mean having to disclose experiences and be perceived as a failure. While survivors were all at different stages in the spectrum of incomplete to complete resettlement, five key factors were evident across their various contexts that impacted their psychological consequences. These factors were: employment, education, immigration, community and justice. My work suggests that survivors' satisfaction with their progress in each of these domains significantly contributed to the alleviation of their psychological symptoms and sparked a sense of hope for the future. As such, they functioned somewhat like a checklist, serving as concrete

signposts of survivors' progress and providing a greater understanding of what constituted successful resettlement from their perspective. This extends existing literature around human trafficking, in which resettlement has received relatively little attention (Schloenhardt & Loong, 2011; Lyneham, 2014; Surtees, 2008). Of the limited research in the area, most studies have been conducted in the United States and primarily focused on anecdotally linking survivors' experiences with consequences, without an adequate theoretical foundation (e.g., Aron, Zweig, & Newmart, 2006; Shigekane, 2007).

First, survivors sought employment opportunities as soon as they were allowed to, having been prevented from working while they were systemically dependent. Irrespective of the amount of abuse they suffered, survivors expressed that the greatest consequence of their trafficking was the loss of earning potential for the period when they were trafficked and systemically dependent. As such, they wanted to make up for it as quickly as possible so they could fulfill their familial responsibility.

However, the process of gaining employment was far from smooth sailing. Survivors shared their frustration with the lengthy process of gaining employment and repeated encounters with exploitative prospective employers. Several reported frequently being passed over for jobs they were qualified for because the visa they were granted also was given on a probationary basis to overseas migrants who had criminal backgrounds. In contrast, those who were able to successfully find gainful employment experienced a rapid upturn in their psychological wellbeing. In contrast, securing a well-paying job meant that survivors were in contact with their family regularly, enabling them to overcome their isolation and prior lack of disclosure. Survivors spoke with pride and a rekindled sense of agency as a result of their ability

to provide for both themselves and their families. All of them spoke of the increased sense of security and purpose that their employment status provided as well as the decreased levels of anxiety and stress they felt.

These findings parallel research conducted by Brennan (2010) on the resettlement of survivors in the United States. She found that survivors' "interest in finding jobs soon after they escape or are rescued is particularly striking. Formerly trafficked persons seek to work right away, and strive to build new networks of friends and colleagues" (p. 1583). Like the survivors in my study, "Work is the reason they came … and finding new jobs after forced labour allows them to carry out plans their exploiters interrupted" (p. 1584). However, survivors often found themselves in highly unstable, poorly paid employment contexts, often only marginally better than the exploitation they left behind (Brennan, 2014). The importance of providing survivors with economic opportunities has also been emphasised in research conducted in Australia and Singapore, where financial hardship and disillusionment resulted in many sex trafficking survivors repeatedly returning to contexts of sexual exploitation even after they had been freed (Yea, 2012). In contrast, Crawford and Kaufmann (2008) discovered that women who were provided with vocational training, micro-financing and business acumen were well received in their country of origin, Nepal. These employment opportunities enabled them to successfully be repatriated and overcome the stigma of their trafficking experiences. Taken together, these findings emphasise the prominent role that employment plays in ensuring survivors' successful repatriation or resettlement.

Second, survivors mentioned the pivotal role that education played in their resettlement, which was of particular importance for survivors who experienced denial of their educational dreams. The educational programs they were eligible for

under government support provided them with the qualifications required to find suitable work but also the opportunity to develop their English competency, socialise and build their support networks. Educational achievements contributed to their redeveloping sense of agency, as survivors discovered that they possessed greater academic proficiency than they thought. However, their academic experiences were not always positive, with some feeling ostracised and shamed by their peers for their lack of language competence. Juggling their educational goals and familial responsibilities also proved difficult, with studying often postponed for the time being. These challenges that many survivors face have been noted before in the literature (Brennan, 2010, 2014) but are particularly well expressed by the survivors in my study as they described their attempts to juggle educational, employment and familial responsibilities, with education often sacrificed in the present at the cost of longer-term opportunities.

As I highlighted in Chapter 4 and mentioned again in the pre-trafficking section above, the third factor important to survivors' resettlement was their immigration status. Their experience of immigration was heavily influenced by the broader systemic context of Australian and Singaporean post-trafficking support legislation. Whereas survivors are eligible for government welfare support and hope to gain permanent residency and eventually citizenship in Australia (Flynn, Alston, & Mason, 2014), this is not the case in Singapore. Survivors in Singapore "are not supported beyond their internment in [NGO-run] shelters where they are provided accommodation, food and some basic health services … [which] does not assist in the efforts of victims to build resilience" (Yea, 2015, p. 318). Survivors' only hope is to be granted new work permits to find new employers. These permits are only granted after an extensive investigation by the Ministry of Manpower, a period during which

survivors are given a temporary visa but are still unable to legally work. Survivors whose cases were still pending investigation, spoke of the frustration and anxiety caused by this lengthy period of uncertainty. If they were not granted new working permits, they feared being deported back to their country of origin amidst circumstances of unfulfilled familial responsibility, economic hardship and high levels of debt that were similar to those that compelled them to migrate initially.

The length of time it took to resolve their immigration status also was the biggest concern for survivors in Australia, with those who received permanent residency describing a process that took between two to eight years. This difficulty in attaining a permanent visa mirrors the findings of existing research (Yea, 2015). During this time, they too lived in constant fear of repatriation, which they experienced as an extension of their suffering. Travel restrictions of temporary visas, which were granted to them as survivors of trafficking, also prohibited them from travelling to their country of origin to visit their families. As such, they lived in a state of limbo, unable to physically reconnect with their social networks and families back home, and unwilling to commit to fully rebuilding their lives in Australia due to the uncertainty surrounding their residency. Those who had been granted permanent residency or citizenship spoke of the tremendous sense of relief, security and certainty they now had. The rights and resources that were now available to them as residents in Australia gave them great comfort, especially in comparison to their experiences with corrupt authorities in their countries of origin. Whereas to my knowledge this is the first study systematically examining the (lived experience of the) psychological impact of the immigration process on survivors of trafficking, prior research has consistently demonstrated that long investigative procedures and other post-migration adversities contribute to mental health problems in asylum seekers

(e.g., Carwell, Blackburn, & Parker, 2009; Laban, Gernaat, Komproe, van der Tweel, & De Jong, 2005).

Having attained their citizenship, survivors also shared their excitement at being reunited with their children who also were granted residency in Australia. Prior to their arrival, they expressed concern for their children's safety and wellbeing, uncertainty about immigration status and stress from their familial responsibility (Yea, 2015). However, they now faced the additional challenge of managing the process of disclosure of their experiences to their children, from whom they had been physically estranged for an extended period of time. They spoke of not wanting to frighten their children, about the importance of considering what was age appropriate for them to know and the fear of stigmatisation they still felt from their experiences. Busch-Armendariz, Nsonwu, and Cook (2011) claimed that this dimension of resettlement has been almost completely neglected in the literature, as the resettlement of children and other family members with resettled survivors, while an important and celebrated immigration milestone, comes with many unforeseen complications that require service provider support.

Fourth, survivors emphasised the importance of attaining social support and developing a sense of community, which was related to the successful resolution of their employment, educational and immigration challenges. They spoke of how being reunited with their children, finding a partner and a close group of friends enabled them to overcome their sense of depression, loneliness and isolation. Such examples of community encouraged and enabled them to pursue their dreams, made them laugh and temporarily forget their traumatic experiences, and fostered their sense of purpose and belonging. Survivors also spoke positively about their opportunity to be advocates and to share their experiences with each other and government

representatives as a way of making meaning from their experiences. These examples showcase how fostering survivors' sense of community plays a crucial role in the resettlement process.

The final factor that survivors mentioned as influencing the resettlement process was their achievement of justice. For survivors trafficked to Australia, their experiences of the immigration and legal processes were closely related (Yea, 2015), as their visa status was "conditional on the willingness of the participant to assist with any relevant criminal investigation into trafficking offences" (Schloenhardt & Loong, 2011, p. 158). This committed them to a lengthy process that would not be resolved for several years, something that was at odds with their desire to move on with their lives and not be defined by and reminded of their trafficking experience. Several survivors expressed significant hesitancy about pursuing criminal justice due to fear of retribution from their traffickers, either to themselves or their families in their countries of origin. Others expressed relief and delight that their trafficker was convicted and imprisoned, although they acknowledged that others members of their trafficking network were still at large. Survivors in Singapore who still awaited the resolution of their legal cases desired a swift, positive outcome so they could return to their goal of fulfilling their familial responsibility. Interestingly, their definition of justice was not that their traffickers be charged or imprisoned, but simply that they be paid the money they were owed by their traffickers.

A possible explanation for survivors' apparent lack of vindictiveness towards their traffickers is my finding of their particular ways of attributing blame. They commonly internalised blame for their trafficking, claiming they were stupid or dumb to have trusted their traffickers. Others externalised responsibility to their fate or luck. As such, they did not see their traffickers as solely and deliberately responsible for

their predicament. My finding is consistent with earlier findings that many survivors do not consider themselves victims of trafficking nor wish to be identified as such (Tyldum, 2010). One or two survivors in my study even went as far as to express gratitude to and empathy for their traffickers, claiming that they would never have been able to resettle in Australia without their involvement; as a result, they did not want them punished. This meant that survivors found themselves in a conflicted state between their own goal to rebuild their lives and support their families and the authorities' desire to obtain justice on their behalf.

Survivors' lack of vindictiveness towards their traffickers, expressions of gratitude and unwillingness to participate in the judicial process may also be indicative of a degree of traumatic attachment or trauma-coerced attachment (TCA) to their traffickers, which may have formed during the period they were encapsulated (Doychak & Raghavan, 2018; Raghavan & Doychak, 2015). There is a nascent body of research conducted primarily with sex trafficking survivors into such attachments, which are defined as "powerful emotional attachment[s]" to traffickers "which remains dynamic and in-flux over the course of the relationship and sometimes even after the relationship has ended" (Doychak & Raghavan, 2018, p. 2). These relationships are believed to form in environments where survivors experience physical threat, isolation and control tactics, exploitation of an extreme power imbalance, and intermittent and arbitrary reward and punishment (Herman, 1992). As a result of such attachments, which are believed to vary in strength, survivors may minimise the abuse experienced, insist on taking responsibility for the abuse suffered, and protect the abuser from social and legal repercussions. These insights at the level of survivors' experiences may help to explain survivors' documented unwillingness to be

involved in lengthy legal processes and the subsequent low conviction rates of traffickers (David, 2010, 2012).

Overall, the post-trafficking stage of my model, and my investigation of systemic dependence and the degree of resettlement, provides important insights at the level of survivors' lived experiences. At the core of the post-trafficking stage are survivors who, having been freed from their traffickers, find themselves still embedded within a restrictive systemic context. My findings suggest that when survivors are provided with stable employment, attain sufficient education, secure permanent residency, belong to a supportive community and achieve their desired level of justice, they report significantly improved psychological outcomes. As a result, assisting survivors' transition to resettlement is critical in ensuring they have a positive long-term trajectory. My research once again demonstrates survivors' intrinsic resilience, which is undermined when they are restricted in a prolonged state of systemic dependence. This serves as a caution against over-protection, and indicates that if service providers and government authorities are able to scaffold and facilitate survivors' quest to fulfill their familial responsibilities, this should result in rapid progress and improvement in their psychological wellbeing.

Having discussed the key themes that emerged during the pre-trafficking, trafficking and post-trafficking stages of my theoretical model and explored their relationship to the existing literature, I will now offer recommendations for best practice in service provision, legislation and further research that arise from my program of research and findings.

Recommendations

In light of the theory I developed and summarised above, and the insights it provides into the experiences of survivors of human trafficking, it is important to consider ways to improve the services and support that can offered to current and future survivors. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 281), a well constructed grounded theory is one that is "relevant and possibly influential either to the understanding of policy makers or to direct action." As a result, these recommendations are offered at the level of both service provision and legislation.

Recommendations for service providers. Survivors' accounts of their trafficking experiences contextualised within their life narratives provided four key recommendations that should be considered by service providers: (1) recognising the importance of each trafficking stage; (2) the dynamic nature of survivors' needs; (3) the impact of culture, fear and stigmatization on survivors' willingness to engage with services; and (4) the importance of re-establishing survivors' capacity for mentalisation.

My theoretical model emphasised first the importance of considering the ongoing influence of all stages of the model upon survivors' post-trafficking context. This echoes the work of Zimmerman, Hossain, and Watts (2011, p. 333), who suggested that service providers' "intervention strategies recognise the distinct stages of the trafficking process, while simultaneously spanning across the trafficking process." For example, it may be that the factors that contributed to survivors' vulnerability prior to their trafficking have not changed as a result of them being in a different post-trafficking country. In fact, it may continue to impact their psychological wellbeing and impede ongoing efforts at service provision and resettlement. Additionally, their earlier life experiences may determine their level of willingness to

even engage with service provision and contribute to their mistrust of the authorities. Therefore, bearing in mind the influence of such broader contextual factors from all three stages of my model may help service providers to evaluate the success of their interventions with survivors. Such interventions should acknowledge the role that survivors' ongoing systemic dependence and incomplete resettlement play in the persistence of their psychological symptomology.

Second, the post-trafficking categories of systemic dependence and degree of resettlement in my model highlight the importance of acknowledging the dynamic nature of survivors' needs, in particular, distinguishing between short-term assistance and long-term resettlement (Surtees & de Kerchove, 2013). While survivors may have many immediate and pressing interim needs (Aron, Zweig, & Newmart, 2006; Macy & Johns, 2011), it should be recognised that a prolonged experience of systemic dependence may be even more detrimental to their mental health than their trafficking experience. Service providers' goals should aim to facilitate their transition to independence and the expression of their inherent resilience as quickly as possible. However, provisions must be made for survivors to access long-term support as their needs will change over time. For example, survivors whose children are granted permanent residency may need special assistance in navigating the educational and welfare system

Third, service providers need to consider the roles that culture, fear of stigmatisation and shame play in survivors' approach to receiving assistance. Survivors may have pre-existing biases against accessing mental health services that are compounded by the stigma associated with trafficking experiences (Aberdein & Zimmerman, 2015; Aron et al., 2006; Brunovskis & Surtees, 2007). As a result, their initial engagement with service providers may be clouded by shame and

mistrust (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2012; Clawson et al., 2008; Gajic-Veljanoski & Stewart, 2007). Therefore, service provision needs to be conducted in a culturally appropriate manner (Shigekane, 2007), acknowledging the difficulty of developing trust after surviving profound exploitation (Brennan, 2010). Psychologists, counselors and therapists who work with survivors need to also actively deal with shame because it "perpetuates psychological isolation with memories of victimisation" (Contreras, Kallivayalil, & Herman, 2017, p. 42). By being attuned, consistent, and empathic, service providers can build trust and decrease their sense of shame, so that "psychotherapy can function as an alternative relational model, one that seeks actively to show respect for the patient's dignity, not to dehumanise or marginalise, while also acknowledging the inherent power imbalance in the relationship" (p. 45).

The fourth and final recommendation for service providers is to focus on redeveloping survivors' capacity for mentalisation. Recent research has found a relationship between mentalisation and resilience (Gunderson & Lyons-Ruth, 2008; Fonagy & Target, 1998), as the capacity to continue to mentalise under stress or threat has been found to develop one's sense of security and personal agency. Similarly, studies on resilience have shown that resilient individuals are able to broaden their network of social support as a result of their mentalisation capacity (Hauser, Allen, & Golden, 2006). Therefore, this body of literature suggests that survivors' mentalisation capacity may be reestablished in the present by finding themselves held in the service provider or psychologists' mind as a separate and worthy individual who is understood and valued (Fonagy & Luyton, 2009). Interventions should facilitate the growth of their sense of subjectivity -- the ability to recognise themselves as an independent self (Fonagy et al., 2002). As they begin to safely explore their own mind, then they should feel safe to explore the minds of their

service providers and experience intersubjectivity. This will provide them with a level of insight into the mental states that underlie their own behaviours, preventing them from automatically living out their traumatic memories, for example, in demonstrations of dissociative rage. Interestingly, mentalisation based therapy suggests that treatments that focus on processing one's traumatic past, which typically result in high levels of stress and anxiety, might not be immediately helpful for survivors with inhibited mentalisation (Bateman & Fonagy, 2006). In fact, my findings regarding mentalisation suggest that it is only when a survivor is able to be firmly established in the present that they can begin the process of guided exposure and reflection upon their past traumatic experiences (Robjant, Roberts, & Katona, 2017). This is especially important considering survivors experience systemic dependence as retraumatising, and thus may not have the current capacity to process prior traumatic experiences.

Overall, my model recommends that service providers consider the interaction between broader contextual and cultural issues and survivors' needs and mentalisation capacity. Over the course of their interviews, survivors in this study demonstrated the dynamic nature of the trafficking experience, in that their understanding of their experiences changed over time. It is a service provider "who can hold all these realities [that] will help the survivor make meaning of [their] experiences" (Contreras, Kallivayalil, & Herman, 2017, p. 46).

Legislative Recommendations. In addition to these recommendations for service providers' best practice, it was evident from survivors' experiences of constrained choice, systemic dependence and resettlement that changes need to be made at the legislative level to reduce their vulnerability to trafficking as well as persistent negative consequences of trafficking. While making recommendations

regarding specific legislation that should be passed is beyond the scope of this thesis, my results provide several suggestions as to how legislative bodies can reduce the psychological consequences of trafficking for survivors. These will be discussed within the context of global migration for employment at the pre- and post-trafficking stages, and include reducing the power imbalance between migrant workers and employers, alleviating the restrictions surrounding systemic dependency, providing better employment opportunities and improving communication regarding residency and migrants' rights.

Survivors' pre-trafficking experiences of constrained choice reflected the role that government policies surrounding migration and the practice of debt bondage played in their perceived vulnerability to traffickers; this pattern has been well documented in the existing literature (Belanger, 2014; ILO, 2015; Owens et al., 2014; Simich, Goyen, Powell, & Mallozzi 2014). This debt, coupled with Australian and Singaporean government policies that require migrants' employment and immigration status to be bound to a single employer, creates an innate power imbalance between migrants and employers that is ripe for exploitation by would-be traffickers (Anderson & Andrijasevic, 2008; Belanger, 2014; O'Connell Davidson, 2006; 2010). As a result, the discourse surrounding trafficking should be situated within, not considered separate from, each country's labour and migration policy, which contribute to a context in which trafficking and the exploitation of migrant labour is able to flourish (Anderson & Andrijasevic, 2008). This is especially true when it is the prerogative of an employer to permit migrants to find another employer at end of their contract or be forcibly repatriated to their country of origin (Brennan, 2010). In addition, migrants often depend on their employers for housing and other basic needs, and lack knowledge of their rights in the destination country. As a result, one clear

recommendation is that greater legislative protections be created for migrant workers, giving them more flexibility in the employment market, and capping or standardising the fees that can be charged by migration agents relative to the amount they would earn on their contract (Clarke, 2012). Migrant workers should also be able to live in accommodations of their choosing and have freedom of movement and communication. This is especially necessary in Singapore, which has an estimated 1.2 million migrant workers at any given time (Clarke, 2012). Greater oversight is also required by government bodies to monitor all the agencies and intermediaries involved in facilitating migration and ensuring that workers are not forced, deceived or coerced. However, given survivors' mistrust of authorities and fear of being forcibly repatriated, both of which are fuelled by their traffickers, it is unlikely that greater government involvement alone will uncover and eradicate trafficking. Governments should cooperate with and empower migrant labour organisations on the ground to engage and represent workers and investigate rumours of forced labour, providing both top-down and ground-up oversight of a complicated systemic context (Brennan, 2008).

In terms of survivors' post-trafficking experiences, my work informs recommendations for changes to legislation that perpetuates their systemic dependency. First, the requirement by the Australian Government that survivors must pursue legal action to be eligible for the trafficking survivor support program should be altered to provide assistance to all survivors. Second, the Singapore Government's steadfast "refusal of residency rights goes against victims' needs for social protection," as no provision is made for them to resettle in Singapore long-term (Gajic-Veljanoski & Stewart, 2007, p. 350). At present, survivors from both countries who are repatriated to their country of origin are at risk of further revictimisation

because they are unable to pay off their debts and may re-incur those costs again in the process of re-migration. It is recommended that these regulations be changed to facilitate survivors' in accomplishing their economic goals and familial responsibility, after which they may return to their country of origin if they so choose.

Third, survivors in Australia recommended that the government-sponsored support programs, which prevent their employment, should instead actively facilitate their resettlement by providing them with employment opportunities. Thus, rather than prolonging their state of systemic dependence, employment assistance would help to reduce their psychological symptoms by strengthening their sense of agency and allowing them to fulfil their familial responsibility. Fourth, better communication and transparency around processes and timeframes relevant to their immigration status and resolution of their residency concerns would provide them with a greater sense of security and also alleviate their psychological symptoms (Perry & McEwing, 2013).

Finally, many survivors suggested providing more information in multiple languages about workers' rights in Australia and Singapore. For example, giving every person who passes through immigration the contact details of relevant authorities and service providers in Australia or Singapore in case of emergency, and ensuring they know that they can access these numbers without charge, would reduce their isolation and vulnerability. In their review of trafficking in South-East Asia, Perry and McEwing (2013, p. 14) emphasised the importance of "training individuals to keep records of contact addresses where they can go for help, increasing their knowledge of travel routes and borders, encouraging regular updates to family while travelling, and the carrying of their own funds" in reducing their risk and protecting migrants' rights.

In sum, these recommendations for service provision and legislative best practice demonstrate that my theoretical model has practical relevance and can assist in improving the systemic context that survivors find themselves in and in reducing their vulnerability and dependency.

Reflections on the Research Process and Limitations

Having discussed the broader implications of my model, I turn now to reflect on my research process and a number of important considerations and limitations. Some of these are inherent in the Grounded Theory approach to qualitative research, while others are unique to this specific field of research. At its core, qualitative research aims to collect data at the level of human experience. Therefore, the trustworthiness of the data collected depends on "participants' ability to reflectively discern aspects of their own experience and to effectively communicate what they discern through the symbols of language" (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 138) and the researchers' ability to acknowledge their influence on this process. In this thesis, the factors that may influence survivors' capacity to speak authentically about their experiences of trafficking include considerations of how trafficking is operationally defined, the involvement of gatekeepers in my methodology, concerns regarding the generalisability of the theory described, limitations of GT and the role of the researcher. This section concludes with survivors' reflections on being interviewed as a counterpoint to many of these limitations.

As defined in Chapter 1, human trafficking involves the exploitation of the vulnerability of an individual through the use of force, deception and coercion, for the purposes of harnessing their productive capacity (UN, 2000). While this may seem

clear-cut in theory, the line is much blurrier in practice when the complicated landscape of migration practices is taken into account. Consequently, what constitutes human trafficking compared to a migration or labour violation may become unclear, particularly when participants were recruited from service providers who assist a wide variety of clients. Additionally, over the course of my data collection, I discovered that service providers, in general, do not have a standardised way of conceptualising or identifying trafficking, which can lead to conflict and confusion even within their teams. Many service providers I encountered lacked standard screening protocols to identify potential victims, and many do not define human trafficking in a manner congruent with legislation in their country. As a result, there was some diversity in the level to which the participants made available to me for interviewing strictly met the UN definition. In fact, two participants were interviewed and ultimately excluded from analysis as I deemed them to be non-trafficking labour rights violations. Despite my determination fairly early on that these were not cases of trafficking, I endeavoured to still bear witness to their experiences, complete the interviews and compensate them for their time. This reflects the importance of researchers having an operational understanding of how trafficking relates to the broad continuum of abuse suffered by migrant workers (Brennan, 2014; Gallagher, 2015; O'Connell Davidson, 2010).

Related to this was the fact that service providers functioned as gatekeepers in my research, the rationale for which I addressed in Chapter 4. This provided them with a level of control over both the survivors in their care and information, as they could effectively make the decision of non-participation on survivors' behalf (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2010). In so doing, they might further disempower survivors who, as part of their trafficking, already had experienced a lack of freedom to choose

for themselves. Service providers had the tough challenge of striking a balance between protecting survivors and allowing them the agentic capacity to make their own decision to participate. Survivors who were offered for interview may also have been the most eloquent and successful cases that an organization wished to publicise. There also is a tendency for organisations with more restrictive support programs to be less likely to provide access to survivors, which proved to be my experience. From the perspective of potential participants, their agreement to participate often is a demonstration of their trust in their service provider, and they may choose to do as a way of expressing their gratitude. Researchers must consider whether it is possible for survivors to actually say no to their service providers for fear of jeopardising their ongoing quality of support (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2010). That said, in this study, survivors spoke both fondly and critically, expressing a surprising degree of honesty about the quality of service provision they received. Finally, researchers must be aware of the unintentional demand characteristics that may be communicated over the course of the interviews that pressure survivors to answer in a way the researcher expects (Tyldum, 2010).

Despite these potential sources of bias, I would argue that interviewing survivors supported by service providers is the only way that trafficked people can be ethically and safely researched (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2007, 2010). Accessing respondents through service providers provides a potential layer of protection in that, should any needs or ethical concerns arise during or following interview, assistance can be easily rendered. For example, while survivors may be told that they have the right of refusal to answer any question if it is overly distressing, it is the question itself, not the process of answering it, which triggers negative emotion (Zimmerman & Watts, 2003). Therefore having procedures and personnel in place that survivors are

familiar with to assist in such an event after the researcher inevitably departs is required.

The research methodology employed and the nature of my sample also has consequences for the generalisability of my findings. Some may argue that my conclusions may not generalise to larger populations of survivors of trafficking, given my sample size of 12 participants, and therefore is unrepresentative given the nature of the sample from which they are drawn. However, the unit of analysis in qualitative research is not defined at the level of number of participants, but at the number of their unique experiences (Morrow, 2005; Polkinghorne, 2005). In fact, Charmaz (2008) claimed that the goal of Grounded Theory is not generalisability but theoretical saturation; the point at which collecting more data adds no significant theoretical insight. It must also be taken into account that the paucity of research in the area and the clandestine nature of human trafficking makes it unclear how a representative trafficking sample should be defined. Most of the research conducted with trafficking survivors has been conducted within service provision frameworks, so while my findings may not be representative of the population of trafficking victims at large, it is at least representative of those who seek service provision in Australia and Singapore (Tyldum, 2010).

That said, studies that rely upon survivors recruited through service providers cannot be assumed to be representative of the population of trafficking victims at large (Tyldum, 2010). This is due to the fact that some survivors may not live in regions where service provision is available, or may not qualify for assistance given the strict selection criteria that many NGOs employ when allocating their limited resources (Tyldum, 2010). Some scholars have suggested that survivors who seek service provision may differ qualitatively from those that choose not to. For example,

Brunovskis and Surtees (2007) argued that European survivors of sex trafficking who were more independent and had existing familial and social networks available to them were more likely than not to decline assistance from service providers. As a result, those who accepted assistance, and thus were available for research participation, likely had few alternative options or reported more severe physical and psychological consequences.

It is also important that some consequences of employing semi-structured interviews and GT in particular be considered here. The data was collected retrospectively with survivors self-reporting on their experiences at a single time point, which may impact its reliability since their perspectives may have changed over time. It is noteworthy that my research question was specifically interested in how survivors reflect on their experiences and contextualised them, not investigating the veracity of those experiences. Additionally, the definition of human trafficking addressed in Chapter 1 is necessarily post facto, leading to questions regarding whether it can actually be investigated effectively in a non-retrospective manner. GT theorists operate under the assumption that participants interviewed are experts of their own experience (Fassinger, 2005). GT endeavors to capture in meaningful ways the causal connections people make between the conditions, action-interactions and consequences they describe (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As a result, the claims made regarding causality while outlining my theoretical model are specific to the contexts described, and the hypothesised connections between categories in my model are believed to have explanatory power only within the conditions that survivors found themselves in. It must be emphasised that this model is intended to provide a preliminary framework that can be further explored. More

specific suggestions for how the predictive power of my model could be examined are offered in the following section, Future Research Implications.

In a similar vein, the role I played as a GT researcher in this project was both a strength and a limitation. I assume that the nature of the interview data collected in the course of my interviews depended on the unique interactions between survivors and myself. The data yielded from these interviews would likely have included numerous deviations from those collected by a different researcher, whose interviewing style would have been informed by their own sensitising concepts and personal experiences. Moreover, though my research supervisor and I went to great lengths to explicate our conceptual frameworks (as described in Chapter 2) to minimise bias in our ways of interpreting and analysing the data, our unique characteristics (e.g., our beliefs, values, genders) no doubt influenced the ways in which data were interpreted and thus represented in this text. For example, Sue and Tina both shared how a consequence of their sex trafficking was their indiscriminate hatred of men. Being a male researcher, this may have impacted the nature of the experiences they were willing to share with me. In general, however, participants disclosed their experiences in great detail, making me confident in their authenticity. They described openly and candidly narratives about their life challenges in general, not just their trafficking experiences, demonstrating their trust in me as a researcher.

Finally, Brunovskis and Surtees (2010) noted that when survivors are asked why they agreed to be interviewed, they most commonly answered that they wanted an opportunity to be heard and hoped their stories could improve the plight of others in similar situations. That was certainly the case in my research. Reflecting on his experience of being interviewed, Alex shared how refreshing he found the opportunity to be honest, particularly in the face of isolation. He said, "*How do I put it? It's good*

… Speaking out what's in my heart, if not, there's no one to tell, did not tell anyone." Rose spoke of a cathartic relief at being attuned to, acknowledged and understood, "*I feel so much relief to tell someone who really understands me … When you actually tell someone what you really felt … and who really understands me, it's so much relief*." Likewise, Toyin expressed how being able to tell her story made her feel "*relaxed inside*." Finally, Anne expressed how the interview provided her with the opportunity to recall and contextualise parts of her experience that she had not yet reflected upon and realise how far she had come:

> *Yeah, yeah it was helpful because I couldn't just sat down and remembering stuff, but once I can remember, oh this is what happened. So I can see that I still have that picture in my mind, although it's not painful like how you, I could have in that situation now, it's just like, because I have come out of that situation now. But I still have the picture. And that's what I would like people to know*.

I suggest that these survivors' reflections demonstrate the enormous value of being interviewed and the importance of research participation as a method of survivors meaning making from their experiences.

Future Research Implications

With these recommendations and reflections in mind, it is worthwhile to briefly explore several avenues of future research that could be conducted based on the grounded theory of human trafficking experiences that has emerged from this research. These avenues relate both to the expansion and further validation of the

grounded theory itself and implications it holds for other areas of psychological theory.

The first step for further qualitative research would be for survivors who did not take part in my research to have their experiences of human trafficking run through my model. These survivors could have been trafficked to countries other than Australia or Singapore, or perhaps have endured types of trafficking that were not included in this study, such as organ trafficking or forced marriage. Further research is also required to determine if survivors of domestic trafficking share similar narratives of their experiences. If my theory is still able to faithfully capture the nuances of their experiences, as it did for the survivors of international trafficking interviewed for study described in this thesis, it would reinforce the validity and robustness of the model.

Second, quantitative research could be conducted to verify my theory, which Glaser and Strauss (1967) claim is the aim of experimental methodology. In order to verify the grounded theory presented in this thesis, experiments would need to be designed and the dependent, independent and related variables would need to be defined. Statistical or experimental controls would need to be implemented so that the impact of each independent variable on survivors' psychological consequences could be isolated and assessed. These experiments could be conducted for each of the three stages in the model. For example, researchers could investigate the concepts that contribute to survivors' vulnerability to traffickers (denial of dreams, proximal focal events, familial responsibility and resilience) in a sample of trafficking survivors compared with a non-trafficked migrant worker sample. This would help to validate my theory's proposal that these concepts uniquely contribute to survivors' vulnerability to trafficking. Alternatively, a quantitative study using diagnostic

measures of psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety and PTSD could be conducted with survivors. Measures of mentalisation and trauma-coerced attachment could be also included in such a study to determine their impact on the way survivors' reflect on their experiences. Ideally, such a study would be conducted longitudinally, measuring their symptomology over time and documenting the impact of resettlement. This would support my assertion that achieving employment, education, immigration, community and justice goals are crucial for survivors' long-term mental health. Given the complexity of my grounded theory, this process of operationalising any of these variables would be immensely difficult. Indeed, preliminary work, both qualitative and quantitative, would need to be conducted to further determine the parameters of the concepts that comprise each category in order to generate operational definitions that would accurately represent the central elements of my grounded theory.

Third, similar research to that carried out for this thesis, but with service providers as participants, would be useful in order to build a grounded theory of the experiences of working with survivors of human trafficking from the perspective of frontline service providers. Very little is known about service providers' experiences of supporting survivors of trafficking and, as a result, research of this nature would yield results that are highly valuable. Future research could combine this model with existing models from survivors' perspectives to broaden our understanding as well as provide a framework for working with survivors, which is helpful and sustainable for all those involved. These insights could be used to train service providers in regards to the unique challenges of working with survivors and prompt greater examination of how the actions and strategies that, although motivated by a desire to protect and

assist survivors, may in fact be detrimental to their long-term psychological wellbeing and independence.

Finally, the categories that comprise my grounded theory, as presented in this thesis, may be extended to areas of psychological research broader than human trafficking. For example, my grounded theory could be used as a launching point for exploring experiences of vulnerability, encapsulation and systemic dependence in refugees and asylum seekers. Such populations may also have experiences of denied dreams, proximal focal events, familial responsibility and resilience that contribute to their vulnerability. They may also experience encapsulation and systemic dependence when detained by immigration authorities or housed in refugee camps, which would limit their ability to fulfil their familial responsibility and therefore impact their long-term psychological wellbeing. Additionally, research with other populations who experience encapsulation, such as victims of domestic violence, could benefit from a consideration of the role that inhibited mentalisation plays in their ability to escape their context and plan for the future. These suggestions provide a brief glimpse into the potential for future qualitative and quantitative research based on the grounded theory I have described in this thesis, as well as ideas for its broader relevance and applicability.

Conclusion

Overall, the work I conducted for this thesis aimed to provide a theoretical account of the lived experiences of survivors of human trafficking in Australia and Singapore, contextualised within their life narratives. Interviews with 12 survivors yielded profound insights into the dynamic, interpersonal and contextualised nature of both trafficking itself and its psychological consequences, highlighting the role that

systemic factors play in determining survivors' pre- and post-trafficking trajectory. My research has capitalised on the strengths of Grounded Theory to present a unique and imperative blend of higher-order psychological conceptualisation and rich and nuanced phenomenology that has been rigorously interrogated and explicated throughout this thesis. I hope that this thesis will increase the understanding and awareness of the issue of human trafficking and function as a helpful resource for those tasked with their support and assistance. If survivors discover it, I hope that it will be a source of insight and comfort that enables them to understand both themselves and their experiences. Research of this nature holds important implications for service provision, legislation and further research surrounding human trafficking. In addition, it may be applied to other areas within the purview of trauma psychology, such as supporting asylum seekers, refugees and survivors of domestic violence. Over the course of conducting my research, I was left with an indelible impression of survivors' strength, ambition and resilience as they strived to not be defined by their experiences, but thrive in spite of them. They were not broken people who needed to be restored. They were restricted people who needed to be unleashed. No one exemplified this more than Anne, whose inspiring words I will end with:

> *My capabilities are not what people see in me, it's up to me what I achieve. So if people look down on you, or tell you 'you can't do that, that it's too much for you' – no. It's up to you. Don't listen. Be you, and go for whatever you want to … Don't let your present define you. Everyone has something, everyone has potential. I can do it, because I have it.*

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Appendix A: Information and Consent Forms

Information Sheet for Participants in Australia

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY | FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES

Information Sheet Relating to Participants

Project title: The Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking in Australia and Singapore.

Project duration: 1/1/13 to 31/12/13.

Who is carrying out the study?
Wesley Tan is a Doctor of Philosophy candidate from the Department of Psychology at Macquarie University. This research will form the basis for the Doctor of Philosophy degree at Macquarie University under the Supervision of Dr Doris McIlwain, Senior Lecturer, Department of Psychology.

What is the study about?
This project aims to explore more deeply the experiences of people who have been caught up as victims of human trafficking as well as the experiences of those who help them through this process. We would like to develop a theory so that when those who have been victimized find a therapist, that therapist really knows what they have been through. Up till now, there hasn't been a specific theory regarding treatment of trauma that occurred due to trafficking. We recognize the severity and complexity of the trauma experienced by victims of trafficking and so a theory that really captures their experiences needs to be created.

Research Questions: We would like to address with you, the question that is relevant to your experiences:
1) For Carers: How have you, as service providers and case-workers been impacted by the experience of working with clients who are survivors of trafficking?
2) For Survivors: How have you been impacted by your experiences of human trafficking?

What does the study involve?

- One 45-60 minute semi-structured interview, in that the researcher will have a few starter questions, but you are free to speak about what you think is most important This will occur at a location you are comfortable with and will be audio recorded.
- You will be invited to review the transcript of your interview.
- You will then be given the opportunity to comment on main issues that have been raised a result of all the interviews.

How much time will the study take?
Initially, you will be involved in a 45-60 minute interview. You will subsequently be given the opportunity for to browse through the transcript of their interview at a later date and comment if they wish via email, phone/Skype or in person where possible. If you wish to discuss the research with the interviewer prior to agreeing to participate, that may occur via email, phone/Skype, or in person if possible. If you experience any discomfort during the interview, it may be postponed or rescheduled. You will receive a $50 Coles group voucher for your time.

Will the study benefit you?
If you are a case-worker and service provider, this study will provide you with the opportunity to critically reflect upon your own experiences and/or practices of your workplace. If you are a survivor of trafficking, you may find participation useful in helping you find the words to describe and reflect upon your experiences and develop your sense of agency and confidence. You may gain a sense of meaning from participation in research which may help others in similar circumstances.

Will the study involve any discomfort for you?
It is possible that you may experience discomfort during the interview. The research is designed so that the interview can be held at a location of you choosing. Any part of the interview can be deleted as the interview unfolds, without you having to give any reason and without any consequence. The interview may be paused, stopped or rescheduled at any point if distress is experienced. You will have an opportunity to review the transcript afterwards to ensure an accurate reflection of your views and required amendments can then be made. Furthermore, you will have an opportunity to comment on the final themes elicited from all the interviews.

If you experience a prolonged period of distress as a result of being interviewed, you should engage more deeply with your current counsellor if you have that support, or you may contact the following trauma experts and experienced psychotherapists: Jacqui Winship (0423 760 162) or Fathima Moosa (0411 440 813) should you require psychological support.

Will anyone else know the results? How will the results be disseminated?
All aspects of the study, including results, will be confidential and only the researcher and his supervisor will have access to information on the participants. Pseudonyms will be used during the interview itself so that your real names will not be revealed. The research will be disseminated in the form of a thesis on the overall findings of the research, and possible subsequent publications.

Can participants withdraw from the study?
Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are not obliged to be involved and can withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any consequences.

Can participants tell other people about the study?
You can tell other people about the study by providing them with the researcher's contact details. They can contact Wesley Tan (details below) to discuss their participation in the research project and obtain a participant information sheet.

What if participants require further information?

For any further queries please contact Wesley Tan:

Wesley Tan (Macquarie University Doctor of Philosophy Candidate)

Email: wesley.tan@students.mq.edu.au
Phone: 0414 584 296

Dr Doris McIlwain (Macquarie University Supervisor)
Email: doris.mcilwain@mq.edu.au
Phone (02) 9850 9430

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and participants will be informed of the outcome.

Information Sheet for Participants in Singapore

Information Sheet Relating to Participants

Project title: The Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking Australia and Singapore.

Project duration: 30/8/12 to 31/12/13.

Who is carrying out the study?
Wesley Tan is a Doctor of Philosophy candidate from the Department of Psychology at Macquarie University. This research will form the basis for the Doctor of Philosophy degree at Macquarie University under the Supervision of Dr Doris McIlwain, Senior Lecturer, Department of Psychology.

What is the study about?
This project aims to explore more deeply the experiences of people who have been caught up as victims of human trafficking as well as the experiences of those who help them through this process. We would like to develop a theory so that when those who have been victimized find a therapist, that therapist really knows what they have been through. Up till now, there hasn't been a specific theory regarding treatment of trauma that occurred due to trafficking. We recognize the severity and complexity of the trauma experienced by victims of trafficking and so a theory that really captures their experiences needs to be created.

Research Questions: We would like to address with you, the question that is relevant to your experiences:
1) For Carers: How have you, as service providers and case-workers been impacted by the experience of working with clients who are survivors of trafficking?
2) For Survivors: How have you been impacted by your experiences of human trafficking?

What does the study involve?

- One 45-60 minute semi-structured interview, in that the researcher will have a few starter questions, but you are free to speak about what you think is most important This will occur at a location you are comfortable with and will be audio recorded.
- You will be invited to review the transcript of your interview.
- You will then be given the opportunity to comment on main issues that have been raised a result of all the interviews.

How much time will the study take?

Initially, you will be involved in a 45-60 minute interview. You will subsequently be given the opportunity for to browse through the transcript of their interview at a later date and comment if they wish via email, phone/Skype or in person where possible. If you wish to discuss the research with the interviewer prior to agreeing to participate, that may occur via email, phone/Skype, or in person if possible. If you experience any discomfort during the interview, it may be postponed or rescheduled. You will receive a $50 NTUC Fairprice voucher for your time.

Will the study benefit participants?
If you are a case-worker and service provider, this study will provide you with the opportunity to critically reflect upon your own experiences and/or practices of your workplace. If you are a survivor of trafficking, you may find participation useful in helping you find the words to describe and reflect upon your experiences and develop your sense of agency and confidence. You may gain a sense of meaning from participation in research which may help others in similar circumstances.

Will the study involve any discomfort for participants?
It is possible that you may experience discomfort during the interview. The research is designed so that the interview can be held at a location of you choosing. Any part of the interview can be deleted as the interview unfolds, without you having to give any reason and without any consequence. The interview may be paused, stopped or rescheduled at any point if distress is experienced. You will have an opportunity to review the transcript afterwards to ensure an accurate reflection of your views and required amendments can then be made. Furthermore, you will have an opportunity to comment on the final themes elicited from all the interviews.

If you experience a prolonged period of distress as a result of being interviewed, you should engage more deeply with your current counsellor if you have that support, or you may contact Samaritans of Singapore (1800-221-4444) should you require emotional support or desire to see a professional counsellor.

Will anyone else know the results? How will the results be disseminated?
All aspects of the study, including results, will be confidential and only the researcher and his supervisor will have access to information on the participants. Pseudonyms will be used during the interview itself so that your real names will not be revealed. The research will be disseminated in the form of a thesis on the overall findings of the research, and possible subsequent publications.

Can participants withdraw from the study?
Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are not obliged to be involved and can withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any consequences.

Can participants tell other people about the study?
You can tell other people about the study by providing them with the researcher's contact details. They can contact Wesley Tan (details below) to discuss their participation in the research project and obtain a participant information sheet.

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Email: doris.mcilwain@mq.edu.au
Phone (02) 9850 9430

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and participants will be informed of the outcome.

Consent Form for Participants in Australia

Name of Project: The Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking in Australia and Singapore.

You are invited to participate in a study exploring the impact of human trafficking on those who have survived such experiences.

This study is being conducted by Wesley Tan to fulfil the requirements of a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Psychology, under the supervision of Dr Doris McIlwain from the Department of Psychology at Macquarie University (phone: 9850 9430; email: Doris.Mcilwain@mq.edu.au).

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to:

1. Participate in an interview (45-60mins):
   This interview will be semi-structured in that the researcher will have a few starter questions, but you are free to speak about what you think is most important, and will occur at a time and place of your choosing. In it you will be asked about your experiences growing up in your country of birth, the circumstances surrounding your trafficking experience, and how that has impacted and continues to impact you.

2. Review a transcript of the interview (20-30mins):
   At a later stage, you will be provided with a copy of a transcript of your interview to review and provide feedback on the themes extracted from it and your overall experience.

For your participation you will receive a $50 Coles group voucher as compensation for your time and travel.

All interviews will be audio-recorded. Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential (except as required by law). All the real names of participants will be replaced by pseudonyms and no specific details that could reveal the identities will be published. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to the full version of the results; published papers and conference presentations will only refer to excerpts of what participants said.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary; you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence. Any part of the interview can be deleted as the interview unfolds, without having to give any reason and without any consequence. If

you are distressed at any point during the interview, it can be paused, stopped or rescheduled. Not participating will not impact the quality of care or support you currently receive.

Signature of Participant: _____

Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____

Name of Researcher: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone [02] 9850 7854, fax [02] 9850 8799, email: ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Consent Form for Participants in Singapore

Name of Project: The Experiences of Survivors of Human Trafficking in Australia and Singapore.

You are invited to participate in a study exploring the impact of human trafficking on those who have survived such experiences.

This study is being conducted by Wesley Tan to fulfil the requirements of a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Psychology, under the supervision of Dr Doris McIlwain from the Department of Psychology at Macquarie University (phone: 9850 9430; email: Doris.Mcilwain@mq.edu.au).

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to:

3. Participate in an interview (45-60mins):
   This interview will be semi-structured in that the researcher will have a few starter questions, but you are free to speak about what you think is most important, and will occur at a time and place of your choosing. In it you will be asked about your experiences growing up in your country of birth, the circumstances surrounding your trafficking experience, and how that has impacted and continues to impact you.

4. Review a transcript of the interview (20-30mins):
   At a later stage, you will be provided with a copy of a transcript of your interview to review and provide feedback on the themes extracted from it and your overall experience.

For your participation you will receive a $50 NTUC Fairprice voucher as compensation for your time and travel.

All interviews will be audio-recorded. Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential (except as required by law). All the real names of participants will be replaced by pseudonyms and no specific details that could reveal the identities will be published. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to the full version of the results; published papers and conference presentations will only refer to excerpts of what participants said.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary; you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence. Any part of the interview can be deleted as the interview unfolds, without having to give any reason and without any consequence. If

you are distressed at any point during the interview, it can be paused, stopped or rescheduled. Not participating will not impact the quality of care or support you currently receive.

Signature of Participant: _____

Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____

Name of Researcher: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone [02] 9850 7854, fax [02] 9850 8799, email: ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you experience a prolonged period of distress as a result of being interviewed, you should engage more deeply with your current counsellor if you have that support, or you may contact Samaritans of Singapore (1800-221-4444) should you require emotional support or desire to see a professional counsellor.

Ethics Approval

MACQUARIE University

WESLEY TAN <wesley.tan@students.mq.edu.au>

Approved- Ethics application- McIlwain (Ref No: 5201200612)

Fri, Oct 26, 2012 at 9:50 AM

Ethics Secretariat <ethics.secretariat@mq.edu.au> To: Dr Doris McIlwain <doris.mcilwain@mq.edu.au> Cc: Mr Wesley Le Wei Tan <wesley.tan@students.mq.edu.au>

Dear Dr McIlwain

Re: "The experiences of victims of human trafficking and service providers for those victims in Australia and South-East Asia" (Ethics Ref: 5201200612)

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Human Research Ethics Committee and you may now commence your research.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/e72.pdf.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Dr Doris McIlwain

Mr Wesley Le Wei Tan

NB. STUDENTS: IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP A COPY OF THIS APPROVAL EMAIL TO SUBMIT WITH YOUR THESIS.

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 26 October 2013

Progress Report 2 Due: 26 October 2014

Progress Report 3 Due: 26 October 2015

Progress Report 4 Due: 26 October 2016

Final Report Due: 26 October 2017

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/ human_research_ethics/forms

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/ human_research_ethics/forms

5. Please notify the Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/ human_research_ethics/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of final ethics approval.

Yours sincerely

Dr Karolyn White

Director of Research Ethics Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix B: General Interview Guide

Interview Number:

- Consent Form
- Information Sheet
- Email Address for Transcript
- Give them voucher and sign form
- Non-verbal signals of distress
- Pseudonyms if required
- Notes
- Acknowledge nerves if nervous

1. Demographics – age, ethnicity, gender, spirituality, educational level and work experience

2. Pre-trafficking conditions – what it was like growing up, important relationships, ideals and dreams, how did they come to be trafficked?

3. Trafficking experience – what conditions did they go through, how did they cope, how did they feel about themselves during this experience, how do they feel about the experience now?

4. Exit – how did they exit the trafficking situation?

5. How do they believe it has affected them – physically, psychologically, relationally?

6. How do they make sense of their experience? Do they believe that it has meaning?

7. Is there anything they'd like to add about what they've been through – what do they wish I would have asked them about or what do they also want to tell me?

8. How did you feel during the interview – do you feel like it was helpful to you?