A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE REPRESENTATIONS OF SEX TRAFFICKING VICTIMS IN MALAYSIA

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2019

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THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

Trafficking of women for sexual purposes has been a major cause of concern in recent years. It is a global phenomenon that has spread extensively in both developing and developed countries. In Malaysia, sex-trafficking victims have been subjected to severe marginalisation in society unlike other social groups such as migrants and refugees. Within the legislation, victims are criminalised and treated as illegal immigrants, and therefore charged with immigration offences. More critically, the conflation between the terms "victims of sex trafficking" and "prostitutes" has led to the use of the terms interchangeably by popular mainstream newspapers in Malaysia. The disparity that exists between both groups can negatively impact on victims' lives, giving rise to a growing body of literature that criticises the discourse of trafficking. The way sex-trafficking victims are represented differently could further lead to the denial of sex trafficking as a legitimate concern in Malaysia. In order for sex trafficking to be viewed as an important and urgent human rights issue, it is necessary to highlight the ways in which victims are represented and explain why certain representations can be damaging for such a social group. In this study, the representation of sex-trafficking victims is explored from two perspectives: the media and interview narratives. The Discourse-historical Approach (DHA) and Sociosemantic Network of Social Actors were primarily used as frameworks to examine the media representation of sex-trafficking victims. A total of 120 newspaper articles between 2010 and 2016 were selected for analysis. Victims' personal experiences and self-representations were also examined through a Thematic Narrative Approach based on interview data of 15 women from five Southeast Asian countries. The interviews were conducted both at a national shelter home for

rescued sex workers and in the field. Analysis of media texts revealed foreign women in sex work being commonly depicted as offenders in terms of legislation, rather than as victims of sex trafficking. Victims' voices remain underrepresented while an extensive amount of space was given to prominent and elite social actors. Analysis of the interview narratives led to the emergence of four main themes that drew attention to victims' vulnerability and lack of power. In particular, the stigma of "whore" attached to sex work had affected the women despite their legitimate victim status. Analysing the voices of women in sex work offers new perspectives about sex-trafficking issues that are affecting millions of women in society and ensures that research is responsive to their needs since it is through these women's voices that "unheard" stories are exposed. Additionally, the knowledge generated from this study could provide insights for newspaper journalists so that they become more sensitive and responsible of the media coverage on sex trafficking as well as promote legislative reform about sex trafficking.

Keywords: sex trafficking, discourse-historical approach, sociosemantic network of social actors, thematic narrative approach.

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ABSTRAK

Kebelakangan ini, pemerdagangan wanita bagi tujuan seksual telah menjadi isu yang sangat membimbangkan. Ia merupakan fenomena global yang telah merebak dengan meluas baik di negara membangun mahupun di negara maju. Di Malaysia, rata-rata mangsa pemerdagangan seks telah mengalami proses keterpinggiran yang parah dalam sesebuah masyarakat berbanding kumpulan sosial yang lain seperti pendatang asing dan pelarian. Dalam perundangan, mangsa-mangsa dianggap sebagai penjenayah dan diperlakukan seperti pendatang asing tanpa izin lalu didakwa atas kesalahan-kesalahan imigresen. Lebih genting, penggabungan makna antara istilah mangsa pemerdagangan seks dengan 'pelacur' telah membawa kepada penggunaannya yang saling disilihgantikan dalam akhbar-akhbar utama yang popular di Malaysia. Ketidaksamaan yang wujud di antara kedua-dua kumpulan tersebut boleh mempengaruhi hidup mangsa secara negatif lantas menyumbang kepada berkembangnya badan pengetahuan yang mengkritik perbincangan tentang pemerdagangan. Ketaksamaan cara mangsa-mangsa pemerdagangan seks digambarkan juga boleh membawa kepada akibat yang statik, yang menyebabkan penafian pemerdagangan seks sebagai satu kebimbangan yang sah di Malaysia. Demi memperlihatkan isu pemerdagangan seks sebagai satu isu hak asasi manusia yang signifikan dan urgen, penekanan perlu diberi terhadap bagaimana mangsa-mangsa direpresentasikan dan juga penjelasan tentang mengapa representasi tertentu sangat penting bagi kumpulan sosial berkenaan. Dalam kajian ini, representasi mangsa pemerdagangan seks diterokai dari dua perspektif: media dan naratif wawancara. Pendekatan wacana kritis *Discourse-historical Approach* (DHA) dan *Sociosemantic Network of Social Actors* digunakan sebagai rangka kerja utama untuk

menyelidik tentang representasi media terhadap mangsa-mangsa pemerdagangan seks. Sejumlah 120 makalah di antara 2010 dan 2016 telah dipilih untuk analisis. Pentingnya, pandangan peribadi mangsa juga diselidik melalui Pendekatan Tematik Naratif yang melibatkan data temu bual dengan 15 wanita daripada lima negara Asia Tenggara. Wawancara tersebut dijalankan di kedua-dua lapangan dan rumah perlindungan kerajaan untuk pekerja seks yang diselamatkan. Keputusan kajian yang diterbitkan daripada analisis teks-teks media menunjukkan wanita warga asing dalam pekerjaan seks kebiasaannya digambarkan sebagai pesalah dari kaca mata perundangan lebih kerap berbanding sebagai mangsa pemerdagangan seks. Suara-suara mangsa tetap kurang "didengari" manakala suara aktor sosial ternama dan elit diberi lebih keutamaan. Dapatan daripada analisis naratif telah membawa kepada kemunculan empat tema utama yang tertumpu pada kelemahan dan kekurangan kuasa mangsa. Terutamanya, stigma 'perempuan jalang' yang dikaitkan dengan pekerjaan seks telah mempengaruhi hidup peribadi wanita-wanita berkenaan walaupun mencapai status mangsa yang sah. Menganalisis suara-suara wanita dalam pekerjaan seks menawarkan perspektif baru tentang isu-isu pemerdagangan seks yang mempengaruhi jutaan wanita dalam masyarakat dan juga memastikan bahawa kajian adalah responsif terhadap keperluan mereka memandangkan melalui suara wanita inilah kisah "tersembunyi" dapat didedahkan. Tambahan, pengetahuan yang terhasil daripada kajian ini berusaha untuk memberi tinjauan bagi para wartawan akhbar agar mereka lebih peka dan bertanggungjawab tentang liputan media ke atas pemerdagangan seks serta mendorong reformasi undang-undang tentang pemerdagangan seks.

Kata Kunci: pemerdagangan seks, *discourse-historical approach, sociosemantic network of social actors,* pendekatan tematik naratif

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATIP	:	Anti-Trafficking in Persons
ATIPSOM	:	Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act
CDA	:	Critical Discourse Analysis
CEDAW	:	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DHA	:	Discourse-Historical Approach
ILO	:	International Labour Organization
IOM	:	International Organization for Migration
MAPO	:	The Council for Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants (Sekretariat Majlis Anti Pemerdagangan Orang dan Penyeludupan Migran)
MCA	:	Malaysian Chinese Association
MIC	:	Malaysian Indian Congress
NGO	:	Non-government Organization
NST	:	New Straits Times
SUHAKAM	:	The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suruhanjaya Hak Asasi Manusia Malaysia)
TVPA	:	Trafficking Victims Protection Act
UMNO	:	United Malays National Organization
UNODC	:	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WGPA	:	Women and Girls Protection Act

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In this research I explore the ways in which sex-trafficking victims are represented in Malaysia by analysing newspaper texts about, and interviews conducted with, sex-trafficking victims. The knowledge generated from this study might offer understanding of the sex-trafficking nature as well as influence legislative policy making about issues relating to sex-trafficking victims. After this brief introductory section, the substantive part of this introductory chapter begins in Section 1.2 with the background that frames the study. This includes the definition of sex trafficking in Section 1.2.1.1 and presentation of the background and research problem in Section 1.2.1.2. The research gap is indicated in Section 1.3. In Section 1.4 the rationale for the research is provided. The definition of victim in the context of the study is provided in Section 1.5. Also included in this chapter are the research objectives (Section 1.6), research questions (Section 1.7), material about the interdisciplinary approach in research (Section 1.8), the prospective significance of the research (Section 1.9), and the anticipated limitations of the research (Section 1.10). This chapter also comprises the terminologies and definitions related to the study (Section 1.11). The final sections of the chapter contain a description of the organisation of all the chapters in the thesis (Section 1.12) and a summary of the whole chapter (Section 1.13).

1.2 Context of the research

This section contains a description of the area under investigation: the trafficking of women for the purposes of sexual exploitation and the discussions that surround their representations in society.

1.2.1 Sex trafficking

A basic understanding about sex trafficking is essential with regard to the present research. This includes the definition of sex trafficking (Section 1.2.1.1) as well as the background and problems (Section 1.2.1.2) related to sex-trafficking victims in Malaysia.

1.2.1.1 Sex trafficking defined

Sex trafficking is perceived to be one of the increasing and most dreadful forms of human rights exploitation, affecting millions of innocent lives around the world. Unfortunately, there is no consistent definition of the term sex trafficking among governments and international organisations. The term sex trafficking, as approved by the United States Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (VTVPA), is defined in simple terms as "the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act". Deshpande and Nour (2013, p. 23) have defined sex trafficking as:

> an umbrella term that may include commercial sex work such as prostitution, but also pornography, exotic dancing, stripping, live sex shows, mail-order brides, military prostitution, and sexual tourism.

Trafficking victims' consent is a central issue that is often contested in terms of whether the victims are aware or unaware of the kind of employment they would be doing in the destination country. Tiefenbrun (2002, p. 206) argued that "consent is not a probative issue in the definition of sex trafficking because one cannot legally consent to slavery, and sex trafficking is clearly a variant of slavery". The UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Article 3) emphasises the irrelevance of trafficked victims' consent (Hoyle, Bosworth, & Dempsey, 2011; refer to Section 3.2.1.1). Usually the consent is given by the women because they are driven by a range of external forces (Piper, 2005) that often limit their

choices (Samarasinghe, 2008) and not because they want to become sex workers. From the beginning, the United Nations has been committed to taking measures that would abolish slavery and protect trafficked victims' human rights. Despite the numerous practices and enforcement efforts taken to combat human trafficking, the act of trading (buying and selling) human beings especially for sexual purposes remains a thriving crime in many parts of the world.

1.2.1.2 Background and research problem

Although the amount of attention given to sex trafficking in the past decades has intensified, and sex trafficking is a major concern for policymakers and governments around the globe, within studies about commercial sex, sex trafficking has largely been ignored (Sanders, 2005; Weitzer, 2000), particularly among the East-Asian women (Jackson, Liu, & Woo, 2008). Fighting sex trafficking is challenging as this transnational crime requires the involvement of many actors at both national and international levels.

Within Malaysia, trafficking of women for sexual exploitation has received increased attention in recent years, inviting debate and opinions from different sources. The widespread international migratory movement into the country has to a certain extent contributed to the rising number of problems related to sex trafficking. Although much has been written and contested about sex trafficking as a social problem, Malaysians understand little about the lives of the many individuals trapped in this covert trade. In Malaysia generally, sex-trafficking victims are subjected to severe marginalisation in society as well as in the media. Unlike other social groups such as migrants and refugees, sex-trafficking victims not only attract little attention from the media, but what little attention they get is often negative in tone. Because public knowledge about this

underground market is fairly limited, victims of sex trafficking are easily stigmatised because women who are exploited for sexual purposes tend to be linked with prostitution (Barry, 1996; Pateman, 1988). As a result, sex-trafficking victims are often generalised and represented in the media as criminals with loose morals, thus minimising or totally ignoring their victimhood. According to Vaidya and Nigam (2010, p. 1), "trafficked women seeking help are locked up in prison for long periods of time because they are viewed solely as illegal aliens, not as victims of slavery or forced prostitution". This is because neither society nor the media make an attempt to differentiate between trafficking of women for sexual purposes and prostitution. Although Leidholdt (2003) maintained that trafficking in women and prostitution are fundamentally interconnected, in reality sex trafficking and prostitution are inherently different. Failure to distinguish between the two has led to the terms being used interchangeably by the Malaysian press including mainstream newspapers. The differences that exist between those two groups can negatively impact on the victims' lives, thus giving rise to the growing body of literature that criticises the discourse of trafficking.

When a woman is technically trafficked and forced into sex work against her will, she immediately loses her agency and becomes a victim, but at the same time she can be misidentified as a prostitute and criminalised for engaging in sex work. This strange discrepancy is blurry (Kempadoo, 2015) because sex trafficking and prostitution can be both identical and different depending on the victims' circumstances and the attitudes of the public. If a person is recognised as a trafficked victim, more resources will be available to help her, but if the victim is regarded as a prostitute, she is criminalised for choosing prostitution without compulsion and is therefore subject to discrimination and arrest. Puidokiene (2012, p. 20) argued that to consider a woman's participation in sex

work as a voluntary act is inappropriate because "these women are victims of many psychological and social circumstances". Likewise, the Human Trafficking Intervention Initiative in New York regards prostitutes as victims of human trafficking rather than as criminals (New York State Unified Court System, 2013, para. 8).

One critical issue that arises from this is that women in sex work lose access to legal justice and are not recognised as trafficked victims or as victims of sexual violence. This may lead to repercussions such as victim blaming in which the women are perceived as immoral and are deprived of their victim identity. In addition, the suffering that sex-trafficking victims experience can be totally negated and it becomes natural to ignore the realities of sex trafficking when victims are misidentified as illegal migrants or criminals. Because Malaysia has not enacted any specific laws about sex trafficking or legislation that recognises trafficked men and women as victims, all cases related to sex trafficking are being referred to the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act (ATIPSOM). This means that there is a tendency for sex-trafficking victims to be regarded as illegal migrants. "Those victims can be unfairly subjected to additional harm, trauma, and even punishment such as arrest, detention, deportation, or prosecution" (U.S. Department of State TIP Report, 2013, para. 8). Arguments are also often made in the literature that sex trafficking is linked to the issue of migration and national security. As a result, governments fail to protect the victims (Andrijasevic, 2010, p. 142; Corrin, 2007, p. 186). Many governments prefer not to regard these women as trafficked victims but as illegal migrants because of their voluntary participation in sex work (Wolters, 2011). Consequently, the women are denied access to equal rights as victims of trafficking.

Within the sphere of Malaysian jurisprudence, it has not yet been determined whether prostitution can be considered a form of sexual oppression and blatant human rights contravention. There is a strong tendency for the victims to be regarded as illegal migrants when they fail to produce their personal documents or when their passport does not have valid endorsement. Because the Malaysian Immigration Act treats this problem more as a cross-border issue, it tends to override the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act with regard to the victims' legal status. According to the 2014 annual human trafficking report, "Authorities not only failed to investigate cases brought to them by NGOs, they also failed to recognise victims or indications of trafficking, and instead treated cases as immigration violations" ("Malaysia Downgraded In US Human Trafficking," 2014, para. 8). Hence, those who are not able to defend their status are criminalised at the very beginning, even before they can be regarded as victims under the Human Trafficking Act. As long as there is no consistency between the two legal bodies, problems related to sex-trafficking victims will remain largely invisible and unresolved. Newspapers play a crucial role in using particular discourses surrounding this social group and therefore determine how they are perceived and interpreted by others as well as reinforcing existing perceptions. According to Bantimaroudis and Kampanellou (2009, p. 175), "the press has had a profound impact on people's perceptions of national consciousness". Therefore, when the media represents sex-trafficking victims in a negative way, that is, associating them with immorality, it may encourage public hostility toward this social group.

In order for sex trafficking to be viewed as an important and urgent human rights issue, it is necessary to highlight the way that victims are represented. This research is intended to shed light of a linguistic nature by examining the way that sex-trafficking

victims are represented in discourse within Malaysia and to explain why certain representations are important for such a social group.

1.3 Research gaps

Although previous researchers have tended to focus on sex-trafficking occurrences in specific regions or even globally (see Hughes, 2005; Kara, 2009; Tiefenbrun, 2002; Weitzer, 2005, 2007), only some of them have investigated the way in which sex-trafficking victims are represented in the media. Within Southeast Asian countries, and specifically in Malaysia, studies about the representation of sex-trafficking victims are not a major concern and therefore resources and documentation about the topic are limited. Most of the research that has been conducted has provided statistical information about a number of aspects related to sex trafficking, ranging from root causes and organised crime to legal frameworks and vulnerability of the victims (Hughes, 2005; Raymond, 2004).

Absent in the literature are representations of sex-trafficking victims in newspapers as well as representations provided by sex-trafficking victims themselves. In particular, researchers such as Gozdziak and Collett (2005) and Lobasz (2009) have pointed out that the voices of those who have been trafficked have not been given attention in human trafficking studies. In order to address these gaps, in this study I incorporated a critical discourse analytic approach to study how sex-trafficking victims are representated in Malaysia from the perspectives of the media and the victims themselves. Analysing newspaper representations of sex-trafficking victims and victims' personal narratives would contribute significantly in obtaining comprehensive knowledge about sex-trafficking victims.

1.4 Rationales for the research

In this study I intend to close the gap in research by explaining why sex-trafficking victims' representation (newspaper and personal interviews) in Malaysia serves to be valuable for the marginalised group and the government as a whole. Several reasons, described in the following subsections (1.4.1–1.4.3), arise for embarking on this research.

1.4.1 The rationale for using newspaper texts

Although existing research about sex trafficking is abundant in Western as well as other Asian jurisdictions, research investigating the representation of sex-trafficking victims in Malaysian newspapers is noticeably absent especially from a linguistic perspective. As language is seen to be one of the most important tools that could change the attitudes of readers about certain issues, analysis of media texts should provide insights into the way in which sex-trafficking victims are represented.

As a platform for the construction of ideology, the media plays an important role in the representation of sex-trafficking victims. Because of this, an in-depth investigation of texts from Malaysian newspapers could reveal the media's hidden political agenda in relation to the victims and the crime. Following amendments to Malaysia's human trafficking legislation (Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act) in 2010, extensive media highlights were given to sex trafficking and for this reason texts from newspapers were selected for analysis in this research. More importantly, the media discourse is analysed since such an investigation could have a significant impact on the way that sex-trafficking victims are perceived and represented by others.

1.4.2 The rationale for interview narratives

Including the voices of women who have lived experience in sex work offers readers "women's personal narratives from new perspectives" (The Personal Narratives Group, 1989, p. 12). Despite the growing body of literature suggesting that much research has been conducted about women in sex work (Doezema, 2000, 2010; Farley, 2004; Kempadoo, 2005, 2015; Vijeyarasa, 2016), studies examining the voices of women in sex work from a narrative approach are lacking. As a result, their voices remain underrepresented particularly the voices of women who have been rescued and are no longer engaged in sex work.

Examining the voices of women who have experienced injustice through analysis of real-life narratives is crucial as it may help them to voice their hidden stories and reflect upon them. It could also help to illuminate the women's emotions, their sense of victimisation and stigma, and representations of themselves. On a more positive note, sharing their stories could help them to change their lives for the better, lessen their social marginalisation, and help them to defend themselves against negative accusations and stigmatisation that have long prevailed in society. In this study, face-to-face interviews were conducted with women who had experienced sexual oppression so that in-depth information (concerns and experience) about their sex work could be obtained directly from them. According to Plummer (1995, pp. 4–5), "sexual stories can be seen as issues to be investigated in their own right". The fact that the victims consented to disclose their personal stories about their victimisation might eventually help other women in the same predicament and at the same time allow broader society to have better knowledge about the victims.

1.4.3 The rationale for interviewing sex trafficking victims

Sex-trafficking victims in general, as a social group, attract little attention in linguistic studies, whereas asylum seekers and refugees occupy more prominent positions. As a result, Chuang (2006, p. 140) stated that this group, mainly consisting of women and adolescent girls, frequently receive less attention compared with other forms of trafficking actions such as "exploitative agricultural work, construction work, domestic servitude or other non-sexual labour including bonded labour". Moreover, when sex-trafficking victims become the object of studies, the main issues discussed are usually concerned with criminal aspects and legal attention, while other important aspects such as group identities and representations are usually missing. As people lacking status within the community, victims of sex trafficking need to be freed from oppression and given equal opportunity to exercise the rights that should be accorded to any other group of people. This can potentially be done through the struggle for recognition. For this, they need to be represented and perceived of in a specific way, or, in other words, they need specific "frameworks of interpretation" around them. The mainstream newspapers play a major role in the formation of these frameworks, because they distribute particular views or discourses about sex-trafficking victims and, therefore, determine how those people are seen and interpreted, not only by others, but also by themselves.

1.5 Defining victim

The recognition of women as victims of sex trafficking could be a primary means in helping to bring positive changes to the women's lives. Within feminist studies, the term "victim" presupposes the submissiveness of women with regard to patriarchal oppression. However, with regard to this research, the term victim generally refers to weak or passive individuals who lack agency and voice in their lives and who are in need of other people's support or power. This definition is also in line with The

Compendium of United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2006, p. 303) which describes victims as:

> persons who, individually or collectively, have suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that are in violation of criminal laws operative within Member States, including those laws proscribing criminal abuse of power.

In the same way, Bayley (1991, p. 53) defined people as crime victims

> … if and only if, 1) they have suffered a loss or some significant decrease in well-being unfairly or undeservedly and in such a manner that they were helpless to prevent the loss; 2) the loss has an identifiable cause; and 3) the legal or moral context of the loss entitles the sufferers of the loss to social concern.

1.5.1 "Victim" in the context of the present study

Within the context of the present research, a woman is considered to be a victim of sex trafficking whether her participation in the sex trade is voluntary or involuntary (forced) regardless of where she comes from and how she entered the trade. The Malaysian Attorney-General's Chambers Prosecution Division chief Tun Abd Majid Tun Hamzah in a press statement ("Not a single case," 2012, para. 12) stated that "foreign women involved in vice are considered victims. Whether their involvement is voluntary or not, it is not an issue" (refer to Section 3.2.1.1). Also, Srikantiah (2007, p. 15) argued that no woman could have consented to sex work and all those working in that industry are in fact victims of sex trafficking. In either case, whether a woman's involvement in prostitution is on a consensual or nonconsensual basis (e.g., force, coercion, trafficked), as long as the element of sexual exploitation occurs and is an infringement of human rights, the woman can be considered to be a victim.

The present study is undertaken with this understanding. It will include not only newspaper excerpts about victims who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation but also excerpts about women in sex work. With regard to narrative analysis, women who have been forced or deceived into sex work will be selected as interview participants. Although both foreign and local groups of victims are subject to exploitation, Malaysian newspapers tend to focus extensively on foreign nationals as a result of those women's overwhelming involvement in sex work. Because of the availability of a large quantity of news articles about foreign women, and to avoid any inconsistencies in data analysis, in this study I will consider only foreign women.

1.5.2 Victim labelling

Although sex trafficking and prostitution are perceived as being the same, given that sex trafficking "occurs within the commercial sex market" (Barrett, 2013, p. 4), labelling the women as prostitutes can imply that those involved in the sex trade belong to an agency that deals with human trafficking and criminal activity rather than that the women choose to be involved in prostitution for survival purposes. The term prostitution as a body or institution, according to Hoyle, Bosworth, and Dempsey (2011) is a sinful crime, but to call a woman in prostitution evil is misleading because her involvement is not by choice; it reflects a decision made by those who have extremely limited options in their lives. Despite this, the public seem to have a fixed negative image about women who have been trafficked into prostitution and those women are criminalised for their sexual offences. According to the manual for journalists compiled by the Minnesota Coalition against Sexual Assault (2013, p. 15), the term "prostituted [girl, boy, woman, man, person] … is a more accurate term, as most adults and all children in prostitution are actually victims of someone else's crime".

The mistaken belief that prostitution is a victimless crime and that women involved in this clandestine work are morally reprehensible has deep-rooted negative connotations in society. According to Woworuntu ("Shandra Woworuntu: My life as a sex-trafficking victim," 2016, para. 75), who narrated her sex-trafficking ordeal to the BBC news, "the problem is that people see trafficked women as prostitutes, and they see prostitutes not as victims, but criminals. And in cities, people turn a blind eye to all sorts of criminality". Although it is not easy to refer to sex trafficking beyond the context of prostitution, depending on the context of the discourse, I will refer to the participants in this study as sex-trafficking victims, victims of sexual exploitation, or women in sex work to underscore these people as having been subjugated and victimised sexually.

1.6 Research objectives

In line with the research problem, in the present study I aim to achieve the following specific objectives:

- To investigate the ways in which social actors, particularly sex-trafficking victims, are represented in newspaper texts.

- To examine sex-trafficking victims' lived experiences and self-representations within the small stories of their narratives.

1.7 Research questions

The following research questions are designed to provide a comprehensive basis for research about sex-trafficking victims in Malaysia. The questions are divided into two main areas of investigation. The first research question (RQ1) is related to the victims' representation within newspaper texts; the second research question (RQ2) is related to victims' personal stories examined through thematic narrative analysis.

RQ1: (a) How are sex-trafficking victims as social actors represented in newspaper texts?

(b) What discursive strategies are used to construct the representation of sex-trafficking victims in newspaper texts?

RQ2: (a) What themes emerge from the victims' narratives about their lived experiences and self-representations?

(b) How do the small stories within victims' narratives reflect their lived experiences and self-representations?

1.8 The interdisciplinary approach in this research

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is classically an inter- or multi-disciplinary approach used in the study of discourse. There is no single theory or methodology associated with CDA (van Dijk, 1993). I have used CDA in an eclectic way that encompasses different levels and units of analysis, and in some circumstances I have linked the analytical tools due to their complementary nature (refer to Section 5.2 for more details).

Considering CDA as being multimodal and the numerous analytical frameworks embraced by a variety of CDA approaches, in this research I will first draw on the analytical categories of Wodak's discourse-historical approach (DHA; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Wodak, 2001) and van Leeuwen's sociosemantic network (van Leeuwen 1996, 2008) to analyse the representation of sex-trafficking victims in the Malaysian mainstream newspapers. Because the concept of *fields of action* within DHA can be used to study a particular discourse from various perspectives, I will examine the victims' narrative data obtained through interviews in addition to the analysis of media texts. For this, Riessman's thematic narrative approach (Riessman, 2008) is adopted as being well suited for exploring victims' experiences and the representations of themselves recounted through what has been referred to as small stories (Bamberg &

Georgakopoulou, 2008; De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012). The combination of different analytical tools, namely DHA, socio-semantic network, and thematic narrative analysis should be useful for exhibiting theoretical variety and the interconnectivity that exists between the various approaches. Although in this study I will examine only the written and spoken discourses about sex trafficking, I hope that the findings will provide a comprehensive account in terms of the broader social context that will be useful in the implementation of major policies in the country.

1.9   Research significance

This research could contribute to and inform future studies about the media and legislation with regard to sex trafficking. Both the media and legislation have important roles to play within society, and both can therefore have a significant impact on the way sex-trafficking victims are represented.

1.9.1   The newspaper media

All policy makers at international and national levels under the principles of human rights legislation should ensure that their countries' human trafficking laws are designed in a way that the rights of sex-trafficking victims are protected. As an active agent that represents the government's voice, the media keeps the public informed about sex-trafficking issues and the government's actions in relation to those issues. Nonetheless, it is important to understand how the powerful discourse generated by newspapers presents sex-trafficking victims, whether in a justified manner or otherwise, so that the public is not misinformed of these victims. van Dijk (1995, p. 10) contended that the media is so powerful that it could manipulate readers' minds in an extremely subtle way and that the media becomes more effective in the absence of other sources of

information. Under such circumstances, newspaper readers obtain information from only one source, the media, which they tend to accept as the truth.

By examining the way media constructs sex-trafficking victims in its discourse, in this study I intend to offer readers the side of the victims' story that has been largely excluded in the discourse. Also, examining the media's representation of sex-trafficking victims is crucial as these representations can influence both societal opinions and legislation associated with this issue. Given that texts are the product of ideological standpoints, the examination of newspaper text should reveal prejudices (if any) that stand in the way of fighting sex trafficking in Malaysia. This is the knowledge that would serve to inform the media and policy makers about their roles in shaping public perception about sex-trafficking victims. As a researcher, I believe it is necessary to analyse the representation of sex-trafficking victims in Malaysian newspapers because their representations may not perfectly mirror what the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act regards as a victim. If these representations are inaccurate, the community might be deceived about the nature of sex trafficking and therefore less sympathetic in relation to policies that support these victims. It is also important to examine the newspaper texts because those texts function as a powerful public domain for shaping public debate about sex trafficking.

1.9.2 Legislative reform

I hope that this research will contribute to a growing body of literature about sex trafficking in the Malaysian context with regard to legislation because this is a subject that has been underresearched. Although there have been considerable studies about sex trafficking in Western perspectives, sex trafficking is still seen as a taboo topic within Asian countries. So far, there has been very limited research in Malaysia that explicitly

addresses the issue of sex trafficking from a critical perspective. This could lead to the assumption that sex trafficking can be associated strongly with prostitution and illegal migration. Therefore, in order to develop a "theoretically comprehensive understanding of human trafficking for sexual exploitation" (Jang, Choo, & Choi, 2009, p. 27) from a legislative aspect, it is important to investigate the victims' representations in Malaysia.

With the politicisation of sex trafficking, government organisations are inclined to see sex trafficking within the structure of security concerns. In doing so, their objective is to find the means to prevent and control sex trafficking. This perspective tends to concentrate on the statistical data of sex-trafficking cases in the country and the measures taken by the government to curb the problem. The present study is intended to detach itself from that perspective, focusing completely on the representations of sex-trafficking victims in Malaysia from a linguistic standpoint. More specifically, this study is oriented toward creating awareness among media practitioners and policymakers about inequality issues and how certain ideas are legitimised and constituted via the linguistic choices made in the selected texts. With this understanding, it is hoped that the media and legislation will be more sensitive and able to provide much-needed reforms in terms of policy development and allocation of resources. Although the findings of this study may contribute to the Malaysian sex-trafficking resources, the findings could also be useful for those who deal with sex trafficking at a global level.

1.10   Anticipated research limitations

There were several anticipated limitations related to the proposed study. However, these limitations should perhaps not be seen as weaknesses but rather as indicating room for improvement for future studies about sex trafficking. Within this section I describe the

limitations that I anticipated in collecting the data in the knowledge that additional constraints might emerge as the research progressed.

Because the newspaper data were collected within a specific time frame (2010 to mid 2016) and from only two English-language newspapers, and because victim perspectives were obtained from only a small number of women, this research cannot be claimed to provide a comprehensive analysis of media reports circulated in the country, nor can the results be generalised as a representation of all sex-trafficking victims. Inconsistency in the use of terminologies in the newspapers may pose difficulties in identifying articles related to sex trafficking. This problem is compounded because, in many instances, sex trafficking is associated with human trafficking, prostitution, and illegal migration—thus making it difficult to select newspaper articles related primarily or solely to sex-trafficking victims. Despite the definition provided by the Palermo Protocol, today many countries around the globe, including Malaysia, are still uncertain about the term and the scope of sex trafficking. Data about sex trafficking are often mixed with other, related, criminal activities.

Another major anticipated limitation in data collection was the identification of potential participants for my interviews with victims of sex trafficking. Although men and children are at high risk of sexual exploitation, the present study will be limited predominantly to examining women as victims of sex trafficking. Because of the sensitive nature of the study and the women's precarious circumstances, many of the sex-trafficking victims may not be willing to participate in interviews and, even after giving their consent, I could not be certain whether all the information they provided would be truthful. Hence, lack of support and cooperation from the participants could hinder the data collection process.

1.11 Terminology and definitions

In earlier sections of this chapter I introduced the components that provide an overview of the research. Before moving ahead to the approaches that will be discussed in greater detail in subsequent chapters, a number of definitions and concepts are explained at this point. Table 1.1 contains a list of the important terminologies and their meanings with reference to the present study. The terms need to be defined so that there is a common understanding among all readers about the words and concepts used in this thesis.

Table 1.1: Terminologies and definitions employed in the research

Terminologies	Definitions
Agency	The ability of individuals to function independently without the help of others and making choices on their own (Milne, 2013, p. 35). In this study, the trafficked victims gain agency when they are able to make decisions and they lose agency when they are under the control of another person.
Discourse	Discourse refers to a mode of social action governed by social norms and values and is highly manipulated by influential organisations as well as historical processes (Fairclough, 1989; Wodak, 1995). Within the study, discourse has the capacity or power to decide who is a victim and who is not a victim.
Representation	Production of meaning through language and exchanged between members of a culture (Hall, 1997, p. 15). The representations in this study, refer to the newspapers' portrayal of the sex-trafficking victims and the women's representations about sex trafficking and of themselves.
Sex work	"A wide range of activities relating to the exchange of money (or its equivalent) for the provision of a sexual service" (Balfour & Allen, 2014, p. 3). In the context of this study, the women are considered sex workers when their work involves explicit sexual behaviour.
Small story	"Stories that we tell in everyday settings, … often not particularly interesting or tellable" (Bamberg, 2006a, p. 63). In this study, the stories narrated by the women in the interviews are used to reflect their experiences and self-representations.

1.12   Organisation of chapters

In this section I present a summary of each chapter of this thesis. It comprises the eight chapters presented in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Thesis chapters

Chapter	Title
1	Introduction
2	Literature Review
3	Human Trafficking Legislation
4	Theoretical Background to the Analyses
5	Methodological Background
6	Analysis of Newspaper Texts
7	Analysis of Interview Narratives
8	Overview and Conclusion

In Chapter 1, the substantial thrust of the research begins in Section 1.2 with a brief review of the background to the study. The next section explains the research problem (Section 1.2.1.2). Following this, in Section 1.3, I discuss the research gap that exists in this research. Next, the rationale of research is presented in Section 1.4 and the definition of victim is provided in Section 1.5. The research objectives are explained in Section 1.6 followed by the research questions in Section 1.7. Next, the interdisciplinary approach employed in the research is presented in Section 1.8. The two areas (media and policy formation) where the research is significant are presented in Section 1.9. This study does not offer a comprehensive coverage of media analysis and therefore it is bound by certain limitations, anticipated in Section 1.10. Terminologies and definitions related to the study are also provided in this chapter (Section 1.11). Following that is a

description of all chapters in this thesis—in this current section (Section 1.12). This chapter ends at Section 1.13 with a summary.

In Chapter 2, I review the studies related to sex trafficking. This begins with the context of sex trafficking in Malaysia in Section 2.2. I discuss the literature about sex trafficking within the newspaper discourse in Section 2.3 and narratives in Section 2.4. In Section 2.5, I present the literature about previous studies conducted at the global and local contexts. The chapter ends with a summary in Section 2.6.

Chapter 3 contains an introduction concerning the ambiguity about definitions related to human trafficking, followed by a description of the international legal framework on human trafficking in Section 3.2. In the next section (Section 3.3), I explain the Malaysian government's response to human trafficking. Subsequently, in Section 3.4, I discuss the UN Trafficking in Persons Report on Malaysia. Within this chapter, I also report on human trafficking legislation in Malaysia; the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, the Anti-Trafficking of Humans and Smuggling of Migrants Act, and the Immigration Act in Section 3.5. Other related Acts (Penal Code Act 574 and Women and Girls Protection 1973 Act 106) are explained in Section 3.6. The chapter ends with a discussion (Section 3.7) and summary (Section 3.8).

Chapter 4 is concerned with the overall research design employed in the study (Section 4.2) followed by main concepts of CDA in Section 4.3. In the next three sections, I describe the three approaches used in this research. The first two approaches, the DHA (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Wodak 2001) and sociosemantic network for analysing social actors (van Leeuwen, 1996, 2008) are presented in Sections 4.4 and 4.5, respectively. Following these two approaches, the third approach, thematic

narrative analysis (Riessman, 1993) is described in Section 4.6. Chapter 4 ends with a summary in Section 4.7.

Chapter 5 contains a consideration of triangulation in research (Section 5.2). The methodology framework, data types, data collection methods, and methods of data analysis are described in Section 5.3. More specifically, information is provided about the area where the study was conducted, the research participants, the study design, and the instruments used in data collection. The data analysis method for both newspaper texts and interview narratives are clearly explained in Sections 5.4 and 5.5, respectively. The chapter ends in Section 5.6 with a summary.

Chapters 6 and 7 contain the findings, discussions, and summaries related to the newspaper texts and interview narratives, respectively. In Chapter 6, I examine the newspaper data in terms of the DHA's three types of discursive strategies (referential, predication, and argumentative) and van Leeuwen's categories of social actors. In Chapter 7, the interview narratives are examined thematically. There I explore how women in sex work interpret their sex work experiences and self-representations through the narration of their small stories (refer to Section 1.11 for a definition of small stories).

Finally, in Chapter 8, I summarise and conclude the main findings from Chapters 6 and 7. In Chapter 8, I also discuss the implications arising from the research and offer recommendations for further research. References and appendices are provided at the end of the thesis.

1.13 Summary

This chapter has laid the groundwork for the present study in that it contains important subsections with specific purposes. The introductory section in Section 1.2 includes the context of the research. Within this section, the background of the study and research problem is also presented (Section 1.2.1.2). In Section 1.3, the research gaps are identified. The rationale for the study is explained in Section 1.4. Next, Section 1.5 contains the definition of victim with reference to the study. Section 1.6 includes research objectives, while the research questions and the analytical tools are discussed in Sections 1.7 and 1.8, respectively. Section 1.9 is concerned with the significance of the research. The anticipated limitations of the research are described in Section 1.10. Section 1.11 contains a list of the key definitions of terminologies related to the research. The penultimate section, organisation of chapters, is presented in Section 1.12. In general, this chapter has established the context for the rest of the thesis.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature within the domain of human trafficking is interdisciplinary and complex. In this chapter I review the relevant literature, identify the gaps in existing studies, and indicate the need for new research. The chapter is separated into three main segments after this introductory paragraph. The first substantial part of the chapter, Section 2.2, focuses on the background of sex trafficking in Malaysia. In the next two sections, I explore the literature about sex trafficking within the two main discourses examined in this study: newspaper texts (Section 2.3) and narratives (Section 2.4). Following this, in Section 2.5, I summarise the existing studies related to the research under investigation. This comprises subsections that evaluate studies conducted at the global level (Section 2.5.1) and local level (Section 2.5.2) as well as a section that points out the current gaps in the literature (Section 2.5.3). The chapter ends with a summary in Section 2.6.

2.2 The context of sex trafficking in Malaysia

The trafficking of human beings is the world's third largest organised crime (U.S. Department of State TIP Report, 2013) and it is of great concern in Malaysia due to its complex nature. This is illustrated by the following account:

> A young woman travels to a new country after she is promised a lucrative job. Upon reaching her destination, however, she finds herself forced into prostitution. She begs not to sell her body, but she is verbally abused, beaten and kicked. When that does not break her, she is told that gangsters would be sent to kill her family. She is then locked up until she 'comes to her senses' and does as she is told. Alone in a strange place, her only hope is for the authorities to bust the racket and rescue her. That was what happened to Lakhsmi (not her real name), 33, who was lured from her home in India with the promise of a maid's job paying RM300-RM500 by her Malaysian-based Indian agent.
>
> (Azizan, 2009, paras. 2–4)

Another story recounted by journalists, Kristof and WuDunn (2010) in their book *Half the Sky*, concerns Srey Rath, a 15-year-old Cambodian who was lured into prostitution. Srey and her friends were promised restaurant work in Thailand to support their families who were experiencing financial distress. The offer seemed attractive to Srey as her family believed that her income would help alleviate their financial problems. Instead of going to Thailand, Srey was deceived and brought into Malaysia illegally where she was sold to a brothel. At the brothel, she was forced into having sex with hordes of men, on average for 15 hours every day. The money that she earned was never given to her, neither was it sent to her family back in Cambodia. She was even threatened that she would be beaten and her family would be killed if she tried to escape from the brothel. Despite the warnings, Srey risked her life and managed to run away. She finally ended up at a local police station where she was raped and resold to the same brothel.

The story of Lakhsmi and Srey Rath is not the only case of a single woman who has experienced sex trafficking. There are thousands of women like Lakhsmi and Srey Rath in Malaysia and across the globe enduring the "white slave trade" (Kempadoo & Doezema, 1998), commonly known as human trafficking. In the following subsections, I discuss growing concern about sex trafficking (Section 2.2.1), the implications of sex trafficking for the country (Section 2.2.2), and various routes into sexual exploitation (Section 2.2.3).

2.2.1 Sex trafficking: A growing concern

The sex industry, especially in Southeast Asia, "remains a hugely profitable and deeply entrenched enterprise" (Kuo, 2000, p. 42) and is mostly run as "disorganized crime: individuals or small groups linked on an ad hoc basis". The magnitude of human trafficking is enormous, with a reported 2.44 million people trafficked and exploited for

various reasons ranging from forced prostitution and domestic work to removal of organs (Andrees, 2008, p. 7). Sex trafficking, as described by Siddharth Kara (Kara, 2009, p. 66), "is one of the ugliest contemporary actualizations of global capitalism". A recent report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) indicated that 21 million people are trapped in modern day slavery, with 22% (4.5 million) being exploited sexually throughout the world (International Labour Organization, 2014).

Sex trafficking has evolved greatly due to the huge supply and demand for people in the sex market, especially women and children, who are coerced and marginalised into sexual slavery and oppression. The misconception that sex trafficking originates in poverty-stricken and underdeveloped regions of the world is no longer relevant. What was previously believed to be a crime that occurred "somewhere" is at present deeply affecting urbanised nations. Countries with a huge sex trade generally create a high demand for trafficked women, while other countries become the source of human supply for the traffickers. Usually, countries with poor economies are the targets of traffickers as these countries offer easy employment for them (Rahman, 2011; Yen, 2008). Because of this, women from poverty-stricken countries leave their homes to seek better opportunities for work as domestic helpers, factory workers, masseuses, and models. Trafficking syndicates exploit this situation and deceive the women by promising them high-paying jobs abroad, but once they reach their destination, they are forced into jobs, often against their will, that have elements of sexual exploitation (Michael, 2013; Rahman, 2011). Sex trafficking also takes place in countries "with a low regard for women, few educational and economic opportunities for women, insufficient public awareness about the crime of trafficking, and inadequate laws to prosecute traffickers" (Vaidya & Nigam, 2010, p. 1). Some studies have pointed out that

people from educated families have also fallen prey to sex trafficking, thus indicating the complexity of the problem (Corrin, 2005, p. 547).

Among the countries with high sex-trafficking cases in the world, Malaysia has been reported to be a destination and source country for the sex trafficking of women and children. Being a predominantly Muslim country, Malaysia sees the problem as creating negative images of the nation even though most of the women trapped into sex work are from neighbouring countries including Indonesia, China, India, and the Philippines (Nasir, Zamani, Ismail, Yusooff, & Khairuddin, 2010). As a result of the increasing number of sex-trafficking cases over the years, the Malaysian government passed the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act in 2007. However, attempts at enforcement have not been able to eradicate sex trafficking within the country. As a mechanism to address this issue, the country's media, particularly major broadsheets, have joined forces with the government in keeping the public posted about transnational organised crime to create societal awareness about its seriousness as well as the need for action. Despite numerous counter-trafficking strategies taken to mitigate what has become a growing illegal business, trafficking of humans has continued to flourish over the years as perpetrators are highly motivated by the revenue gained from trafficking people.

Furthermore, with the new policy that allows Indian and Chinese nationals to enter the country with multiple-entry visas (MVEs) and covert syndicates that transport trafficked people legitimately using social visit passes and student visas, it is more challenging for the authorities to identify the offenders and the victims of human trafficking (Council for ATIP and Anti-smuggling of Migrants, n.d.). Trafficking agents operating under the pretext of legal employment agencies, and problems at the border, also hamper monitoring of some areas that are more porous. Moreover, it has been

reported that the Malaysian government's use of mass media has not been successful in educating the public on the dangers of human trafficking (Saad & Salman, 2014).

2.2.2 Implications for the country

The human trafficking phenomenon, especially for the purpose of sexual exploitation as noted by a number of scholars (Bindel, 2006; O'Connor & Healy, 2006; Raymond, 2004), is regarded as a part of the international prostitution trade. It is therefore not only perceived as a problem that should be addressed but also viewed as a social issue that has infused diverse social circles in a number of countries. The sex industry, all through history, and mainly involving women, has occupied a deviant position in societies, and the women generally face exclusion from "mainstream society, their lowly and marginal position analogous to that of a low caste or minority ethnic group" (Bindman, 1997, p. 1). The women's involvement in sex work or prostitution is conventionally deemed to be a social evil and is often regarded as a "symbol of sinfulness" (Puidokiene, 2012, p. 26). This social exclusion (Balfour & Allen, 2014) leaves the women vulnerable to marginalisation, thus preventing them from seeking legal redress for discrimination, one of the indispensable aspects of human rights. Their susceptibility to human rights abuse is far greater than that of others caused by the stigma and criminal allegations linked to sex work. This is problematic because many innocent women who are victims of sex trafficking are being penalised and exploited for committing an offence against their will—more so when they are categorised as criminals or illegal migrants.

Understanding the nature of human trafficking, specifically sex trafficking in Malaysia, is important. Human trafficking encourages the existence of structured illegal groups and also creates public alarm within the recipient nations. Being a remarkable region for its economic growth in Southeast Asia, (apart from during the Asian

economic crisis of 1997–1998), Malaysia has emerged as one of the favourite targets among human traffickers (Othman, 2006). The country's long border at sea and the fact that it shares borders with Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines make the country vulnerable with regard to the transactions of human trafficking. Furthermore, Ramayal (2013) has pointed out that apart from geographical variables, the country's economic growth encourages transnational organised criminals to choose Malaysia as their preferred destination for conducting human trafficking and smuggling businesses. The flooding of sex workers from neighbouring countries as a result of the increasing demand for sex services has jeopardised Malaysia's reputation despite the government's efforts to fight prostitution ("Prostitution in Malaysia", 2014).

The extent of sex trafficking in Malaysia is difficult to determine because of the clandestine nature of the crime, the group being transient, and victims' reluctance to come forward to the law enforcement agencies (Cusick, Kinnell, Brooks-Gordon, & Campbell, 2009; Pennington, Ball, Hampton, & Soulakova, 2009). As a result, victims of sex trafficking are a hidden population in Malaysia and it is difficult to determine the exact number of people who have been brought into, or taken from, the country illegally. This is partly because there are no accurate records relating to the trafficking of humans (Laczko & Gramegna, 2003). Often traffickers get access to counterfeited documents or they bribe officials at the border, and therefore national or government records are not available (Martin, 2013, p. 61). Determining the number of foreign women involved in prostitution is also problematic because some numbers are related to the frequency of police raids (Nagaraj & Yahya, 1998, p. 67). Moreover, it is difficult to obtain complete details of the victims since the statistics are mostly based on secondary resources that may not be accurate.

Regardless of the complexity in collecting and recording data, *The Malay Mail* reported that between 2008 and 2016, victims of sex trafficking aged between 16 and 40 "represented 3,321 of the 4,094 people" housed at shelter homes specifically catering for human trafficking victims (Edward, 2016, para. 2). Although the scale of sex trafficking in Malaysia is low compared with its neighbouring countries, the impact of sex trafficking is harrowing. It threatens the vulnerable groups' wellbeing and erodes the country's security and economy. Various types of laws and policies associated with the crime have been developed at different levels, but sex-trafficking victims in Malaysia have not been treated as victims of crime but rather as criminals. As stated by Száraz (2012, p. 5), in many countries, "neither the necessary laws are not in place nor they are not properly enforced [sic] – traffickers are not punished, while victims are treated as criminals".

2.2.3   Routes into sexual exploitation

The problems related to sexual exploitation of trafficked women continue to be one of the most complex issues within Malaysia. The majority of trafficked people are non-national women from South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Asia-Pacific region (Ramayal, 2013) with Indonesian, Chinese, Sri Lankan, and Filipino nationals heading the list. Many of these victims arrive in Malaysia voluntarily in search of better employment opportunities as factory workers, construction workers, agricultural workers, or domestic servants. However, traffickers later on dupe the victims into owing money (debt bondage) or the women are subjected to involuntary slavery by unscrupulous agents. Many of the women are confined in warehouses or brothels. Also, trafficking victims comprising women and children are exploited to provide sexual services at "fitness clubs, hairdressing salons, karaoke bars, coffee shops, nightclubs, hotels" (Brown, 2001, p. 21) and "brothels" (Mohd Na'eim Ajis, 2010, p. 483). Some of

the infamous areas in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur, recognised as "red-light hotspots", provide sex services as their core business in places such as "Petaling Street, Jalan Alor, Chow Kit, Jalan Sultan Ismail, Jalan Bukit Bintang, Jalan Hicks, Brickfields and Jalan Imbi" ("Prostitution in Malaysia", 2014, para.3).

Many women from China have fallen prey to traffickers in this way and have been deceived into the Malaysian sex trade. These women are generally nicknamed "China dolls" (Hsia Hsiao-Chuan, 2007, p. 62). According to the former U.S. Ambassador to Malaysia, Christopher LaFleur, China has evolved as a major supplier of women for the sex industry as a result of "a more liberal Malaysian visa policy that reflects growing economic ties and Malaysian government efforts to encourage tourism and university enrolment from Chinese students" (Esplanada, 2011, para. 9). In the global city of Kuala Lumpur, for example, international students have been detained for unauthorised work including sex work (Chin, 2013). Thousands of Vietnamese women from poor rural villages who migrate to Malaysia in search of a brighter future have also faced similar consequences after being tricked into prostitution by unscrupulous labour agencies (Hung, 2012, para. 2). Although a large number of trafficking offenders in Malaysia comprise individual businessmen, many large and well-organised crime groups are also advocators of trafficking (U.S. Department of State, 2012).

Because trafficking of human beings is one of the most lucrative illegal trades, syndicates make their earnings by compelling the victims into prostitution to compensate for the cost incurred in bringing them to Malaysia. Reports provided by nongovernment organisations (NGOs) have indicated an increasing number of Ugandan women, as well as women from Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe, and Macau, have been

deceptively employed to work in Malaysia but apparently compelled to become prostitutes upon arrival in the country (U.S. Department of State, 2013).

In addition to trafficked foreign nationals, many Malaysian women have been deceived and exploited for commercial sexual exploitation within the country and also abroad to countries such as Hong Kong, Singapore, France, and the United Kingdom (U.S. Department of State, 2009). One example of this is the story of six Malaysian Indian women who were deceived and taken to Australia using student visas only to realise subsequently that they had to serve as sex slaves in brothels (Bodkin, 2013). Another way local women are deceived into the sex trade is through men becoming their supposed boyfriends. This approach is commonly used by traffickers to gain the trust of the victim as well as her family. The deceiver usually gives the family a false impression that he loves their daughter and convinces them to agree to their marriage. However, once they are far away from the family, the trafficker forces the girl to commit sexual crimes as a way of proving her loyalty to him, and, if she does not submit, she is physically abused. Despite this, these girls almost always do not attempt to flee because traffickers have somehow convinced them to believe that providing the "boyfriend" with sexual services is obligatory. This, as Marion (2012) has stated, marks the beginning of their expedition into forced prostitution.

The shifting of sex trade from main cities to small cities and suburbs is not uncommon. For example, the nation's tribal group, Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia and the Penan ethnic group from Sarawak state's interiors are trafficked within the country for sexual exploitation. Young girls and women are taken to brothels and massage parlours to draw the attention of affluent locals and tourists. According to the

executive director of Tenaganita Irene Fernandez, Malaysia's leading NGO that traces

trafficking of foreign women across the Asia-Pacific region to Malaysia,

> It is a most heinous crime because tribal girls are duped into believing they
> are getting high-paid office and home jobs, but are forced into prostitution.
> … The government is totally unresponsive … it is total neglect of
> indigenous people. … They give lip-service whenever the issue makes the
> headlines, but after that the indigenous people are left to the mercy of the
> traffickers. (Kuppusamy, 2008, paras. 4–8)

Researchers have also indicated that outside exploiters who are workers and miners

go to the tribal villages to search for young women to be exploited as sex slaves. "It is

their poverty, dislocation and vulnerability" that makes the tribal [women] easily

exploited", according to an unnamed Malaysian researcher with the Penan community

(Kuppusamy, 2008, para. 7).

2.3 Newspaper media discourse

In this section I describe the newspaper media discourse in the Malaysian context. The

first Subsection (2.3.1) provides an introduction to the role of Malaysian media which is

followed by material about ideology in the media (Subsection 2.3.2), the relationship

between media and legislation (Subsection 2.3.3), and representation in media

(Subsection 2.3.4).

2.3.1 The role of the media in Malaysia

For most countries, information concerning national and international issues is often

circulated through media, whether in print or electronic forms. News related to sports,

environmental issues, political disputes, and entertainment events that cannot otherwise

be accessed by the general population can be easily made available through media.

Powerful forms of media such as the newspapers, television, radio, and online blogs

provide important sources from which people can obtain the latest updates and interpret

information based on what they read and hear. Since most people have very restricted access to the events that take place around the world, "the information flowing in interpersonal communication channels is primarily relayed from, and based upon, mass media news coverage" (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 185).

The Malaysian media, according to Pang (2006, p. 72) abides by the model of "development journalism [which is] a system where the media openly practice pro-government policy in aid to nation building" (Taylor & Kent, 1999, p. 138). As claimed by Mohd Azizzudin Mohd Sani (2004, p. 341), freedom of media in Malaysia "has been controlled by the government and media companies are associated with government leaders for the political survivability of the ruling government party and leaders to hold the power". The Malaysian government controls and regulates all information disseminated by the media through its media laws and concentrated media ownership (Wok & Mohamed, 2017, p. 46). Media laws such as the Printing Presses and Publications Act (1948) and Broadcasting Act (1987) restrict any news or political discussions that criticise the government. With the various media laws that limit people's freedom of speech, it is evident that Malaysian newspapers are very much politicised and overshadowed by dominant parties to the extent that it is possible for limited and biased perspectives being made available to the readers. Hence, when only one angle of news is reported, consumers' interpretations are based on what they read, often with them being unaware that the news content has been manipulated and that the truth might not be revealed.

Although the media sources in Malaysia cover only small segments of sex-trafficking occurrences, the role of the media in shaping public opinion and policies is indisputable. Boots and Heide (2006) have argued that "the public draws conclusions from cases

about which they become familiar [and] legislators, similar to their constituents, often formulate policy on what they know about a phenomenon, particularly when it is one that inflames passion" (p. 435). Because the truthfulness of media coverage cannot be assured at all times, the fact that newspaper media reporting is often inclined toward horrendous and sensational crime stories is worth investigating (Ericson, 1995; Jewkes, 2006).

Although the media is seen as being an important channel for providing information that is not easily obtainable, Vendenberg's (2007) reservations are that when human trafficking cases are highlighted extensively in the media, there will be a tendency for increased policies to fight human trafficking which could put the victims' lives at risk. Rather than restricting traffickers' activities, policies that are aggressive might cause trafficked individuals to encounter more problems. For example, in the Malaysian news media there are many news reports about the number of raids conducted by enforcement officials (with reports having headlines such as *Prostitution ring busted*; *Nearly 2,000 trafficked victims rescued*; *22 foreign women arrested for prostitution*) but there is less information concerning actual stories of the victims forced into sexual servitude and the kind of support provided for them. Very often the headlines are sensational in nature: *Sexy 'takeaway' China dolls*; *Women from China pay RM10,000 to work as prostitutes*; *Viets sex workers a big hit*; and *Foreign prostitutes go 'open for business'*. Headlines of this kind not only create a negative impression of the women in sex work but, what is even more noticeable, is that the media places emphasis on the commodification of the victims in a way that ultimately categorises them as criminals. Seldom is news made available that emphasises the traffickers and "clients". Questions could be asked about why the media does not focus on the exploiters. Although it is true that the media

reportage of sex-trafficking stories is based on actual stories, it is certainly the news that is reported based on the voices of those in power.

Given that the media operates as a vehicle to mould public views and potentially social policy, it is essential to understand not only the content of the news, but how that content is shaped by those with vested interests. Chermak's (1994) study about how news-making shapes the dramatisation of crime in the news media reveals that social actors such as police officers, detectives, and government officials play an influential role in manipulating the information presented in news reports. These social actors serve as shapers of news articles in that they have power over the way crime stories are reported in the news (Chermak, 1994). Media reports seldom contain accurate statistics of trafficking crimes in editorials, but more frequently the media reports contain what reporters and informants choose to include in the news to appeal to or inform readers (Chermak, 1994).

Additionally, MacDonald (2003, p. 17) has stated that getting access to actual information is not possible and, even if that kind of information is obtained, the news is often blocked or distorted by individuals who have a strong influence in society in that "they have sole producing rights and can therefore determine what is included or excluded" in the news reporting (Fairclough, 2001, p. 50). Therefore, attempting to scrutinise the openness of media representation is equivalent to a wild goose chase. Furthermore, Johnson-Cartee (2005) pointed out that social actors involved in the production of news have personal goals to reach and journalists are not only responsible for collecting and putting together news but, at the same time, they also advocate for their own ideology while accommodating the needs of others.

2.3.2 Ideology in the media

As ideologies are unconsciously formed and (mainly) unchallenged by the general population, those in positions of power can attempt to mould ideological constructs that can result in desired actions. This is evident in the case of newspapers because journalists often determine and manipulate the content of the news in the way they want it to be or what they believe the readers perceive to be important by emphasising certain areas and giving less attention to others.

Ideology exists in every part of society and is transmitted through the use of language and discourse. In the view of researchers who employ critical discourse analysis (CDA), the language element cannot achieve power by itself but through the deployment that powerful people make of it. This explains why researchers who use CDA are often interested in examining the perspectives of those who suffer, and researchers using CDA carefully examine the language of those in power who are responsible for the existence of inequalities and who have the means and opportunity to improve conditions (Wodak, 2001, p. 10).

Matheson (2005) asserted that the language and terminologies employed within news media encrypt certain schemes of beliefs and ideology that authorise the concerns of the influential groups. Fowler (1991, p. 101) further pointed out that "news is not just a value-free reflection of facts. Anything that is said or written about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position". van Dijk (1996) argued that often the views found in the reporting of news convey ideologies that have a significant function "in the formation and change of public opinion, in setting the political agenda, and influencing social debate, decision making and other forms of social and political action" (p. 2). This relates to newspapers' stance in the establishing and maintaining of

the ideologies. The language employed in the news media serves as a communication device and also as a means of exerting power. Furthermore, the kind of linguistic choices decided upon in discourse do not only communicate its meaning but are also capable of twisting the meaning. In other words, newspapers play a dual role as a news transmitter and as a manipulator—and the latter is more prevalent. Olowe (1993, p. 8) agreed:

> The editor and his reporters on the one hand and their audience constitute an ideological empire. The newspaper subjects all newsworthy events that constantly come up in social life to rigorous linguistic manipulation to make them suit the ideological expectation of the audience.

Media organisations undeniably exert a pervasive force in present-day society by influencing discourse and manipulating a collective mindset. The conventional and contemporary media's alliance with the public and private bureaucracies and within the society often influences the way that news is reported. According to Fishman (1997, p. 210), the importance or newsworthiness of any given event is usually decided "according to a system of beats and bureaus that locates reporters almost exclusively in legitimated institutions of society" and this coalition has crucial discoursal repercussions. For example, crime-related news is often written through the perspectives of the police, and political news is often written through the assemblies by the ministers and a host of other allies and divisions. Additionally, McKay (2006, p. 77) has claimed that the journalists' "attitude of mind" plays a role in "the shape of the final story" and this is expected to happen in the production of news reports.

2.3.3 The relationship between the media and legislation

The media and legislation often share an interactive relationship. In reality, both cannot exist in a vacuum. Both institutions perform important roles in strengthening each other for supporting a democratic system and a well-informed public. This relationship

becomes even more evident when legislation is seen to be the agent of certain constituents' interests. As the mediator between the government and the public, the media gives consent to the government in providing information to the general public as well as setting the public agenda. The media as an agenda setter decides what and how an event is to be transmitted to the public. In other words, the media is instrumental in determining society's agenda by deciding what to include or not to include in its content (Hiebert & Gibbons, 2000). Some news reports are given extensive coverage while others are totally left in darkness (Graber, 1978). The media, then, executes two key functions: first as the public informer, and second as the public agenda setter. Both are very important contributions and, as a representative of the public, the media is capable of making news for better or worse.

Sex trafficking has become one of the most important topics of debate, especially in the political arenas of most countries in the world. The interest in sex trafficking has amplified as a result of its rapidly growing criminal involvement, causing the security of the receiving countries to be seriously threatened. For most countries around the globe, international law on human trafficking has been referred to as the principal guiding framework in fighting the crime. Because of the law's comprehensive guidelines, countries such as Malaysia have decided to adopt most of the framework outlined in international law in their own national legislation and enforcement policies. In Malaysia, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007 is referred to as the country's main legislation in fighting sex trafficking (refer to Chapter 3). This is particularly true for the Malaysian government, where the amendments made to the existing Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 2007 have had an impact on the design of the nation's security policy. According to Peetz (2008), legal texts are a reflection of the government discourse or the discourse of the legislative majority. The written law

establishes ground rules to maintain peace and safety in the country as well as to ensure that human rights are protected. Therefore, in order to make these guiding principles available to the public, the cooperation of the media is required.

As there is a strong link between legislation and media, powerful elites such as politicians, members of parliament, and stakeholders have better access to media than do ordinary people. This is because, as van Dijk (1995) has asserted, the media often refers to these elites to seek their political views and represent them as key news actors. Supporting van Dijk's claim, Wodak (2011) postulated that the media's role is essential in presenting politicians as well as their political parties in such a way that the public perceives these influential elites as "wise" people who represent the nation in the government's top decision making. Likewise, due to the role of media as a major news outlet that connects the public and the government, politicians constantly rely on the media to publish news pertaining to government events and to keep the public informed of their actions. Not only that, politicians are dependent on media to achieve their goals by seeking popularity and gaining public recognition to exercise power (van Dijk, 1993; Wodak, 2011). In other words, political elites use the media as a means of gaining public trust. Without the support of the media, politicians would not be able to influence the public effectively as it is through the media that the public gains knowledge about politics and political leaders (van Dijk, 1993; 2000).

Political leaders rely on the media to inform the public of their actions, while the newspapers depend on leaders to market their product through the information provided by them (van Dijk, 2000). This convenient relationship suggests that politicians and the media complement one another because they share a common link in terms of their ideological stances. Ideological standpoints become even more apparent in relation to

issues such as sex trafficking. Sex trafficking is a global problem that has received extensive international legal attention. In Malaysia, sex trafficking is largely regarded as a national problem and measures have been taken to curb sex trafficking in the country. Therefore, the public needs to be informed about the seriousness of this issue, and this is where the media's role becomes significant. The government uses the media as an avenue to inform the public about sex trafficking within the country as well as the legal aspects that deal with this matter. The newspaper, often now in digital form, is the most accessible information that the public can obtain. According to Happer and Philo (2013), even those who do not have direct access to what is happening around them, the media communicates with the public by providing them with information that increases public reliance on media.

The Malaysian newsprint media is generally restricted by the political parties and their investment alliances. For example *The Star,* a leading English-language newspaper in the nation, is owned by the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), a major political party affiliated with the governing alliance, while the *New Straits Times (NST),* is an investment arm of UMNO (The United Malays National Organisation). Other dailies include Malay newspapers such as *Utusan Melayu* and *Berita Harian,* and the Chinese dailies, *Shin Min Daily News* and *Sin Chew Jit Poh*. The other main political party, Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) has substantial control over its Tamil newspapers, *Malaysian Nanban, Makkal Osai,* and *Tamil Nesan*. *The Star*, like the *New Straits Times,* is dominated by a constituent party of the governing alliance. It consistently promulgates the ruling coalition's agenda and policies to maintain that coalition's supremacy and control (Wang, 2001). Obviously, there exists a strong affiliation between the national newspapers and the political groups in the Malaysian ruling alliance. The newspapers owned by the ruling party acquire control of the media and

therefore have a say in determining the extent and nature of the media content. This situation is not easy for the reporters because they are simply part of the government's propaganda machines. Also, it is not easy for the public to exercise their privileges to information access as well as their human rights to make well-informed decisions.

With regard to the media control in Malaysia, Nain and Kim (2004) and Balraj (2008) have claimed that media practitioners in Malaysia have constraints that do not allow them to have full freedom in news reporting. If their news jeopardises national security, the government may impose stricter law on media companies. In other words, journalistic practice in Malaysia is camouflaged by the constitution as a way of maintaining the government's dominance in the name of nation building and protection. The stringent legislative restrictions that are found in the federal constitution and other laws, for instance the Internal Security Act (ISA), the Official Secrets Act (OSA), the Sedition Act (SA), the Emergency (Public Order and Prevention of Crime) Ordinance, and the Essential (Security Cases) Regulations also impose constraints on journalists' freedom of expression (Karlekar, 2006, pp. 161–162).

Generally, business people and companies in favour of the ruling parties have a degree of control in nearly all main newspapers and politically inclined news reporting, as demonstrated by the editorials being strongly in support of the government (Karlekar, 2006, p. 162). Political figures also use the newspapers as a medium to achieve their targets and draw the readers' attention. As Teittinen (2000, p. 1) stated, "the winner is a party whose language, words, terms and symbolic expressions are dominant once reality and the context have been defined". Therefore, there arises a need to examine the language of the media because the media discourse represents the voices of the political agents whose ideologies are deep-rooted within the texts. This is expected. As van Dijk

(2004, p. 11) pointed out, "it is eminently here that different and opposed groups, power, struggle and interests are at stake. In order to be able to compete, political groups need to be ideologically conscious and organized."

2.3.4 Representation in media

Within this overall section about representation, I introduce the concept of representation in Section 2.3.4.1 and demonstrate how representation functions in media discourse in Section 2.3.4.2. In the following two sections, Section 2.3.4.3 and Section 2.3.4.4, I discuss the CDA approach to media representation and media representations of trafficked victims, respectively. In Section 2.3.4.5, I present the critical discourse analysis research about media and other studies.

2.3.4.1 The concept of representation

Representation is created through the way in which language is used to produce meanings. In other words, to gain understanding of the world around us involves the process of transmitting our knowledge and revolutionising of ideas not only for ourselves but also for other people. According to Hall (1997, p. 1), language functions as a system of representation that comprises "signs and symbols". It is through this channel that communication is made possible. As a result, not surprisingly, it has permitted me to present this thesis so that it could be read and understood by others. Language can be best described as

> the property of neither the sender nor the receiver of meanings. It is the shared cultural 'space' in which the production of meaning through language – that is, representation – takes place. (Hall, 1997, p. 10)

The term representation, as stated by Hall (1997, p. 17) is "the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language. It is the link between concepts

and language which enables us to refer to either the real world of objects, people or events or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events."

Language, an exemplar of representation, on its own is meaningless. However, when the elements of language (words, sounds, gestures, etc.) are collectively constructed, they are capable of representing a concept that can be turned into a code. These elements "are the vehicles or media which carry meaning because they operate as symbols, which stand for or represent the meanings we wish to communicate" (Hall, 1997, p. 5). For Jenkins (1996, pp. 4–5), "meanings are the outcome of agreement or disagreement, always a matter of contention, to some extent shared and always negotiable". It is therefore necessary that representations of individuals are examined, for example, the marginalised sex-trafficking victims because the way they are represented in the media can affect the victims positively or negatively.

> Representations sometimes call our very identities into question. We struggle over them because they matter – and these are contests from which serious consequences can flow. They define what is 'normal', who belongs – and therefore, who is excluded. (Hall, 1997, p. 10)

2.3.4.2 How representation functions in the media

According to Fowler (1991, p. 60), "representation, in the press as in all other kinds of media and discourse, is a constructive practice. Events and ideas are not communicated neutrally, in their natural structure, as it were." Due to certain limitations in a newspaper, for example the editorial structure, the newspaper to some extent is obliged to reflect its content through its writing style. Representations that are made in the newspapers actually indicate the journalists' perspectives of an event or people. In other words, news is the product of how the reporters or editors perceive and understand those objects of representation. Berkowitz (1997) claimed that news reporters know how to attach meanings to selected news actors according to the criteria set by the news

organisation and society, and reporters frame the news in a way that appeals to the readers. That is why the same news that is presented in different newspapers can have different interpretations.

What is reported in the media may not be the same as what may have taken place in actual situation or reality because the degree of attention given to the actors and actions can differ, for example via the "foregrounding" and "backgrounding" factors of recontextualisation (Fairclough, 1992, 1995; van Leeuwen, 2008). News correspondents often claim that their news reporting is unbiased and that the news is written dispassionately and accurately. However, media researchers and informed members of the public have demonstrated, with ample evidence, the existence of misrepresentation in news reporting. One example of this is evident in a study conducted by Fein (2011) in which the U.S. president, Barack Obama, was backgrounded in *The New York Times* relating to a healthcare program in 2010, while the beneficiaries (patients who would gain from the program) were foregrounded or given greater attention. This may not reflect reality because we know that the president could be the key person behind the running of the entire program. Shoemaker and Vos (2009) described this strategy as gatekeeping: having the control to decide what to include and whose voices should be heard in the news. Because newswriters and editors have the power to choose who and what to include in their copy, the media will represent people and situations in its own version for personal benefits. Fowler (1991, p. 4) argued that the ideology and discourse employed in newspapers can actually help to "shape, rather mirror the world". MacKinnon (2003, p. 24) also maintained that the media's depiction of news, and the real lives of people, are totally different. This means that, no matter how realistic news is in the media, it hardly presents the real world.

The media is able to influence and manipulate the perceptions of its readers into accepting ideologies that are not true. "The relationship between media and audiences is conceived as a mechanistic and unsophisticated process, by which the media 'inject' values, ideas and information directly into the passive receiver" (Jewkes, 2006, p. 9). "Every day newspaper headlines scream for our attention with stories about crime designed to shock, frighten, titillate and entertain" (Jewkes, 2006, p. 3). So, readers who are insensitive to media's unstated ideologies will tend to trust and form opinions from the sources that they think are reliable, particularly if they do not have first-hand knowledge of the subject matter (Tan, 2011). Likewise, when newspapers publish stories about women who sell sex, the media constructs women both as criminals in trafficking while members of the opposite gender, the people who purchase sex, are not discussed. Barnett's (2013) work supports this idea. In her study examining coverage of human trafficking in magazines, she observed that the trafficking narratives foregrounded selling of women for sex, not the buying of sex, and therefore constructed women both as villains and victims in trafficking while disregarding the larger systems of gender inequity that make the trafficking of women profitable.

2.3.4.3 The critical discourse analysis approach to media representation

The last few decades have seen the development of CDA as a central research technique throughout the world as a consequence of discourse studies in the European context generated by Wodak, Fairclough, van Dijk, and others (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). CDA has developed the study of language into an inter-disciplinary tool that can be applied within different fields of the humanities and social sciences including linguistics, history, and criminology, as well in the critical study of media texts. This implies that studies involving CDA should not be regarded as employing CDA because it is the only appropriate approach, but that CDA is a methodology that encompasses

various methods in examining the link between the use of language and particular social contexts.

2.3.4.4 Media representations of trafficked victims

One area in which CDA has been employed to a great extent is the media (Bell & Garret, 1998). This is appropriate especially when one examines the link relating to media discourse as well as the different types of social discourses embodied in newsprint media. Furthermore, critical discourse analysts find CDA to be a useful device for investigating the negative and positive representations of social actors in texts. As stated by Bridges and Brunt (1981, p. 35), the media is "precisely representations of the social world, images, descriptions, explanations and frames for understanding how the world is and why it works as it is said and shown to work".

Within CDA, Wodak and Busch (2004, pp. 109–111) stated that the media also functions as the representation of the society in that issues about social struggle and dominance can be studied, especially the language of the media. According to Wodak and Busch (2004, p. 110), "language is often only apparently transparent. Media institutions often purport to be neutral, in that they provide space for public discourse, reflect states of affairs disinterestedly, and give the perceptions and arguments of the newsmakers." Although the media's ultimate aim is to transmit information, its message is at times passed in a subtle way or, put simply, the media can have its own agenda that is hidden from the public's knowledge as it may contain sensitive elements, for example, issues about antisemitism, nationalism, and neo-racism (Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl & Liebhart, 2009), and racism (van Dijk, 2000).

As a sensitive and controversial area, the phenomenon of sex trafficking in Malaysia has come to the attention not only of the public but also of government policymakers and interest groups. The media is often the primary arena where debates about grave issues such as sex trafficking take place and where legitimate discourses at the state and global levels are contested. The Malaysian newsprint media plays a key role in constructing understandings about the representation of sex-trafficking victims. Because the discourse about sex trafficking is something that is not often heard about or is far from the typical daily life experience of an average Malaysian citizen, it is the news media that brings the public and the subject matter together. The press in Malaysia to a large extent is politically reliant, and this is likely to be mirrored in the representations of the powerful and the powerless. According to Farrell and Fahy (2009), anti-trafficking stakeholders use the news media as a platform for conveying information and legitimising certain ways of understanding issues related to sex trafficking. The media also has the power to frame events in ways that emphasise the perception of certain groups as well create public empathy for a social issue (McCarthy, McPhail, & Smith, 1996, p. 479).

In addition, Gulati (2011) stated that the media representation of human trafficking often reflects how policymakers look at this issue and how they propose to combat the problem. Gulati added that the media is able to authorise the viewpoints of policymakers to the mass public while silencing opposing perspectives. The media, therefore, in the interest of dominant actors, selectively decides what to transmit to readers since readers do not have access to "real news" and lack alternative resources to contest the media. This filtering can then manipulate public opinion and subsequently have an effect on the construction of anti-trafficking policies. As emphasised by McCombs and Evatt (1995, p. 31), "when media pays attention to certain aspects,

sacrificing others, and when it suggests certain solutions or answers in place of others as well, this has a major influence on the way people think about these subjects". Readers often tend to take on a passive reading stance and submit to the "undoubted superior knowledge of the writer" (Wallace, 1992, p. 60).

Certainly, the media operates as a powerful agent, capable of mobilising people in pursuing its goals (Rose & Miller, 2013). To comprehend this complex process requires a great deal of understanding. However, readers often fail to do this simply because they lack the professional knowledge to adequately understand the issue. Therefore, it is important to reflect on media representations of sex-trafficking victims because the news media may not truthfully represent the way this group should be understood. Also, "the more an issue gets covered, the more it will be perceived as being important by members of the public" (Wanta, 1997, p. 2). This is especially true for victims of sex trafficking because, when trafficked victims are constantly accorded negative media coverage, over time the public will be convinced and shape their own judgment of the victims for their illegitimate actions. Very seldom the public bypass what is being written in the newspapers in order to obtain actual information about a particular group. Therefore, there is a pressing need for research in this area as studying media representations of sex-trafficking victims is essential as these representations can change the public beliefs of the victims and, to a certain extent, influence legislation (Wahl, 2003).

2.3.4.5 Critical discourse analysis research about media and other studies

Pioneers of CDA have extensively explored the way representations can operate in media discourse and how certain social actors have been portrayed unconstructively. Bell and Garrett (1998, p. 6) and van Dijk (1991, 1993, 2013), for example, investigated

news media discourses in relation to immigration, asylum regimes, racism, and ethnic relations. KhosraviNik (2009) analysed the representations of RASIM, (Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Immigrants) in the UK news media between 1996 and 2006. Using the socio-cognitive approach of van Dijk, van Leeuwen's socio-semantic model of analysing social actors, and Wodak's discourse-historical approach (DHA), KhosraviNik's studies revealed the RASIM group had been negatively represented in the British newspapers.

Similarly, Bolte and Yuen (2014) conducted a study about RASIM in Malaysia using CDA. They investigated online news reporting of RASIM from three news portals, namely *New Straits Times*, *The Star*, and *Malaysiakini*. Their findings indicated that framing of RASIM was greatly influenced by the stance taken by the government papers (*New Straits Times* and *The Star*) which are very much in favour of the government unlike *Malaysiakini* in which reporting was more neutral. Other media studies conducted in Malaysia by Pang (2006) and Gill, Yuen, Bolte, and Ramiah (2012) confirm that there is a strong relationship between the ideological opinion of the news media and the ruling government and thus the framing of certain news reports is more pro-government.

van Dijk (1991, p. 254) has examined the way prominent actors such as politicians consciously or unconsciously use the newspaper as a medium to propagate racism as well as to secure the governance of Western culture. Fairclough (1989, 1992), one of the most influential advocates of CDA, has also contributed extensively in the field of CDA and media. Other areas where CDA has been used to examine the media, according to McGregor (2003), comprise the function of news editorials that serve the interests of domineering groups in public and the way news reporters "adopt particular ideological-

discursive structure to express the values of an ideological system" (Kress, 1990). Fowler (1991) and Bell (1991) have also conducted research studying newspaper language and its structure. It is important to mention that studies in CDA comprise the exploration of not only written materials but also visual materials. Likewise, linguists such as Fairclough (1995) and Chouliaraki (2004) have integrated visual materials in their discourse studies. Social semiotics researchers such as van Leeuwen (2008), Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), and Hodge and Kress (1998) have explored both verbal and visual aspects of discourse in their studies.

2.4 Narrative analysis

The notion of narrative analysis began with its establishment in the area of literary theory. It is closely connected to the studies of media and culture, but social scientists such as Rosenwald and Ochburg (1992), Riessman (1993), and Bruner (1986) started showing interest and began to adopt this type of analysis in their research to gain better knowledge and understanding of the social world and the construction of data. Due to its multidisciplinary applications, there are different ways of collecting and analysing data acquired through narrative research. These include autobiography, biography, autoethnography, life narrative, oral history, in-depth interviewing, focus groups, and the sociology of storytelling (Earthy & Cronin, 2008; Letherby, 2003). Narrative studies are found in almost every discipline, for example in the fields of identity construction (De Fina, Schiffrin, and Bamberg, 2006; Georgakopoulou, 2007), sociology and anthropology (Riessman, 1993), psychology (Polkinghorne, 1988), nursing (Sandelowski, 1991), and education (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Cox, 2001). The study of narrative analysis can be applied to the present study as the interview transcript data are regarded as a form of narrative. According to Denscombe (2010, p. 291), interviews can have the specific purpose of retelling personal events and

experiences, connecting events of the past with the present, and dealing with people's feelings and interactions.

One of the most common habitual forms of social communication is through storytelling (Webster & Mertova, 2007). The words "story" and "narrative" have similar characteristics and therefore they are often used interchangeably because, as Bringhurst (2002, p. 16) pointed out, "in the real life of language these terms overlap". Rosenweld and Ochburg (1992, p. 1) maintained that "personal stories are not merely a way of telling someone (or oneself) about one's life; they are the means by which identities may be fashioned". Some of the characteristics include "chronological or sequential arrangement" (Labov & Waletsky, 1967) and "events in thematic order" (Czarniawska, 1998). According to Franzosi (1998, p. 521):

> The events in the story must disrupt an initial state of equilibrium that sets in motion an inversion of situation, a change of fortunes—from good to bad, from bad to good, or no such reversal of polarity, just an 'after' different from the 'before,' but neither necessarily better or worse.

Hence, stories are outcomes of interpretations of events that have taken place in a certain order (Fisher, 1987).

Bruner (1990), stated that people are prone to tell stories to make sense of difficult life experiences. The stories or narratives provide a sense of meaning and allow the narrator to reconstruct a sense of identity. This method (storytelling) provides rich data as it permits various interpretations of ideas as well as describes the speakers' past and present experiences based on their personal judgments. According to Feldman, Skoldberg, Brown, and Horner (2004), the actions of including, excluding, and emphasising certain events in the narratives brings about different interpretations in which the narrator not only demonstrates his or her version of the story but at the same

time presents a critical commentary or explanation of the subject matter. Young (1996, as cited in Feldman et al., 2004) asserted that the sequences in narratives are crucial because the structure of a narrative exposes the different practices, beliefs, places, and symbols that are assumed to be important to people.

According to Plummer (1995, p. 87), "for narratives to flourish there must be a community to hear; … for communities to hear, there must be stories which weave together their history, their identity, their politics". Very often, when people narrate their side of a story, it is a reconnection of actions and events of the past to the present. However, this does not mean that narrative analysis is restricted to a chronological description of experiences. Gill (2001) pointed out that narrative analysis can be employed to document various points of view that can be interpreted to identify similarities and differences that arise in people's life experiences. Riessman (1993) argued that, through storytelling, people reinterpret their life stories and by narrating their stories and actions they are able to make sense of their experience, the linguistic as well as the structural properties.

2.4.1 Voice in personal narratives

In the field of academic writing, the concept of voice has received little attention simply because it is a relatively new area of interest (Matsuda & Tardy, 2007; Prior, 2001). Bakhtin (1981, pp. 291–292) defined voice as:

> specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific worldviews, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and values. As such, they may be all juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another, and be interrelated dialogically.

According to Bakhtin, therefore, voices can be employed in combination with one another within a single text and they can be dialogically interconnected. For Atkinson

(2001), voice is an essential and unique component of recognising one's identity, and that identity is the expression of the self. Couldry (2010) was largely in agreement with Atkinson in contending that giving voice to individuals is important because it enables people to recount stories about themselves and their identity, and that those who do not have this ability are considered not to be human. He further asserted that voice serves an important role in gaining recognition as it is able to explain both "a practice of recognition (listening to others' voices, registering them as important) and a realistic analysis of the obstructions to recognition; even at times when we are told we have voice, we can reinvent ourselves, we can be heard" (Couldry, 2010, p. 132).

Also, in order to have a voice, Couldry (2010, p. 117) stated that it (voice) relies on the asymmetry of power that exists in society. The decision about making a group recognised or not is not determined by the individuals as these individuals do not have a say concerning the stories written about them. Contrary to this assertion, Wilson (2012) has given voice to a victim, Katie Piper, to speak about her experience of disfigurement. Using a thematic narrative approach, the analysis revealed that the victim was able to construct her sense of self and identity through the narration of her small stories (refer to Table 1.2 in Chapter 1 but there is a more extensive explanation in Chapter 4 for a definition of small stories). Following the same small story approach, Rahman (2015) focused on self-representation and articulation of identities in video blogs (vlogs) among Muslim Hijabi female vloggers in Canada. In this narrative study, Rahman found that women who used YouTube displayed a high level of agency to express themselves to a global audience.

In another study, Alford (2017) investigated how patients with multiple sclerosis experienced resilience and the strategies they employed to cope with the condition. The

study was conducted with seven female participants whose transcripts were analysed using Riessman's thematic narrative analysis approach. Likewise, the thematic narrative analysis performed on female university students working in the sex trade exposed the truth that, although the main reason for their involvement was financial, the idea of pursuing sex work was decided only after they had exhausted other employment options (Sinacore, Jaghori, & Rezazadeh, 2015). As can be seen, narrative research allows the voices of the affected individuals to be heard; it not only reveals stories hidden below the surface but also determines the individuals' recognition in the public sphere.

2.4.2   The absence of victims' voices in the media

The media works as a gatekeeper in deciding what to include or exclude in its treatment of an issue and it has the benefit of determining whose voices should be given prominence relative to others (Tham & Zanuddin, 2012). Within the Malaysian media, victims of sex trafficking are barely given any space to voice or challenge the unconstructive stereotypes that are applied to them and therefore much of the truth about them is kept hidden from the public. Taylor (2010) asserted that trafficked women are seen as being outside mainstream society because they find themselves caught inside a patriarchal discourse that silences them and removes a space for action. Victims' voices are most likely to be acknowledged in news reportage that portrays them as problematic or accountable for their own actions rather than highlighting the humanising aspects or as sympathetic victims. Hershatter (1997, p. 4) pointed out that the women's "daily lives, struggles and self-perception … were … constructed in part by … other voices and institutions", not through the voices of those women.

The news media has the power to publicise trafficked victims' voices to its readers. There is therefore scope to present the victims in a humanitarian way and with

compassion through their voices. However, this aspect is often undermined because the news might not be accurately reported. Even if these people's voices are reported, they are presented either as direct quotations ("she said") or indirect quotations ("she said that her trafficker …") to show their fear of the traffickers and trafficker's violence. Scholars such as Soderlund (2005), Galusca (2012), Friedman and Johnston (2013), and Murphy (2014) have produced narratives that refer to sex trafficking in which women are featured as helpless female victims and males as cruel traffickers. Many researchers have also highlighted the role of masculine heroes as saviours and rescuers (Bernstein, 2007; Hesford, 2011; Kamler, 2013).

Although the purpose of such narratives may be well-meaning, the absence of victims' voices from a first-person perspective can deprive readers of a nuanced, let alone fundamental, understanding of the actual issues involved. Scholars have pointed out that readers tend to interpret the representations of victims in accordance with their preconceived beliefs. Misrepresentation can also impact on the victims negatively by denying them legitimate victim status. According to Greer (2007), crime victims who are deprived of legitimate victim status may not be accorded much attention from the media and virtually go unnoticed in the social world. Other scholars (Andrijasevic, 2007; Hesford, 2011; Murphy, 2014) have noted that narratives can influence readers to participate in voyeurism through the portrayal of women as sexual objects. The inappropriateness of this is manifest: The women portrayed as victims of sexual oppression in these narratives should be helped and this can potentially be done by giving them voice.

One way of helping these women directly is by giving them the opportunity to talk about their personal stories. Although Spivak (2010) doubted whether the personal

narratives of marginalised women can actually be useful, Schaffer and Smith (2004), Hesford and Kozol (2005), and Lyon and Olson (2011) have argued that the stories narrated by these women have remarkable potential for generating change. Their narratives can "expose oppressive material conditions, violence and trauma, give voice to heretofore silent histories, help shape public consciousness … and thus alter history's narrative" (Hesford, 1999, p. 195).

2.5 Gaps in previous research

Regardless of the increased attention given to sex trafficking, relatively little systematic investigation based on sound theoretical foundations has been performed in this area. The sociologist, Weitzer at the George Washington University, claimed that "in no area of the social sciences has ideology contaminated knowledge more pervasively than in writings on the sex industry" (Weitzer, 2005, p. 934). This claim without doubt applies to trafficking of human beings for sexual exploitation, a field "where cannons of scientific inquiry are suspended and research deliberately skewed to serve a particular political and moral agenda" (Weitzer, 2005, p. 934; see also Goode, 1997; Rubin, 1984; Weitzer, 2007).

Research about sex trafficking as a social problem has been extensively conducted, both at the regional and global levels, from differing theoretical perspectives (Doezema, 2010; Farley et al., 2011; Hughes, 2000, 2002; Jyrkinen, 2009; Kara, 2009; Malarek, 2011; Sethi, 2007; Tiefenbrun, 2002; Weitzer, 2005, 2007; Zimmerman et al., 2006). However, only a small number of researchers have investigated the representation of sex-trafficking victims in newspapers and narrative studies. Farley (2003) and O'Connor and Healy (2006), for example, highlighted the descriptions of clients and their role as well as the demand for sex. Ekberg (2004) studied the buying of sexual

services and trafficking of women in Sweden as a form of human violation against women. Researchers such as Hughes (2000) and Bertone (2000) have focused on the causes of sex trafficking. Available literature about sex trafficking has mostly focused on other aspects such as social or sociological variables and media descriptions of trafficked women (Andrijasevic, 2007; Badarevski, 2006; Pajnik, 2004) that focus mainly on gender-based discrimination.

Hennink and Simkhada (2004) studied how young Nepalese girls were trafficked to India. Other researchers, O'Connor and Healy (2006), emphasised the connection that exists between sex trafficking of women and prostitution. Advocates involved in anti-prostitution campaigns have also conducted much of the research about sex trafficking (Raymond, 2004; Raymond, Hughes, & Gomez, 2010). According to Weitzer (2005, p. 936), these anti-prostitution advocates have adopted a fanatical account of radical feminist hypothesis "that does not distinguish between trafficking for forced prostitution and voluntary migration (legal or irregular) for sex work and claims that all sex workers are victims of trafficking".

What is lacking is scholarly research investigating the linguistic representation of sex-trafficking victims in the newspapers and how victims have represented themselves (self-representation) within their personal narratives. Analysing from this viewpoint could generate a better understanding about sex-trafficking victims' representation in Malaysia. In Subsections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2 below, I summarise some of the existing research about media representation of sex-trafficking victims and studies relating to the narratives of the victims in both global and local contexts.

2.5.1 Global studies

The media could appear to be main source for readers to obtain information about sex trafficking. Although news media reports are not in a good position to provide information about the way that a readership understands and perceives social issues such as sex trafficking because of their inevitable bias in wanting to project an image of neutrality, Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (2008) have argued that studies conducted in the past have revealed that mass media can indeed manipulate readers' attitudes and provoke their emotions. The following literature illustrates some of the studies associated with sex-trafficking victims at a global level that may be valuable for the present research.

In his research about sex-trafficking media coverage in the United States, Ta (2014) found that trafficked victims were construed as "helpless and naive" while traffickers were construed as having more agency. Ta argued that the sex-trafficking news has focused on what is presented as the sexual transgression of the traffickers instead of the sex-trafficking act between clients and victims. This simplistic representation of sex trafficking, according to Ta, is "political and does not help to address the complexity of the phenomenon" (2014, p. 99), allowing the media to scandalise the victims even more by their patronising view. Focusing on slightly different issues, Kempadoo (2005, p. xxiii) claimed that the representation of women on women as "victims in the anti-trafficking work … privilege[s] external forces in the conceptualization of the trafficked person and denies women's agency and subjectivity in the process". In partial contrast, research by Kantola and Squires (2004) about the topics of prostitution and trafficking within UK parliamentary debates revealed that, although sex workers have been represented as innocent victims trapped in the vicious trade, in many ways they are regarded as public nuisances whose behaviours create discomfort among the public. Despite scholars having argued that victimisation is indeed a concern within sex work,

not all sex workers experience victimisation. O'Doherty (2011), for example, revealed that off-street sex workers in Vancouver, British Columbia, who work indoors, faced lesser forms of victimisation than did street-based sex workers.

In recent work, Sobel (2015) investigated sex-trafficking news coverage in Thailand by quantifying the framing of news coverage in the English language newspapers. Her findings revealed that sex-trafficking news was largely associated with other countries and that the media tended to portray sex trafficking as crime-related news. A similar tendency to frame sex trafficking as a criminal issue was the key focus in research by Szorenyi and Eate (2014), Johnston, Friedman, and Shafer (2014), and Kinney (2015).

The absence of victims' voices in media reports has created space for others to fill the gap in the reporting of news media (Johnston, Friedman, & Shafer, 2012). Research by Johnston, Friedman, and Sobel (2015) revealed that media coverage of sex-trafficking in the U.S. generally focused on the voices of the official sources and lacked the opinions of the trafficked victims. Likewise, Gulati (2012), Johnston and Friedman (2008) revealed that the sex-trafficking coverage in Western media relied on official sources' voices that concentrate mainly on anti-trafficking efforts by legislators and enforcement officers as well as brothel raids, but the voices of the victims had been neglected. Not only does the newspaper coverage give more attention to dominant voices, the media tends to also advocate rescue narratives and emphasise traditional gender stereotypes (C. N. Baker, 2013).

2.5.2 Local studies

The representation of sex trafficking is not new in Western journalism (Saunders & Soderlund, 2003, p. 32) as researchers are constantly conducting studies in this area.

However, in a culturally constrained country such as Malaysia where discussing matters related to sex trafficking is taboo, literature about sex trafficking is barely documented and therefore little research about the topic is available. Nur Ibtisam (2014) investigated how the policy on human trafficking is deciphered and executed by government officials via a blend of qualitative research approaches, group and individual interviews, written credentials, and field observations. Research by Nur Ibtisam (2014) indicated that variables such as "incomprehensive coordination, incompatible resources, criminal approach, critical information flows, hierarchical control, and low discretion" (Nur Ibtisam, 2014, p. iv) hinder the execution of policies related to human trafficking. Although Nur Ibtisam's study constituted a comprehensive investigation of Malaysia's human trafficking policy implementation, she might not have sufficiently considered the perspectives (personal voices) of the sex trafficked victims because there were relatively few direct quotations from the victims—something that could otherwise have contributed to enhanced policy implementation.

More specific studies about sex-trafficking victims were performed by Leng, Khan, and Rahim (2014) who investigated how the internet creates an avenue for traffickers to recruit women for sexual exploitation. Interviews with members of an NGO were included to substantiate their findings. Their investigation revealed that perpetrators largely use advertisements and chat rooms to prey on victims. Although detailed analysis of the internet has inevitably shed light on the types of cybercrimes that involves women, the inclusion of victims' voices is essential for sound and reliable findings. In an executive summary, Wong and Saat (2002) indicated that many Filipino women were illegally brought into East Malaysia as sex workers. Narrative testimonies of those victims revealed the involvement of corrupt law enforcement officers with traffickers. Although the authors had successfully taken into account first-hand details

(victims' narratives), the study was confined to only one particular group, Filipino victims, and did not include victims from other regions.

A more recent study by Saad and Salman (2014) has incorporated interviews with Ugandan and Indonesian trafficking victims at a detention camp to elicit first-hand data from victims. Findings of that study revealed victims as having been deceived by agents or syndicates with promises of well-paid jobs in Malaysia only to discover subsequently that they were to serve as prostitutes in entertainment centres. Given that the focus of this study was mainly on human trafficking, the findings from the interviews may not be applicable to the more specific situation of sex trafficking.

2.5.3 Addressing gaps in present research

Contemporary researchers involved in CDA studies have taken on a more critical standpoint, exploring how such variables as gender, power, and discrimination are presented in media discourse. However, much of the literature written in this area is from a Western perspective (Johnston et al., 2012, 2014; Kantola & Squires, 2004; O'Doherty, 2011; Riffe et al., 2008; Sobel, 2015; Ta, 2014) and concentrates on the legal, social, and economic implications of sex trafficking which may not reflect the situation of victims in Malaysia.

Although researchers such as Leng et al. (2014), Saad and Salman (2014), Nur Ibtisam (2014), and Wong and Saat (2002) have attempted to conduct studies concerning human trafficking, sexual exploitation through the internet, and victims' narratives of the trafficking experience, research in which CDA methods are used for investigating sex-trafficking victims' representations through media analysis and their personal narratives is remarkably limited.

Investigation of these kinds is central to the present research as it could help to expose particular views and ideological stances that are embedded in language. This is an important feature of CDA studies because it is through language that meanings are produced and evoked. This study should be important especially for the hidden population (sex-trafficking victims) as a means of redressing the existing imbalance through a systematic linguistic investigation. Considering the focus of this study and the dearth of scholarly attention given to studies about sex-trafficking victims, in the present study I attempt to at least partially fill the linguistic gap by conducting a study that combines analyses of newsprint media and interview narratives.

2.6 Summary

In this chapter, after brief introductory material, I explored three areas of the relevant literature. The first part related to the background of sex trafficking in Malaysia (Section 2.2). I then investigated the two major discourses in the study: newspaper and narratives (Sections 2.3 and 2.4). In the final part, I identified the gaps in current literature (Section 2.5), which included studies about sex trafficking in both the international (Section 2.5.1) and local contexts (Section 2.5.2), and how those gaps can be addressed (Section 2.5.3).

CHAPTER 3: HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

3.1   Introduction

In this chapter I describe and examine the jurisdictional background of human trafficking policies at both international and national levels. After this brief introductory section, I consider ambiguity concerning the definition of human trafficking (Section 3.2) which leads to an examination of the international legal framework about human trafficking. In Section 3.3, I discuss the response of the Malaysian government in combating trafficking. Following this, in Section 3.4, I deal with the annual U.S. *Trafficking in Persons Report* on Malaysia. The subsequent sections provide descriptions of the Malaysian legal system concerning human trafficking and sex work (Section 3.5) and related Acts (Section 3.6), respectively. The chapter ends with a discussion in Section 3.7 and a summary in Section 3.8.

3.2   Ambiguity in the definition of human trafficking

The definition of human trafficking has changed over time and there still exist uncertainties that lead to its misinterpretation among the public. Hoque (2010) asserted that the definition of human trafficking is unclear despite the various definitions provided by international governments and nongovernment organisations (NGOs). Trafficking consultant Alexis Aronowitz (2009, p. 65) wrote that "trafficking can range from something as simple as a single individual recruiting and exploiting a single victim in the same city or country of origin, to highly sophisticated operations moving large numbers of victims across numerous borders". Chuang (1998) stated that human trafficking comprises the recruitment of people through force and slavery-like

conditions (except for some victims). It is believed that human trafficking becomes more difficult when there is an increase in immigration.

The different definitions used in different contexts have resulted in confusion especially in recognising human trafficking victims and the complexity of identifying trafficking meaningfully. Additionally, the boundaries between sex trafficking and prostitution raise concerns with regard to the assistance offered to sex-trafficking victims and also in terms of ethical issues in the classification of people's lives and identities since "victims of commercial sexual exploitation share the same demographic characteristics such as poverty, adolescence, unemployment and lack of family support" (Leidholdt, 2008, p. 178). Despite numerous versions of human trafficking definitions having been proposed by scholars, domestic laws, and international agreements (Aronowitz, 2009; Chuang, 1998; Leng, Khan, & Rahim, 2014), the definition presented by the United Nations' *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*[1] has been accepted for providing the most influential and comprehensive definition.

3.2.1 The international legal framework regulating human trafficking

The United Nations' *Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime* that was approved on 15 November 2000 is the most important international tool implemented with the purpose of combating transnational organised crime. Member states were called to a political conference in Palermo, Italy from 12 to 15 December 2000 to discuss ways to deal with transnational organised crime, and the convention was finally entered into force on 25 December 2003. This convention was adopted by many

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[1] Within this thesis, titles of protocols, conventions, reports, and academic papers will be placed in italics. Titles of legislative Acts will be presented in regular font.

countries around the world to help them address human trafficking problems within their own countries. The convention is supplemented by three protocols that aim to address problematic areas and manifestations of organised crime. The three important protocols that complement this convention are the:

- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children;
- Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; and
- Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition

(United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2004)

The first two of the above protocols are directly connected to issues concerning human trafficking. These protocols serve to support human trafficking victims. However, implementation of the protocols requires intense monitoring as there are other mechanisms involved in their execution. To become a party to any of the three protocols, a country must initially become a member of the convention. The convention embodies the leading framework for many nations throughout the world due to its comprehensive mechanisms in fighting human trafficking. Most countries, including Malaysia, have adopted almost the entire framework outlined in the international legislation into their national law and enforcement policies for combating transnational organised crime. In other words, countries that sanction this mechanism have committed themselves to taking systematic measures to restrain transnational organised crime.

Subsections 3.2.1.1 and 3.2.1.2 below contain detailed information about the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children* and the *Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air*.

3.2.1.1 The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children

The United Nations has acknowledged the call for the international community to join forces in the struggle against the rapid escalation of human trafficking. For this reason, the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children*, commonly referred to as the Palermo Protocol, was implemented. The protocol was a milestone as the first universal binding mechanism in providing an established trafficking-in-persons definition. On 14 December 2000, this protocol was signed, and it was sanctioned on 9 February 2006. The Palermo Protocol is a universal instrument established to encourage active collaboration among its members to address all aspects of human trafficking. The ultimate aim of the protocol was to design a framework that would help to define trafficking, prevent trafficking, and assist the international community in pooling resources to combat transnational organised crime more effectively. Additionally, this protocol serves to protect trafficking victims and to accord them civil rights.

The Palermo Protocol provided documentation indicating that the prevention of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, needed a complete global strategy in the origin, transit, and destination countries. It was realised that trafficking in persons legislation should not only criminalise the actions related to trafficking in persons but should also provide additional rights and protections as specified in the protocol. Furthermore, the stipulations of the statute should be relevant to all victims of trafficking. This approach should incorporate actions in preventing human trafficking, penalising the traffickers, and providing protection for trafficking victims that included protection of their universal entitlement to human rights.

> The intention behind this definition is to facilitate convergence in national
> approaches with regard to the establishment of domestic criminal offences
> that would support efficient international cooperation in investigating and

prosecuting trafficking in persons' cases. An additional objective of the Protocol is to protect and assist the victims of trafficking in persons with full respect for their human rights.

<div align="right">(United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, n.d.)</div>

The Palermo Protocol was the first agreement to present a comprehensive description of human trafficking. Article 3 of the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children* includes the universally approved human trafficking definition. Despite debates about the definition of human trafficking, the definition outlined in the protocol has become an international yardstick and reference standard for its member countries, including Malaysia, in helping them to understand and interpret the crime.

The term "trafficking in persons", which includes multiple facets of trafficking, is defined in Article 3 (a) of the protocol as:

> the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person by means of the threat or use of force or other means of coercion, or by abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or by 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.

The word "exploitation" has been further defined as:

> the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

<div align="right">(Article 3, Palermo Protocol, 2000)</div>

Although this definition is not directly aimed at sex trafficking, it is important because it indicates that victims of human trafficking do not need to be held through force but may be deceived or coerced into abusive practices. This definition differs from a previous definition in which the trafficking event involved abduction and the victims

may have agreed to follow their traffickers without being aware of the situation or its consequences (Kabance, 2014).

Another important aspect is the means of coercion. The insertion of "coercion" in the definition leaves out the victim's consent. This means that in circumstances where the crime of trafficking (coercion, abduction, fraud, etc.) has been proven to be true, any claim by the alleged trafficker that the victim had expressed agreement becomes invalid. Article 3 (b) of the Palermo Protocol, restates this principle:

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

Based on the definition outlined in the protocol (Article 3 (a)), the following three elements have been categorised in Table 3.1 on the basis of acts, means, and purposes:

Table 3.1: Human trafficking identification

ACT	MEANS	PURPOSE
Recruitment • Transport • Transfer • Harbouring • Receipt of persons	• Threat or use of force • Coercion • Abduction • Fraud • Deception • Abuse of power or vulnerability • Giving payments or benefits	Exploitation including: a) Prostitution of others b) Sexual exploitation c) Forced labour d) Slavery or similar practices e) Removal of organs f) Other types of exploitation

http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking

Prior to acceptance of the protocol, there was no international mechanism that focused on all facets of human trafficking. The protocol is not only applicable for sexual

slavery of women and children but also applies to the entire international community's recognition of all forms of human trafficking, including forced labour, slavery, removal of organs, and sexual exploitation. In most cases, the victims' consent is obtained successfully by the syndicate to prevent punishment but it is also stated in the same article that the approval of the victims is not relevant in situations that demonstrate victims have been threatened, coerced, or deceived or in cases where the victims' vulnerability had been exploited by the trafficker. This means that the victim's consent can no longer be used to protect the offenders as a way of escaping punishment. It also implies that the protocol is serious in its intent.

The definition of human trafficking provided in the United States' Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) is similar to the definition outlined in the Palermo Protocol. The TVPA describes "severe forms of trafficking in persons" as:

> Sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age; or
>
> the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.
>
> (U.S. Department of State, 2015)

An additional clause has been included in the TVPA definition which states that "a victim need **not** (emphasis in bold) be physically transported from one location to another in order for the crime to fall within these definitions" (U.S. Department of State, 2015). This add-on clearly defines the present scenario of human trafficking that has evolved over time and that the movement of victims from one place to another is no longer a requisite in the human trafficking legislation.

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3.2.1.2 The Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air

Another important protocol that supplements the The United Nations' Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime is *The Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air*, entered into force on 28 January 2004. This protocol was aimed at "preventing and combating the smuggling of migrants, as well as promoting cooperation among States Parties, while protecting the rights of smuggled migrants and preventing the worst forms of their exploitation which often characterise the smuggling process" (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, n.d.).

The term smuggling in Article 3 of the protocol is defined in the following way:

Smuggling of migrants shall mean the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident.   (Article 3, Palermo Protocol, 2000)

The Smuggling of Migrants Protocol in Article 6 indicates that, in order to conform to this protocol, it

requires states to criminalize both smuggling of migrants and enabling of a person to remain in a country illegally, as well as aggravating circumstances that endanger lives or safety, or entail inhuman or degrading treatment of migrants.   (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, n.d.)

Countries throughout the world have been affected by this profit-seeking crime, regardless of their status as the origin, transit, or destination country for smuggled migrants. Migrants who have been smuggled are susceptible to abuse and life-threatening risks. "Thousands of people have suffocated in containers, perished in deserts or dehydrated at sea" (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, n.d.). It is anomalous that although Malaysia is one of the nations that has sanctioned the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the country has yet to ratify the *Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air* which clearly

indicates the Malaysian government's reluctance to accept an international partnership to address problems related to smuggled migrants. Although the Malaysian government has not signed the protocol, the inclusion of the provision related to migrants smuggling in the recently amended *Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act* (ATIPSOM) is a clear indication of the government's readiness to ratify the protocol.

3.3   The Malaysian government's response in combating human trafficking

When the United Nations Convention against Human Trafficking sanctioned the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially in Women and Children* and the *Protocol Against Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air*, Malaysia was not among the countries that signed the protocol. Malaysia's failure to address human trafficking issues in its security agenda has been a contributory factor to the widespread sex trafficking in the country, which in turn creates a threat to its people as well as regional security. However, Malaysia acceded to both the UN Convention and the Palermo Protocol, with reservations, on 26 February 2009, 2 years after it established its own law on Trafficking in Persons (United Nations Treaty Collection, n.d.).

The intense global upsurge of human trafficking over the last decade demonstrates that this highly organised crime can now be regarded as modern day slavery. In a report, Siegel (2016, p. 488) stated that every year "hundreds of thousands of women and children particularly from Southeast Asia and eastern Europe end up in the sex trade in industrialized countries". Among these countries, Malaysia is seen as one of the most attractive and profitable human trafficking destinations due to its location. Many victims who were brought into the country were given false promises about a decent career but

were later forced into prostitution (Stanslas, 2010, p. 601). Most of these victims are trafficked from nearby regions such as the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Burma, Cambodia, and Vietnam but also as far away as Bangladesh, Columbia, Ecuador, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, and Uzbekistan (U.S. Department of State, 2009, p. 197).

Understanding human trafficking by the general population in Malaysia is still at a minimal level as many people, including law enforcement officers, do not have a clear sense about the degree of sex trafficking in the country and often fail to regard trafficked persons as victims. According to Syerleena (2014, para. 5), "a majority of Malaysians still mistakenly equate human trafficking to prostitution … it can be assumed that our government's inactions may be a result of the very same misconception that the public seem to have."

3.3.1 The 3P approach

The 3P approach was set up to counter activities relating to trafficking of humans. It has three important objectives, commonly known as 3P: prevention, protection, and prosecution. The 3P paradigm is referred to by governments around the world as a fundamental guiding principle to help them combat human trafficking.

3.3.1.1 Prevention

The prevention component focuses on creating public awareness to educate and inform the public about human trafficking so that victims can be better identified. Current measures however, have been adopted to emphasise "effective policy implementation, strengthening partnerships between governments, law enforcement, and NGOs, and working to reduce demand for commercial sex" (U.S. Department of State, n.d.).

3.3.1.2 Protection

The protection of victims is given utmost importance in the 3P approach. According to this component, human trafficking victims, whether potential or identified, ought to receive immediate protection so that they are safe. This includes addressing victims' immediate needs and providing psychological help and legal support so that they are protected from any kind of harm.

3.3.1.3 Prosecution

The third component of the 3Ps in combating human trafficking is the prosecution of perpetrators. Even though there is a compulsory provision in the United Nations trafficking protocol to punish traffickers, legal action taken against traffickers is still inadequate and many traffickers remain unprosecuted and unpunished. Some of the activities related to prosecution comprise implementation of specific anti-trafficking laws; provision of training of police officers, lawyers, and judges to effectively respond to trafficking; and the establishment of special anti-trafficking police units. Despite this, most countries that have sanctioned the protocol have failed to develop a legal framework that encompasses the entire requirements outlined in the trafficking protocol.

3.4 Trafficking in persons reports on Malaysia

Since the acceptance of the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Protocol, the United States has been executing its annual observation on Malaysia's efforts in combating this illegal activity. In its yearly report, the U.S. Department of State (2009) lamented that the legal action taken against traffickers in Malaysia had been small and that the victims of trafficking were not offered protection by the Malaysian government as well as there being a lack of legal options to repatriate distressed victims. Moreover, it was reported that the Malaysian government has failed to adequately identify its trafficking victims

and, as a consequence, most illegal migrants were either deported or imprisoned without any kind of identification.

Further reports pointed out that Malaysia did not entirely conform to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act's (TVPA's) minimum standards for the eradication of trafficking even though the nation did make significant efforts to fulfil those standards. This meant that the Malaysian government's efforts were still largely inadequate in relation to the 3P approach (U.S. Department of State, 2009). Merely ratifying laws does not imply that the country has met the objectives of the 2007 Anti-Trafficking Act. The delivery of the policy is very much dependent on the implementation methods conducted by the government. Malaysia has to ensure that the adopted 3P approach is delivered effectively as promised (Nur Ibtisam, 2014).

3.4.1 Malaysia's human trafficking tier ranking

In this section, I describe Malaysia's human trafficking tier ranking by the U.S. Department of State for the years 2005–2016 with reference to Figure 3.1. The description of the tier ranking is provided in Table 3.2.

U.S. Department of State (2016)
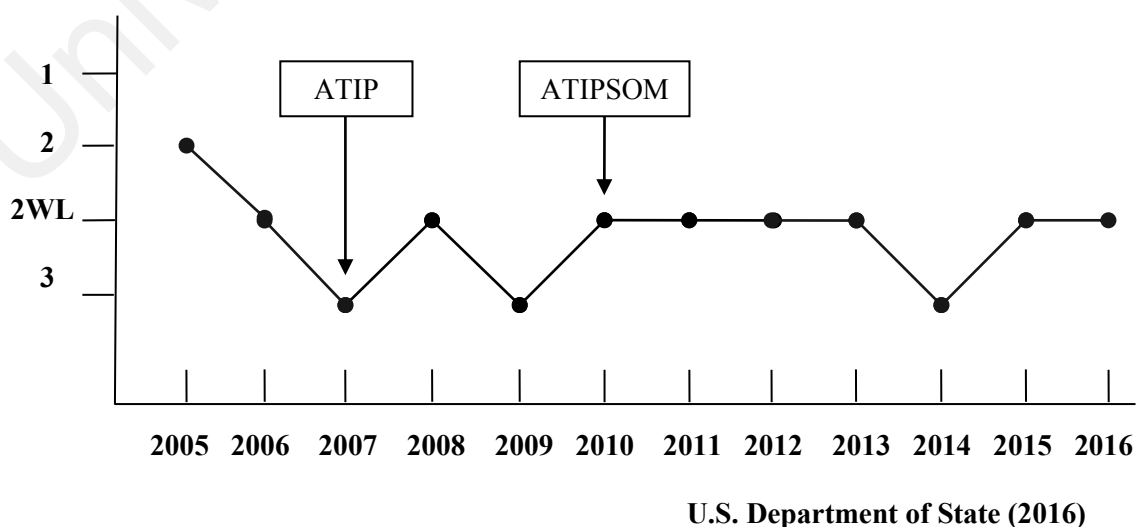
Figure 3.1: Malaysia tier ranking by year

Table 3.2: Descriptions of tier ranking[a]

Tier	Description
TIER 1	Countries whose governments fully comply with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act's (TVPA) minimum standards.
TIER 2	Countries whose governments do not fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.
TIER 2 WATCH LIST	Countries whose governments do not fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards AND: a) The absolute number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing; b) There is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year; or c) The determination that a country is making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance with minimum standards was based on commitments by the country to take additional future steps over the next year.
TIER 3	Countries whose governments do not fully comply with the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so.

[a] Information in this table was obtained from the U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report (2015).

As Figure 3.1 demonstrates, Malaysia's tier ranking showed barely any significant improvement in the government's actions in combating human trafficking over the span of 12 years (2005–2016). Following the adoption of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 2007, Malaysia was categorised as one of the worst human trafficking offenders according to the 2009 Trafficking in Persons Report (US Department of State, 2009). Prior to the implementation of the country's own Anti-Trafficking Act in 2007, its ranking was at Tier 2 in 2005, the next best ranking to Tier 1 (refer to Figure 3.1). The ranking dropped to Tier 3 in 2007 and once again in 2009. It is ironic that Malaysia's

rank fell to Tier 3 in the same year that the country passed its domestic laws on trafficking in persons (U.S. Department of State, 2007).

In 2010, the Malaysian government amended its legislation on human trafficking due to a massive increase in human trafficking cases. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 2007 was renamed the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007 (ATIPSOM). In spite of this, the tier ranking did not improve and Malaysia remained static at Tier 2 Watch List in the U.S. Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report for the 3 successive years (2010–2012). In 2013, the U.S. Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report* on Malaysia placed the country on Tier 2 Watch List for the fourth successive year because Malaysia failed to show a demonstrable improvement in its trafficked victim identification and protection procedures (U.S. Department of State, 2013).

The 2014 United States' annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* was a big blow for the Malaysian government as Malaysia was relegated to Tier 3 and subsequently blacklisted for lack of compliance with minimum standards in fighting human trafficking. It was grouped with other countries, including "North Korea, Iran, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Gambia" (Syerleena, 2014). "Malaysia's downgrade to Tier 3 is an automatic relegation after four years on the Tier 2 Watch List and it is the third time in seven years that the country has sunk to the lowest ranking" ("US Penalises Malaysia for Shameful Human Trafficking Record", 2014).

> The recent demotion also means that our country could face possible sanctions at a time when we really need robust policies to help drive our economy because at present, we are aware of how unhealthy things are, even if we are being told otherwise. In addition to the spate of negative press already highlighted in the international media, this recent testimony solidifies Malaysia as a human rights outcast, which is a huge

embarrassment to everyone living on this soil and a great insult to the forefathers who created the Federation. (Syerleena, 2014, para. 3)

The director of Tenaganita, a local NGO that works directly with trafficking victims, Aegile Fernandez (2014; cited in "U.S. Penalises Malaysia for Shameful Human Trafficking Record", 2014) said that "Malaysia is not serious about curbing human trafficking at all. The order of the day is profits and corruption. Malaysia protects businesses, employers and agents [not victims] – it is easier to arrest, detain, charge and deport the migrant workers so that you protect employers and businesses" (paras 4–5). These accusations indicate that, despite the amended legislation, a catastrophic violation of human rights is still active and widespread as Malaysia has failed to conform to the most basic international requirements to prevent human trafficking.

In the 2015 annual human trafficking report, despite attempting but not meeting the minimum standards to eradicate the scourge, Malaysia was promoted one level from Tier 3 to the Tier 2 Watch List in 2014. This "stunned" Phil Robertson, Asia division Deputy Director of Human Right Watch (2015; as cited in The United States Upgrade Malaysia's Human Trafficking Ranks, 2015). According to Robertson,

> [Malaysia] has done very little to improve the protection from abuse that migrant workers face. … This would seem to be some sort of political reward from the United States and I would urge the U.S. Congress to look long and hard at who was making the decisions on such an upgrade. (para. 21)

In the 2016 report, Malaysia continued to be in the Tier 2 Watch List for the second successive year. It was stated in the report that overall the government did not show any increase in its efforts to combat trafficking compared with the contents of the 2015 report. Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister who is also the Home Minister, Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, said that the Malaysian government appreciated the constructive

criticisms and would take action to improve the country's evaluation in the upcoming 2017 *Trafficking in Persons Report*.

3.5 Legislation regulating trafficking and sex work in Malaysia

The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 2007 (see Section 3.5.1), the amended Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007 (see Section 3.5.2), and the Immigration Act 1959/63 (see Section 3.5.4) in Malaysia have so far been regarded as the main legal foundations for countering human trafficking in the country. Supplementary Acts that are used in conjunction with the main Acts are presented within the next subsections.

3.5.1 The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2007

Because human trafficking activity was becoming rampant, the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) Committee documented its concern about the situation in Malaysia. The group recommended that the government of Malaysia enact "specific and comprehensive legislation on the phenomenon" (Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 2006, p. 96) and finally, in 2007, the legislation on human trafficking was passed in the Malaysian parliament. It was named the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (ATIP). Before this Act was passed, all cases concerning human trafficking were either referred to the provisions in the Immigration Act 1959/63, the Penal Code, or the Child Act 2001 because Malaysia did not have any specific legislation to address human trafficking.

Enactment of the ATIP Act 2007 in Malaysia was the keystone for the nation's strategy in combating human trafficking. The ATIP Act was implemented in response to

the nation having received a low ranking from the United States in its yearly *Trafficking in Persons Report*, which specified Malaysia's negligence in addressing its human trafficking problem and for not sufficiently meeting the terms of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act's minimum standards for eradicating human trafficking. Other institutional initiatives that strengthen and provide support to the Anti-Trafficking Act are the Malaysian Anti-Trafficking Council and the National Action Plan (2010–2015).

The legitimately accepted definition of human trafficking in Malaysia is based firmly on the definition presented in the 2000 United Nations Palermo *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking, Especially Women and Children,* supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, namely that

> "trafficking in persons" or "traffic in persons" means the recruiting, transporting, transfering, harbouring, providing or receiving of a person for the purpose of exploitation
> …
> exploitation means all forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, any illegal activity or the removal of human organs
> …
> trafficked person means any person who is the victim or object of an act of trafficking in persons.
>
> (Parliament of Malaysia, 2007)

With gazetting of the ATIP Act 2007, officials have been granted responsibility to scrutinise trafficking offences, punish human brokers, and protect victims from exploitation. In order to repress human trafficking at the national level, the National Action Plan was formulated by the Malaysian government for a duration of 5 years (2010–2015). The main objective of that plan was to organise awareness campaigns, coordinate data collection, and conduct research related to human trafficking in Malaysia.

3.5.2 The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act and the Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act

The intensification of human trafficking and migrant smuggling in Malaysia led to the amendment of the ATIP Act 2007 in 2010. The amendment was executed to reinforce the monitoring framework to efficiently handle crimes related to human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Most importantly, the amendment widened the definition of trafficking in persons to include all actions "involved in acquiring or maintaining the labour or services of a person through coercion" (Parliament of Malaysia, 2010).

The amended Act was passed into law on 15 November 2010 and renamed as the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007 (ATIPSOM). Subsequently, the Secretariat of the Council for Anti-Trafficking in Persons was given a new designation as the Secretariat of the Council for Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants. The ATIPSOM Act includes new offences related to what are referred to as smuggled migrants which include the following:

> Arranging, facilitating or organizing, directly or indirectly, a person's unlawful entry into or through, or unlawful exit from, any country of which the person is not a citizen or permanent resident either knowing or having reason to believe that the person's entry or exit is unlawful.
>
> (Parliament of Malaysia, 2010)

The most important change in the ATIPSOM Act is related to the prosecution of people who commit migrant smuggling; it does not concern the handling of those who have been smuggled. More specifically, the ATIPSOM Act specifies severe punishment for those who are involved in smuggling of migrants, as outlined in Clause 26B of the Act:

26B. Any person who commits an offence of smuggling of migrants where any of the following applies:

(a) in committing the offence, the person intends that the smuggled migrant will be exploited after entry into the receiving country or transit country whether by the person himself or by another person;

(b) in committing the offence, the person subjects the smuggled migrant to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; or

(c) in committing the offence, the person's conduct gives rise to a risk of death or serious harm to the smuggled migrant,

Although the amendment is ultimately aimed at making Malaysia free from problems related to human trafficking and smuggling of migrants, the amendment attracted much criticism, including from the National Human Rights Institution or SUHAKAM (Suruhanjaya Hak Asasi Manusia Malaysia) which objected to the conflation of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants. Trafficked victims will tend to be classified as undocumented migrants or illegal immigrants and, under these circumstances, victims will most likely be deported to their own countries. ATIPSOM has also been criticised for its inadequate definition of human trafficking and failing to offer sufficient protection for individuals, including refugees, who have been smuggled.

Trafficking of people and smuggling of migrants are not the same, but people often confuse the two as the differences are subtle and at times the two are undoubtedly related to one another. However, having a basic understanding of the two terms should make it easy for the authorities to differentiate between them so that sex-trafficking victims are not inappropriately categorised as illegal migrants. Human trafficking primarily concerns the security of the victim against human rights violations, while smuggling is an illegal cross-border activity that threatens the integrity of the territory or country. In Table 3.3, the differences between trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, as stipulated in the Malaysian legislation, are listed.

Table 3.3: Differences between trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants[a]

Trafficking in Persons	Smuggling of Migrants
The instrument/international law involved is the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* under UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime.	The instrument/international law involved is the *Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea* under UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime.
The main element to prove any offence relating to trafficking in persons is exploitation and it may happen in a country without being a cross-border offence. It may also happen at the domestic level.	The important element in the smuggling of migrants is the cross-border occurrence.
Involving the elements of exploitation, manipulation, threat against victims. Continuous and repeated exploitation.	Involving consent of the smuggled persons and profits for the people smuggling syndicates. The smuggling activity ends upon arrival at the destination.

[a] Obtained from http://www.moha.gov.my/index.php/en/akta-antipemerdagangan -orang-dan penyeludupan-migran-2007/sekretariat-akta-perbezaan

D. Wong (2005) as cited in van Schendel & Abraham (2005, p. 71), who studied labour migrants in Malaysia, wrote that "individual migrant lives constantly weave their way in and out of intersecting spheres of legality and illegality", and although trafficking and smuggling are unrelated legally, the penalties with regard to migrants' susceptibility to exploitation are actually the same. Therefore, when the oppression is equivalent, this can pose a threat to victims of sex trafficking as the authorities may classify sex-trafficking victims and smuggled migrants as being essentially the same as each other. Providing equal treatment to the victims (of sex trafficking and smuggling) will eventually lead to misjudgement and exploitation of the victims due to the absence of specific legislation about sex trafficking.

With the amalgamation of migrant smuggling and human trafficking as concepts, the current legislation becomes too inexplicit as it combines migrant smuggling, human trafficking, and sex trafficking within a single item of legislation. Moreover, with

Malaysia's soaring popularity as a transit point for human trafficking and the stigma associated with sex work, this vulnerable group (sex-trafficking victims) is often neglected and not given adequate attention by the authorities since they are not regarded as victims of sex trafficking. The failure to recognise them as victims of sex trafficking is an indication of the authorities' lack of knowledge and awareness about sex trafficking. Also, there will be a propensity for the voices of the victims to continue being unheard until they are recognised as victims. In relation to the discrepancy in the current human trafficking policy, it is clear that trafficked victims, especially victims of sexual exploitation, are being sidelined because there is no specific policy on sex trafficking in the Malaysian legislation.

3.5.3 Debates concerning the amendment of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007

The amendment to the ATIP Act had demonstrated the seriousness of the Malaysian government and its commitment to combat human trafficking throughout the nation. Yet, there are some areas in the ATIPSOM Act 2007 that require critical attention. The following subsections (3.5.3.1–3.5.3.4) demonstrate the major components of the ATIPSOM Act 2007 that have attracted criticism.

3.5.3.1 Interpretation of trafficked person

The ATIPSOM Act 2007 defines "trafficked person" as "<u>any person who is the victim or object of an act of trafficking in persons</u>" (underlining in original). This definition does not clearly demarcate who the trafficked person is and what type of trafficking is involved since human trafficking entails different modes of trafficking. The Act tends to generalise all types of trafficking within the same legislation. Furthermore, trafficked people are interchangeably referred to as either "victims", or "objects", that have undergone exploitation.

It is interesting but dehumanising to represent trafficked persons as objects. The act of foregrounding the victims as objects undoubtedly leads to two contrasting impressions. First, trafficked people are perceived as being vulnerable and desperate (victims); second, they are seen as subjects performing sexual acts (objects). The latter perception may have serious repercussions. When victims of trafficking are objectified, it may contribute to a climate in which exploitation of individuals is accepted and implicitly encouraged. As pointed out by Frank (2008) in her paper *Objectification of Women,* "once a class of human beings are seen as objects or commodities, or in ways that effectively reduce them to objects, it becomes much easier to use them as one would an object, with as little, or no, regard". Moreover, the Act does not provide any information about the victims of trafficking except that they are the "victim or object of an act of trafficking in persons". Information such about whether they are trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation, forced labour, or for removal of organs is also not considered in the Act.

Because the ATIPSOM Act is the country's primary law dealing with human trafficking policies, the public tend to form opinions, and to act, based on what is stipulated. The government's exclusion of important perspectives in its legislation and its maintaining silence might not only lead to defective decision making on the part of the government but also can create scepticism among the public. Access to definitive information is certainly important for building public confidence and trust in government, and in the case of the present research, it might allow the public to be better informed about sex trafficking and its victims. For this reason, the absence of specific details might be considered significant.

3.5.3.2 Amendment of title

The amendment made to the title of the ATIP Act, which associates trafficking of people with smuggling of migrants, can result in hazardous policy implications. The following is an excerpt from the ATIPSOM Act on short title and commencement.

Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007

Short title and commencement

1. "An Act to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and <u>smuggling of migrants</u> and to provide for matters connected therewith."

The ATIPSOM Act, because of its title, promotes false ideas that smuggling and trafficking crimes are highly linked with each other, as if dealing with one issue would help to eradicate the other and vice versa. However,

> international best practice in implementing anti-trafficking efforts shows exactly the opposite: focusing on smuggling is likely to damage efforts to counter trafficking because it shifts the emphasis from countering exploitation of individuals, the hallmark of trafficking, to controlling immigration, thus effectively undermining identification and protection of human trafficking victims.
>
> (Human Rights Watch, 2010)

It is necessary to be responsive toward the legal discrepancies related to human trafficking and smuggling of migrants because there is much overlap between the two: Any policy that affects one will affect the other. As mentioned earlier, human trafficking entails different categories of trafficking, and victims of sex trafficking are no exception. So, when sex-trafficking victims are apprehended outside a trafficking situation, they can be treated as smuggled migrants who do not fall under the category of victims, as a consequence, not provided appropriate support since this particular social group is being de-emphasised in the legislation. Depending on the way it is

executed, smuggling of migrants can be a victimless offense; while in human trafficking there is always a victim.

An explanatory statement outlined within the ATIPSOM Act specifies the rationale for the amendment in the title: "The amendment is necessary to deal with the current influx of illegal migrants from conflict countries who are seeking better life either in Malaysia or third countries and who, in particular, are using Malaysia as a transit point while they await their onward journey to possible countries" (Parliament of Malaysia, 2010, p. 18). Despite the justification in the ATIPSOM Act, this merging is a prime concern with Human Rights Watch (2011) which stated that the amendments "reduce protections for both groups" (trafficking victims and smuggled migrants). In a letter written to the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, in September 2010, Human Rights Watch expressed its deep fear about the ATIP Act amendments:

> We are concerned that the amendments conflate the serious rights abuse of human trafficking with the immigration violation of people smuggling. As a result, front-line law enforcement officials will inevitably treat trafficking victims as undocumented migrants subject to immediate deportation, undermining government efforts to counter trafficking and risk exposing trafficked persons, abused migrants, and refugees to further rights violations.
>
> <div align="right">(Human Rights Watch, 2010)</div>

Despite the agitation by Human Rights Watch, the Home Minister, Hishamuddin Hussein, stated that the amendments to the ATIP Act were made because human trafficking and migrant smuggling are strongly connected and interconnected especially in the context of foreign labour and migrants' exploitation (Malaysiakini, 2010). The Home Minister seems to have missed the point.

3.5.3.3 Narrowed definition

The definition of trafficking in the amended ATIP Act has been significantly altered and no longer conforms to the international legislation. The present meaning is confined to the exploitation of people via "coercion". In the ATIP Act 2007, coercion is described as "threats of serious harm to or physical restraint against any person and the abuse or threatened abuse of the legal process". This definition departs from the United Nations' Trafficking Protocol (Article 3) in which human trafficking does not entail only the element of coercion, but also elements "of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person" (United Nations, 2000, p. 2). The broadened meaning also encompasses the exploitation of child trafficking where victims are forced into exploitative work conditions by adults (Human Rights Watch, 2010). The omission of these aspects in the human trafficking definition can have a significant impact, resulting in many trafficked individuals, including sex-trafficking victims, being excluded from the ATIPSOM Act's protection.

The new interpretation of "trafficking in persons" in the ATIPSOM Act 2007 refers to "all actions involved in acquiring or maintaining the labour or services of a person through coercion" (underlining in original) (Section 2) is also not sufficiently explicit because it could encompass all forms of labour exploitation, not just sexual exploitation, and it applies to all those engaged in the recruitment and employment of labour migrants. In other words, the law does not stipulate exactly who will be punished because there are many people who are involved in trafficking, ranging from the trafficker to recruitment agents, employment agencies, outsourcing companies, and employers (Lyons & Ford, as cited in Yea, 2014).

In addition to the above, in the section titled "Offence in relation to trafficked person in transit", (Section 15A) of the ATIPSOM Act, the amended law uses the term "any person" as in "any person who brings in transit a trafficked person through Malaysia by land, sea or air, or otherwise arranges or facilitates such act" (underlining in original). Situations in which the doer of the action (offender) is not specified suggest that the law (ATIPSOM Act) is loosely constructed, and this allows the real culprits to find ways to avoid prosecution. On one hand, the amended law has effectively created a framework from which those involved in smuggling activity can be arrested and penalised—a positive step taken by the Malaysian government to remedy previous negligence. However, the law has done little to address the problems relating to sex-trafficking victims as there are no separate policies for different types of trafficking actions anywhere in the legislation, and by categorising all victims (trafficking and smuggling) under one item of legislation, victims of sex trafficking can continue to be exploited and remain vulnerable to re-trafficking.

3.5.3.4 Victim protection

In terms of the provisions linked to victim protection, Section 51 of the ATIPSOM Act 2007 specifies that trafficked people who are foreign victims should "be placed in a refuge place that looks more like a detention centre for a duration of not more than 3 months" (underlining in original) before releasing the person "to an immigration officer for necessary action in accordance with the provisions of the Immigration Act 1959/63" (underlining in original). The 2015 report by the United States Department of State Trafficking in Persons recorded that:

> It denied foreign victims the liberty to leave the premises without a chaperone; victims remained under police custody for hospital visits or court appearances. The government did not allow foreign victims to work outside the facilities while under protection orders, and repatriated them to their home countries after their protection orders expired, in accordance with Malaysian law. Some government officials continued to view foreign

victims as migrant workers and not victims, hampering progress on victim protection efforts. Victim services were inadequate; in some facilities, victims were only allowed to call their families once per month for 15 minutes.

<div align="right">(U.S. Department of State, 2015)</div>

The recent 2016 statement contained the following:

The revised law allows victims to work and to move freely in and out of government facilities. During the reporting period, the government collaborated with an international hotel chain to identify employment opportunities for trafficking victims and advertised the positions to more than 100 trafficking victims in government facilities.

<div align="right">(U.S. Department of State, 2016)</div>

Although the recent 2016 United States *Trafficking in Persons Report* confirmed some progress made by the Malaysian government in terms of allocating more freedom of movement to trafficked victims and permitting them the right to work, some aspects that require rectification have not been reviewed in an unambiguous way. For example, the report did not state whether the victims are allowed to move freely within the shelter or whether the victims are allowed to contact their families more frequently. This raises questions about whether the Malaysian government is really serious in its efforts to improve the protection of trafficking victims.

3.5.4 The Immigration Act 1959/63 (Act 155)

The increased number of foreigners entering Malaysia is believed to contribute to the human trafficking problem. The government relies on the Immigration Act 1959/63 because it addresses problems relating to visa violations by undocumented migrants and trafficked victims. Being a division under the Ministry of Home Affairs, The Immigration Department of Malaysia aims to provide services to Malaysian citizens, permanent residents, and visitors from foreign countries. As a reformation of the prior Immigration and Residency Act, the Malaysian government enacted the Immigration

Act in 2002. The Immigration Department is responsible for issuing travel documents and passports to citizens of Malaysia and residents with permanent status. It also issues passes, visas, and authorised permits to foreigners who enter the country, and it controls people's movement at the permitted entry and exit points. Another important function of the department involves the enforcement of the Immigration Act 1959/63, Passport Act 1966, Immigration Regulations 1963, and Amendment 2010 to the ATIPSOM 2007.

Under present law, immigration officials have been given enhanced border security measures and have begun scrutinising foreign visa applicants closely to look for potential trafficking victims. Since the legislative changes took place, the number of illegal occupants and trafficking victims in the country has decreased. However, as there were no reliable data relating to government prosecutions, particularly in relation to human trafficking, it can be said that the legislation has yet to be proven effective in helping to curb the trafficking of human beings. The Malaysian Immigration Act shares some similarities with the ATIPSOM Act. This is because immigration officials have responsibility for preventing immigrants from coming into and leaving the country. The immigrants' legality is subordinated to the Malaysian government's sovereignty, which has ultimate power over these immigrants.

Prohibited immigrants

The Malaysian Immigration Act 1959/63 contains clauses related to the members of the prohibited classes as shown in the following extract:

(3)(e)   any <u>prostitute</u>, or any person, who is living on or receiving, or who, prior to entering Malaysia, lived on or received, the proceeds of prostitution;

    (f)   any person who procures or attempts to bring into Malaysia <u>prostitutes or women or girls</u> for the purpose of prostitution or other immoral purpose . . .

As specified in the Immigration Act, the label prostitute is given to members of the prohibited classes since they are considered to be criminals and lawbreakers in the eyes of the legislation. The fact that Malaysian Immigration uses the word prostitute in relation to these immigrant women suggests that the legislation practices bigotry since the law dehumanises the victims by referring to their actions without recourse to human ethics (refer to the above extract from the Immigration Act). Although it is true that, historically, prostitution has often been considered to be gender-specific or exclusively applied to women and girls, male prostitutes also exist. According to Flowers (2011), although there are limited data about male prostitutes, some findings indicate that there could be as many males involved in prostitution as there are females. This is important because the Malaysian Immigration Act neither recognises nor includes males as prostitutes and thus their presence in this legislation has been entirely overlooked.

Victims of sex trafficking are already at an immense disadvantage when they confront law enforcement bureaucrats. "Because they live and work at the margins of society, they are easily and quickly labelled illegal immigrants and prostitutes" (Rieger, 2007, p. 245) and are therefore often documented as accomplices rather than as victims. Because the Malaysian immigration legal framework views all those involved in prostitution, whether the prostitution is consensual or forced in association with trafficking, they are all subject to the same legalities with regard to prosecution. Such a deficiency in the legislation reveals elements of one-sided discrimination. Trafficked victims who are perceived as not being victims are usually seized and deported to their home countries. According to Bailliet, (2006, p. 28) deporting to victims' home countries can be extremely risky for them as it typically involves going back "to dysfunctional states where reintegration is difficult and security not easily guaranteed". Often, when victims are sent back, the deporting country fails to monitor the victims'

welfare in their homeland and, as a consequence, "many victims appear to disappear" (Bailliet, 2006, p. 28).

3.6 Related Acts

In addition to the ATIPSOM Act and Immigration Act used as the main legal framework to refer to human trafficking offences, the Malaysian government relies on other Acts. These include the Penal Code (Act 574) and Women and Girls Protection 1973 (Act 106)—each of which is considered in the following subsections.

3.6.1 Penal Code (Act 574)

The Penal Code is "an act relating to criminal offences" (Penal Code, 2006). Section 372 of the Penal Code is sufficiently comprehensive to cover all types of human trafficking crimes, including kidnapping, abduction, slavery, forced labour, and rape. The Penal Code also refers to offences concerning trafficking of people for sexual purposes. The law specifies punishments for the trafficking of people and for the activity of procuring and trading of people through deceitful means (Section 372(1)). According to the code, whoever exploits any person for prostitution purposes "shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to fifteen years and with whipping, and shall also be liable to fine" (underlining in original).

The Penal Code also criminalises anyone living on the earnings of a prostitute, who can be punished in the same manner with "fifteen years and with whipping, and shall also be liable to fine" (underlining in original) under Section 372A. Prostitution alone is not an unlawful offense in the Penal Code, but a person found soliciting for prostitution or for other immoral purpose can be imprisoned for up to 1 year and subjected to a fine (Section 372B).

3.6.2 Women and Girls Protection 1973 (Act 106)

The Women and Girls Protection Act (WGPA) remains a powerful instrument to control, and provide legal protection to young women from, prostitution. Under this Act, any woman less than 21 years of age may be detained for a maximum of 3 years if she is found to be trained or exploited for prostitution purposes or any purpose of immoral conduct. Those who operate brothels and conduct the business of employing and trading, obtaining, or holding women and children in custody for prostitution, as well as those who act as mediators involved in the marketing and transporting of women into Malaysia to work in this illicit business, are also punishable under the WGPA. The Act also specifies penalties for individuals who "traffic women and girls whether or not for the purpose of prostitution, to live on the earnings of a prostitute or to have carnal knowledge of a female below 16 years of age" (Nagaraj & Siti Rohani Yahya, 1998, p. 90).

Unlike the Immigration Act that punishes foreign women who work as prostitutes in Malaysia under the category of prohibited immigrants, the WGPA does not punish a sex worker who derives an income from prostituting herself. However, soliciting in a public place is considered an offence. The WGPA has also been used to arrest and detain women in karaoke lounges and bars, while their male companions are untouched. According to Nagaraj and Siti Rohani Yahya (1998), although the WGPA has delineated many offences for those involved in prostitution, the process of convicting them is not straightforward due to lack of evidence and, because of this, alternative laws are used.

3.7 Discussion

In this chapter I have provided information about and evaluated the Malaysian legal system and the international legal framework pertaining to human trafficking, particularly sex trafficking. Generally, the ATIP Act and the amended ATIPSOM Act have not drawn distinctions between different types of human trafficking. Sex-trafficking victims are handled indiscriminately alongside other forms of human trafficking and smuggled migrants. As the distinction between trafficking and smuggling can be subtle, sex-trafficking victims face marginalisation because even the enforcement officials often mistake them for undocumented migrants and thus they are subject to immediate deportation. Also, there is no wording in the legal framework that distinguishes between the various types of trafficking victims except when interpreting the word "exploitation" in Section 2 of the ATIPSOM Act. In the absence of comprehensive legislation, the existing laws have done little to address problems faced by sex-trafficking victims. This is another major setback that requires restructuring in the ATIPSOM Act.

In order to avoid discrepancies in legislation, separate policies should be drafted because both human trafficking and migrant smuggling involve different kinds of crimes. The existing human trafficking law in Malaysia is an amalgamation of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants which has been renamed as the ATIPSOM Act. Adding "smuggling of migrants" into the amended ATIP Act essentially "criminalizing the facilitation of irregular migration into or out of Malaysia" (Human Rights Watch, 2010, para. 6). As a significant site for legal reference on matters relating to human trafficking, the government plays an indispensable role in the way that trafficking victims, particularly sex-trafficking victims, are represented. In order to protect both groups of individuals, Human Rights Watch (2010) proposed that the government

should separate human trafficking from smuggling of people. Despite the contribution and support of international bodies to the Malaysian government for tackling sex trafficking in the country, issues related to victims of sex trafficking have yet to be fully addressed and they are in need of critical attention. Sex trafficking is outlawed in Malaysia, and the fact that there are no specific laws that cater to the victims, causes the wellbeing of the many existing or potential trafficked victims to be at stake, and thus their representation becomes highly contestable.

3.8 Summary

The contents of Chapter 3 provide a comprehensive description of human trafficking legislation both within international and local contexts. The chapter commenced with explanations about limitations in the definition of human trafficking (Section 3.2). Next, the Malaysian government's legislative attempts to curb human trafficking were presented in Section 3.3. Following that, in Section 3.4, the U.S. Department of State TIP reports on Malaysia were discussed. The next two sections (3.5 and 3.6) introduced the legislation pertaining to human trafficking and sex work in Malaysia as well as Malaysia's relevant accompanying Acts. The chapter concluded with a discussion in Section 3.7 by my pointing out the arguments relating to the existing legislation and proposing ways that could benefit the victims of sex trafficking.

CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND TO THE ANALYSES

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains information about the theoretical background to the analyses that were employed in this research. Following this brief introductory section, in Section 4.2 I describe the overall research design. In Section 4.3, the key concepts of critical discourse analysis (CDA) are discussed. Next, in Sections 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6, respectively, I describe the three specific approaches used within this research, namely the discourse-historical approach (DHA), the sociosemantic network of social actors, and thematic narrative analysis. In doing so, I indicate how they are used within the present research. A summary of the chapter is presented in Section 4.7.

4.2 Research design

This study is located within the paradigm of qualitative research. According to Nápoles-Springer and Stewart (2006), qualitative research can be beneficial for researchers who investigate special populations and individuals who are traditionally underrepresented in research. This study is framed within the critical discourse analysis (CDA) perspective with particular focus on the discourse-historical approach (DHA) and sociosemantic network of social actors. Thematic narrative approach was also employed to examine the personal narratives of the victims.

4.3 Critical discourse analysis

Theorists and researchers who use CDA recognise language as "a central vehicle" through which "people are constituted as individuals and as social subjects" (Mills, 2004, p. 118). CDA emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a conceptual

framework within the studies of European discourse initiated by Fairclough (1989, 1995, 2001), van Dijk (1993, 1998), Wodak (1996, 2001), and others. These theorists adopted a modified Foucauldian definition of discourse that encouraged researchers to adopt a critical standpoint toward the analysis of discourses on "a more ground-level approach" to analyse concrete features of language that demonstrate the construction of power inequalities (Mills, 2004, p. 119).

When a discourse violates human rights or plays a role in social discrimination, that discourse is perceived to be undesirable. Discourses are not powerful in their own right. They gain power when they are used by people on an everyday basis, most prominently by those in powerful positions in society (Chilton, 2004). Because a dichotomy between "Us" and "Them" is a typical feature in the discourse of social discrimination, examining discourse about sex trafficking from a critical stance is essential. Through research based on CDA, the discriminatory pitting of dominant elite groups against powerless victims, embedded in the form of subtle linguistic strategies, can be exposed.

CDA researchers attempt to transform people's mindsets from perceiving "language as abstract to seeing our words as having meaning in a particular historical, social, and political condition" (McGregor, 2003, para. 4). When using CDA, researchers focus on discourses such as those from institutions that are found in everyday communication (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). The aim is to deconstruct those discourses in order to reveal the ideologically imbued and hidden power structures, political domination, and control, as well as practices of exclusion (Tapia, Kvasny, & Ortiz, 2011, p. 220; Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl, & Liebhart, 2009, p. 8).

4.3.1 Text and discourse

McKee (2003, p. 4) defined text as "something that we make meaning from". When analysing texts, it is important to consider the use of language in the particular text for understanding social relations because it is via language that social inequalities are realised (Pennycook, 2002). Whether we are aware of it or not, the words we speak are important because of the power that they carry in mirroring the interests of the writers. The roles that the dominant elites and groups such as government bureaucrats, leaders, and editors play are highly capable of having an impact because those people have the authority to shape issues in society and to decide what should be discussed and how it should be discussed (Henry & Tator, 2002), while words of the powerless are excluded because their words are seen as being irrelevant, inappropriate, or without substance.

As an analytical tool, CDA primarily involves investigating the "impact of the systematic choices of particular language items or grammatical construction within a text" (Mills, 2004, p. 119). CDA provides an ideal platform from which to identify the linguistic means used by those in power to maintain inequalities in society (van Dijk, 2001, p. 300; Wodak & Meyer, 2009, pp. 10–32). Because language shapes and establishes the basis of communication between people, powerful groups rely on discourses to enable them to control, obscure, and work their way through power (Oktar, 2001). McLellan (1995, p. 60) stated that language has often been "taken for granted, like a window through which we look at the world outside". However, this perspective is no longer fully accepted because more critical approaches are taken within language studies. Following the convention set by CDA researchers in exposing inequality in discourse, in the first part of the present study I attempt to disclose the media's ideologies through language use and how ideologies in media shape the public's understanding and interpretation about sex-trafficking victims. Revealing the

hidden ideologies in media texts could incline readers to question and even defy the power relations that exist in society.

4.3.2 Interdisciplinary features

CDA is a multidisciplinary approach to textual study that regards "language as a form of social practice" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 20). In order to understand the way that language operates in establishing, as well as disseminating power and knowledge via discourse, an eclectic or interdisciplinary approach is desirable (Wodak, 2004; Wodak & Meyer, 2009, pp. 3–7).

In keeping with eclecticism, the instruments that researchers use to analyse discourse can be flexible. According to Rashidi and Rasti (2012, p. 2), CDA makes extensive use of tools and techniques from related disciplines, for example "social semiotics, stylistics, critical theory, [and] film theory" to expose hidden ideologies. Reisigl and Wodak (2009, p. 95) stated that the tools used for each analysis should be modified with clear explanations according to the particular problem under investigation. The eclectic element in CDA is also useful in demonstrating how text discourse and the notion of power and ideology are interconnected and in turn inform interpretations that are provided to the public. This ideological assumption is not directly imposed by the media; rather, it is effected through the underlying "hidden agenda" that resides within the text (Cameron, 2001).

The present study is established with the belief that this clandestine way of maintaining power in texts is made possible through both intentional and unintentional use of language. As CDA researchers endeavour to reveal power relations that are frequently concealed, the results derived from research will be communicated not only

within the academic domain but also into broader society—to those in positions of influence and experts because they have the power to bring about change in society. The results of CDA should also be of practical relevance to society in that they may lead to the liberation of people from powers of an unequal or exclusionary nature (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Because CDA is very much diversified in terms of its theories and analytical categories, it can at times create difficulty for scholars and academics from diverse disciplines. KhosraviNik (2010) has indicated that this is partly due to a lack of proper understanding of the concepts behind CDA, especially in clarifying the connection between discourses, ideologies, and texts that, to date, is lacking among researchers.

4.3.3 Criticisms

CDA, like some other approaches, has been subject to criticism because of its attempt to make explicit the nuances in text. According to Kress (1996, p. 15), studies in CDA have been demonstrated to be the most "overtly political" form of discourse analysis that aims at "altering inequitable distributions of economic, cultural and political goods in contemporary societies". The approach used by CDA researchers in selecting the texts for analysis, according to Sharrock and Anderson (1981), has attracted criticism from a number of people. Meinhof and Richardson, (1994) indicated that some researchers using CDA have been criticised for selecting unrepresentative texts (perhaps not deliberately), while others have argued that the methodology in CDA tends to be anecdotal and therefore there will be tendency for the conclusions to support the preconceptions of the researchers (Zhang & Mihelj, 2012, p. 510).

Other criticisms include some researchers' preference, when using CDA, for selecting only a small number of texts, or only selected portions of text (Fowler, 1996;

Stubbs, 1997), leading to "concerns of over representativeness of the texts selected" (Sriwimon & Zilli, 2017, p. 136). Furthermore, texts that are not examined thoroughly may not permit researchers to identify recurring linguistic patterns (Stubbs, 1994, p. 204). When the amount of data collected is small, the probability of prejudiced data increases. In order to avoid this criticism, Blackledge (2005), Wodak (1986, 2009), Wodak and Schulz (1986), and Wodak and van Dijk (2000) have studied large samples of data in their research. This concern, however, has been addressed differently by P. Baker (2006, pp. 19–21), who argued that the volume of the text is not an important criterion for determining prospective value because even a particular single utterance can be valuable and powerful in terms of analysis.

4.3.4 Ideology and power

Fairclough (1995) regarded CDA to be a practical method for exposing the ideological patterns that are imbricated in language. Focusing on ideologies in text analysis, according to Fairclough (2001, p. 2), is important because ideologies are "closely linked to language, because using language is the commonest form of social behaviour". According to van Dijk (1998, p. 3), "ideologies are usually defined as political or social systems of ideas, values or prescriptions of groups or other collectivities, and have the function of organizing or legitimating the actions of the group". van Dijk further argued that newspapers carry important roles in creating and changing the opinions of the public, establishing political agendas, manipulating social discussions, and making certain decisions, as well as other kinds of actions that involve social and political issues (van Dijk, 1996).

Oktar (2001, p. 314) regarded ideology as "presentations of who we are, what we stand for, what our values are and what our relationships with others are". This

perspective is particularly beneficial in studying the discourses about sex trafficking because it centres on the function of ideology in the construction of "Us" and "Them" that takes place in society. Ideologies are enacted through social practices and through discourses that aim to achieve particular functions and outcomes. Fairclough's (1995) interpretation is comparable to Oktar's definition, even though Fairclough's focus was on the way media discourse portrays the global world, people, and the community as a whole. According to Fairclough (1995, p. 12),

> The ideological work of media language includes particular ways of representing the world (e.g. particular representations of Arabs, or of the economy), particular constructions of social identities (e.g. the construction in particular ways of scientific experts who feature on radio or television programmes), and particular constructions of social relations (e.g. the construction of relations between politicians and public as simulated relations between people in a shared life world.

Fairclough (1989), in his discourse about ideology and commonsense, further explained why media discourse, in particular, is significant in ideology construction. According to him, "ideology is most effective when its workings are least visible" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 85). This means that people in power can maintain their dominant positions only when the ideology that supports them is implicitly embedded in media discourse. "If one becomes aware that a particular aspect of commonsense is sustaining power inequalities at one's own expense, it ceases to be commonsense, and may cease to have the capacity to sustain power inequalities, i.e. to function ideologically" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 85). In other words, ideologies that are explicitly foregrounded in discourse may cause people in powerful positions to lose power, and, because of this, the media tends to keep ideologies obscured. This also means that when the ideology is concealed, people are being deceived by the media by its presenting them with a false idea of reality so that the dominant groups can maintain their power (van Dijk, 1998).

4.4 The discourse-historical approach: The first method for analysing newspaper texts

The DHA falls within the broad school of CDA. Krzyżanowski (2010) stated that its main focus is on discursive and linguistic elements, social practices, and in-depth analysis. According to Wodak (2011, p. 62), DHA is constructed to investigate implicit prejudicial statements as well as to identify and bring to the surface the codes and insinuations found in discriminatory discourse. Reisigl and Wodak (2001) first developed the DHA to examine Kurt Waldheim's 1986 Austrian presidential campaign by analysing the structure of antisemitic stereotyped images that appeared in public discourses at that time (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 70). It is the most powerful approach within discourse analytical research relating to the positive-Self and negative-Other presentations.

Because researchers who use CDA are often criticised for being biased in their analyses, one way to avoid this, is by adopting the process of triangulation. This is one of the most prominent aspects of DHA in which researchers endeavour to work "interdisciplinarily, multi-methodically and on the basis of a variety of different empirical data as well as background information" (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 35). As asserted by Reisigl and Wodak (2001, p. 35),

> depending on the respective object of investigation, users of the DHA attempt to transcend the pure linguistic dimension and to include, more or less systematically, the historical, political, sociological and/or psychological dimension in the analysis and interpretation of a specific discursive occasion.

Another important, and inherent, aspect of DHA involves the investigation of the relevant historical context (Wodak, 2001, p. 67) which is then incorporated into the analysis of discourses and texts. When researchers attempt to explore historical and political topics as well as texts using the DHA, they try to incorporate "as much

available information as possible on the historical background … in which discursive 'events' are embedded" (Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl, & Liebhart, 1999, pp. 8–9). Wodak (1996, p. 18) has stated that "it is not enough to analyse texts — one also needs to consider how texts are interpreted and received and what social effects texts have". Additionally, researchers using the DHA study the historical component of discourse by investigating how particular types of discourse are subject to change. Because Wodak (2001, p. 65) regarded text, particularly historically based texts or texts that are formed from diachronic study, she proposed the following three critiques that should be considered when analysing any text:

    (1)   Text or discourse immanent critique aims at discovering inconsistencies, (self-) contradictions, paradoxes and dilemmas in the text-internal or discourse-internal structures.

    (2)   The 'socio-diagnostic critique' is concerned with the demystifying exposure of the – manifest or latent – possibly persuasive or 'manipulative' character of discursive practices. This is carried out by employing the background and contextual knowledge and embedding the interactional structures of a discursive event in a wider frame of social and political relations, processes and circumstances.

    (3)   Prognostic critique concerns the end result of the findings by providing practical suggestions to construct a sound and neutral text or discourse.

                                                              (Wodak, 2001, pp. 64–65)

Reisigl and Wodak (2009, p. 88) regarded the above critiques as being important for examining biased power relations as well as bringing to the surface the existence of dominant ideologies within the texts under study because the DHA "aims to 'demystify' the hegemony of specific discourses by deciphering the ideologies that establish, perpetuate or fight dominance". Researchers who use the DHA also emphasise the importance of power and power relations in language. The DHA is used by researchers to critically analyse the language of those in power because those people have the agency to bring changes in society.

Wodak's concept of context (Wodak, 2008) takes into consideration four levels of analysis that are listed below. The first level involves linguistic analysis; the remaining three levels involve the social theories of context within the DHA.

(1)   the immediate, language or text internal co-text;

(2)   the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses;

(3)   the extralinguistic social/sociological variables and institutional frames of a specific 'context of situation' (middle-range theories);

(4)   the broader sociopolitical and historical contexts, which the discursive practices are embedded in and related to ('grand theories')

(Wodak, 2008, p. 13)

The DHA is effective in the sense that researchers using it "integrate systematically all available background information in the analysis and interpretation of the many layers of a written or spoken text" (Wodak, 1995, p. 209). The DHA moves beyond the dimension of the linguistic and assimilates the historical, political, sociological, and psychological dimensions when it is used to analyse particular discourses. The DHA therefore functions as a tool to reconcile and bridge sociological and linguistic categories.

4.4.1 Tools of analysis

By using the DHA in the present study, I aim to explore the linguistic and contextual dimensions of newspaper texts by employing the method of triangulation. At one point, Reisigl (2008, p. 100) argued that triangulation should be executed in the early stages of data acquisition. However, Reisigl and Wodak (2009, p. 96) subsequently stressed the importance of applying triangulation throughout a research enterprise, particularly during the analysis of data, and it is that second strategy that I employed in this

research. Wodak's DHA achieves triangulation both at text-internal and text-external levels to ensure validity (refer to Section 4.4.2).

Practitioners of the DHA often employ a three-dimensional approach when analysing data at the text-internal level. According to Reisigl and Wodak (2009, p. 93), text-internal triangulation (linguistic) in the DHA involves investigation of textual meanings and structures that comprise the following aspects:

- Specific contents or topics of a specific discourse

- Discursive strategies

- Linguistic means (as types) and the specific, context-dependent linguistic realisations (as tokens)

and text-external triangulation (contextual) in the DHA involves investigation of the following four external features of the text during qualitative analysis:

- The intertextual and interdiscursive relationships between utterances, texts, genres, and discourses

- The extra-linguistic variables

- The institutional frames of the specific context of a situation

- The history and archaeology of texts and organisations.

4.4.2 Analytical categories

Researchers in the field of social studies have generally become receptive to interdisciplinary research and, as a result, have embraced the opportunity to use more than one theory or method (van Dijk, 1993). Because researchers in CDA stress the importance of analysing texts from the perspective of social and historical contexts, I

will investigate the representation of sex-trafficking victims in newspaper texts from both text-internal and text-external perspectives. Figure 4.1 illustrates the selected categories I used within the DHA's text-internal and text-external analyses.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Linguistic analysis (Text-internal) │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│         Discursive strategies        │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │
      ┌───────────┼───────────┐
      ▼           ▼           ▼
┌───────────┐ ┌───────────┐ ┌───────────────┐
│Referential│ │Predication│ │ Argumentative │
└───────────┘ └───────────┘ └───────────────┘
                  │
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│           Linguistic devices         │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Contextual analysis (Text-external) │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│         Intertextual analysis        │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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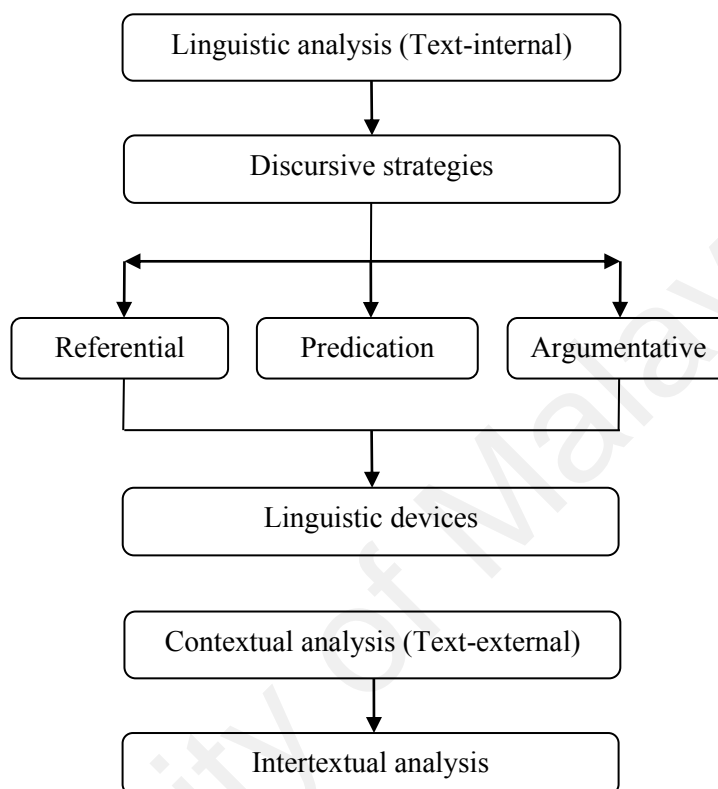
Figure 4.1: Linguistic and contextual levels of analysis in the DHA

4.4.2.1 Text-internal analyses

Within text-internal analysis, the DHA's three types of strategies, namely referential (categorisation of social actors), predication (attribution of social actors), and argumentative (topoi) strategies will be used as categories of analysis when examining newspaper texts. In the DHA, strategies are "a more or less accurate and more or less intentional plan of practices (including discursive practices) adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic aim" (Wodak, 2001, p. 73). In other words, strategies are analytical tools for examining the ways in which language becomes meaningful and the purpose language achieves in a particular situation. The

linguistic means and context-dependent linguistic realisations (devices) that shape the strategies for analysing discourse will also be identified. This is done with the purpose of studying implicitly biased statements as well as to identify and reveal the hidden messages and insinuations found in discriminatory discourse.

4.4.2.2 Text-external analyses

In my research I also incorporate some aspects of analyses at the text-external level. Investigation of texts at this level entails the exploration of the relationship between what have been called intertextual and interdiscursive discourses (refer to Section 4.4.4). Within this study, I will investigate only the intertextual aspects of the newspaper texts. This is because the element of voice is closely associated with intertextuality, and in order to examine whether sex-trafficking victims are given voice, intertextuality is analysed together with the referential and predication strategies in Chapter 6. The analysis of the intertextual features is also essential for the construction of the positive-Self and negative-Other as well as for exploring power and ideology at the text-internal level.

4.4.3 Self and other presentation in the discourse-historical approach

The unequal power relations and obscured ideologies in society contribute to the representations of positive-Self and negative-Other in discourse. According to KhosraviNik (2015, p. 71) in his book *Discourse, Identity and Legitimacy,* such representations may occur at both the international and national arenas.

> The broader arena of international relations calls for various kinds of political representations in more complex contexts, where the economic, social, political, cultural, and religious aspects of life inter-mix. In both the national political field (e.g. parliamentary campaigns and party elections) and the international (e.g. international political, religious, cultural conflicts), representations of the Self and the Other often become the main subject matter of political discourse.

Different strategies that range from "mass media control to power over content modifications and linguistic mechanisms" (KhosraviNik, 2015, p. 71) are all possible for understanding the presentations of Self and Other for varied political ends. Studies by Reisigl and Wodak (2009), Wodak et al. (1999), and Wodak and Matouschek (1993) have all indicated that the dichotomy of "Us" versus "Them" is an important theme that has been widely discussed.

In this study, the government and its allies are in-groups for propagating ideology and gaining solidarity, while the sex-trafficking victims are represented as the out-group. The in-groups have used certain strategies to characterise the out-groups in order to gain the support of the public to agree with the government's actions. To demystify and define the dichotomy of Self and Other presentation, Reisigl and Wodak (2001, p. 45) developed the following five questions:

- How are persons named and referred to linguistically? (referential/nomination strategies).
- What traits, characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to them? (predication strategies).
- By means of what arguments and argumentation schemes do specific persons or social groups try to justify and legitimise the inclusion or exclusion of some? (argumentative strategies).
- From what perspective or point of view are these labels, attributions and arguments expressed? (perspectivation framing or discourse strategies).
- Are the respective utterances articulated overtly, are they even intensified or are they mitigated? (mitigation and intensification strategies).

As indicated above, the five questions lead to the DHA's five types of strategies (referential/nomination, predication, argumentative, perspectivation, and mitigation and

intensification) that are connected to the positive-Self and negative-Other presentation. Table 4.1 summarises the five strategies, and in Sections 4.4.3.1 to 4.4.3.5 more elaborated information about each of these strategies is provided.

Table 4.1: Discursive strategies

Strategy	Objectives	Devices
Referential/ Nomination	Construction of in-groups and out-groups	Membership categorization, deictics, anthroponyms, biological naturalizing, and depersonalizing metaphors and metonymies
Predication	Labelling social actors more or less positively or negatively, deprecatorily or appreciatively	Stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits, implicit and explicit predicates
Argumentative	Justification of positive or negative attributions	Topoi used to justify political inclusion or exclusion, discrimination or preferential treatment
Perspectivation; framing or discourse representation	Expressing involvement, positioning speaker's point of view	Reporting, description, narration or quotation of (discriminatory) events and utterances
Intensification/ Mitigation	Modifying the epistemic status of a proposition	Intensifying or mitigating the illocutionary force of (discriminatory) utterances

(Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 95)

4.4.3.1 Referential strategies

The referential, or nomination strategies are employed in the construction and representation of social actors, whether those actors are individuals, groups, or institutions. These strategies are often in a basic discriminatory form such as the use of demeaning labels and words. This is realised through the strategy of positive in-groups and negative out-groups. According to Reisigl and Wodak (2001, p. 47), when comparing these two groups, out-groups usually remain anonymous or are linguistically

excluded or backgrounded in comparison to in-groups. van Leeuwen (1996) argued that social actors can be represented through nomination strategies such as categorisation, abstraction, collectivisation, and impersonalisation.

According to van Leeuwen, the social actors' qualities, role allocation, agency, and actions are highlighted, for example, through specific uses of pronouns, verbs, modality, and adjectives. Some of the strategies pointed out in Reisigl and Wodak's framework in identifying social actors' representations are based on a modified version of van Leeuwen's social actor categories (refer to Section 5.4.3.2.1). In analysing the representation of sex-trafficking victims in newspaper texts, only some of the referential strategies adapted from Reisigl and Wodak (2001, p. 48–52) are employed in this study because these strategies occurred frequently in the texts. These are shown in Table 4.2.

The difference between Reisigl and Wodak's, and van Leeuwen's, taxonomies of sociosemantic network of social actors is that the modified version (by Reisigl & Wodak) does not include all of van Leeuwen's types of referential strategies. However, the modified forms are useful from a critical perspective, for example in exploring the in-groups and the out-groups explicitly in order to achieve certain ideological purposes.

4.4.3.2   Predication strategies

Reisigl and Wodak (2001, p. 45) define predication strategies as "any kind of evaluation, attribution or predication upon the social actors". Predication strategies are very much linked with referential strategies (refer to Section 5.4.3.2.1). To be more specific, predication strategies are presented in linguistic forms that assign negative or positive qualities to the in-groups and out-groups. These strategies can be realised

through evaluative attributions, for example adjectives, prepositional phrases, relative clauses, and infinitive phrases (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

Table 4.2: Referential strategies

Selected strategies	Linguistic means	Examples of realisation (Types)
Somatisation 1. Ethnification	Ethonyms	The Poles, Romanians, nationals
2. Reference in terms of sexual orientation or habits	Anthroponyms (Referring to persons in terms of their sexual orientation or habits)	Heterosexual, lesbian, gay
Spatialisation	Toponyms	Asia, Africa, America
De-spatialisation	De-toponymic anthroponyms	Europeans, Africans, Englishman, foreigner, Asians
Explicit dissimilation	Xenonyms	Strangers, others, aliens
Collectivisation	Deictic pronouns Possessive determiners	We, us, they, them, group Our, their

4.4.3.3 Argumentative strategies

Argumentative strategies involve the application of *topoi* or *loci*[2] which refer to parts of argumentation that belong to the "obligatory, either explicit or inferable premises" (Wodak, 2001, p. 74). The words topoi and loci (both plural and regarded as synonymous) and topos (singular) refer to location or place, as in topography. However, in the DHA, they are the "content-related warrants or 'conclusion rules' that connect the argument or arguments with the claim or conclusion" (Wodak, 2001, p. 74). Reisigl and

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[2] Loci is the plural form of locus. It refers to a place or locality.

Wodak (2001) have provided a list of topoi, some of which are the topoi of law and right, burden, danger and threat, humanitarianism, justice, numbers, responsibility, culture and abuse, finances, authority, and urgency.

4.4.3.4   Perspectivation strategies

Within the DHA, the perspectivation strategies allow the "speakers [to] express their involvement in the discourse, and position their point of view in the reporting, description, narration or quotation of discriminatory events or utterances" (Wodak, 2003, p. 140). The social actors attempt to rationalise their viewpoints to influence others to agree with them through the use of quotations, narration, reporting, or description. By these means, the writers may exhibit their involvement which can be recognised through such things as direct quotation, turn-taking, and repetition, or writers may detach their involvement, for example through use of indirect speech and relative clauses.

4.4.3.5   Intensification and mitigation strategies

Intensification (explicit expression) and mitigation strategies (implicit expression) are used to reveal the way utterances are used to articulate discriminatory aspects in texts (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 45). These strategies can either sharpen or dilute statements through the use of "modals, tag questions, subjunctives, hesitations, vague expressions, hyperboles, litotes, indirect speech acts, and verbs of saying, thinking and feeling" (Wodak, 2001, p. 93).

4.4.4   Intertextuality and interdiscursivity in the discourse-historical approach

The DHA takes into consideration the "intertextuality and interdiscursivity relationships between utterances, texts, genres and discourses" (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 93). In

this study, I incorporated intertextuality in the analysis of media text. Interdiscursivity was not included because there were few instances of it within the selected articles. The following sections present a description of intertextuality, then, for the sake of completeness, interdiscursivity.

4.4.4.1 Intertextuality

Intertextuality refers to the associations of meaning between texts of a similar kind within a specific genre. When the insertion of new elements in another context (recontextualisation) takes place, to some extent new meanings are acquired from the decontextualised elements (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 90). The analysis of discourse representation through intertextual analysis enables researchers to recognise the included and excluded voices of the actors in the texts, why some actors' voices are more powerful or visible than others, which actors are being marginalised, and how some voices are included in a particular text, either directly or indirectly. Intertextual analysis can be performed through the identification of quotations, explicit references (Swales, 1990), plagiarism (Pecorari, 2010; Pecorari & Shaw, 2012), or re-use of institutional text (Shaw & Pecorari, 2013).

4.4.4.2 Interdiscursivity

Interdiscursivity "indicates that discourses can be linked to discourses on other topics or sub-topics" (Wodak & Richardson, 2009, p. 46). Fairclough (2003) has stated that "when different discourses come into conflict and particular discourses are contested, what is centrally contested is the power of these preconstructed semantic systems to generate particular visions of the world" (p. 130). Thus, analysis of interdiscursivity could allow for the investigation of power allocation among various social actors engaged in discourse as well as defining the perspectives of different actors concerning

who is more, or less, influential. Further, interdiscursive analysis discloses the text producers' strategies and whether they are reinforcing or narrowing particular ideological beliefs in their texts in a way that may have an impact on certain social actors.

4.5 The sociosemantic network of social actors: The second method for analysing newspaper texts

The second method that I employed for analysing the newspaper texts was based on the sociosemantic network of social actors proposed by van Leeuwen (1996). van Leeuwen's framework was adopted because it is considered to be a "powerful tool of enquiry within CDA" (Rashidi & Rasti, 2012, p. 2). Analysis of social actors allows researchers to understand how those actors' identities and relations are structured and represented in discourse. van Leeuwen provided detailed analytical categories (refer to Appendix A) to represent social actors as well as their linguistic realisations in texts. His approach differs from that of other critical discourse linguists in that his "operationalization of analytical categories on 'in' and 'out' groups prioritizes the *socio-semantic* aspects over linguistic realization" (KhosraviNik, 2010, p. 58, italics in original). These social actors achieve the role of actors because they perform particular roles within a specified social sphere. In some cases, social actors may have more liberty than do others, depending on their ability to perform certain tasks. The analysis of social actors is similar to the DHA's intertextuality in that van Leeuwan's approach permits recognition of whose voices are emphasised or deemphasised, included or excluded, in texts, and how those voices are recontextualised in relation to the voices of other social actors.

Because van Leeuwen's sociosemantic network of social actors is in-depth and integrates a wide range of discourse-level linguistic systems, the categories can be used

in newspaper analysis to categorise social actors, particularly, in the case of the present research, sex-trafficking victims. Although the present research gains from the approach put forward by van Leeuwen, only a limited set of analytical categories were applicable in the present study and therefore only those categories were considered for analysis. They are indicated in Figure 4.2 and described in detail in Sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2.

EXCLUSION	• Suppression • Backgrounding
INCLUSION	• Nomination 　└── Titulation • Categorisation 　├── Functionalisation 　├── Appraisement 　└── Identification • Impersonalisation 　└── Abstraction • Role allocation 　├── Activation 　└── Passivation • Individualisation • Assimilation 　├── Collectivisation 　└── Aggregation

Figure 4.2: Selected analytical categories adopted from van Leeuwen (1996) for categorising social actors

4.5.1 Exclusion

When there is no trace of the social actors in texts, exclusion is regarded as occurring. In some cases, the exclusion is unintentional, while in other cases the exclusion can be

intentional. There are two important categories in exclusion, namely suppression and backgrounding.

1. Suppression: Suppression refers to situations in which the social actors are not mentioned at any place in the text. van Leeuwen (1996, p. 39) stated that suppression "leave[s] no traces in the representation, excluding both the social actors and their activities". Suppression can be realised through passive agent deletion, nonfinite clauses, beneficiary deletion, nominalisation, process nouns, process adjectives, coding the action in the middle voice, or through post modifying phrases. In the following example, the person referred to in "concerns are being expressed" is suppressed through passive agent deletion.

> "In Japan similar concerns are being expressed about a mere trickle of Third World immigrants."

2. Backgrounding: In backgrounding, the social actors who have been excluded in relation to the activity may not be referred to openly in the text, but they are mentioned elsewhere in the text and the reader can clearly identify who they are. As stated by van Leeuwen (1996), backgrounding means that the social actors "are not so much excluded as de-emphasized, pushed into the background" (p. 39). Backgrounding can be realised through basic ellipses as in nonfinite clauses –*ing* and –*ed* participles, in infinite clauses (*to*) as well as in paratactic clauses—as in the following examples:

- Clearing the case, police set up the evidence. (nonfinite clause –ing)
- To maintain the policy, government has invited some experts. (infinite clause with to-)
- John invited them to the party, but the Wilsons didn't show up. (paratactic clauses)

<div align="right">(Bustam & Heriyanto, 2013, p. 39)</div>

4.5.2 Inclusion

When the social actor is included in texts, van Leeuwen (2008) referred to this as inclusion. In inclusion, not all of the social actors are represented directly in the text so the readers have to infer the existence of those social actors. The following are the inclusion elements that I employed in the analysis of newspaper texts.

1. Nomination: The analyses of social actors who are nominated are important for understanding the way they are represented in texts. van Leeuwen's nomination can be realised by using unique identity, for example, the use of proper nouns in three possible ways: "formal (surname only, with or without honorifics), semi-formal (given name and surname)", for example "*Dwight Harris*", and "informal (given first name only)" for example, "*Beverly*" (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 41). The following sentences are examples of semiformal nomination provided by van Leeuwen:

"Dwight Harris, aged 32 … his wife, Beverly, aged 33".
"Carole Maychill, a 32-year-old captain … Colonel Robert Pepper".

(van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 41)

Nominations can be titulated in the form of honorification, for example, standard titles, ranks, or affiliation as with "Colonel" in the above example.

2. Categorisation: In categorisation, the social actors are recognised "in terms of the identities and the functions that social actor(s) share with others" (van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 52). There are three types of categorisation: functionalisation, identification, and appraisement. van Leeuwen (2008, pp. 42–45) stated that functionalisation and identification are the two main forms of categorisation for describing social actors. Functionalisation is displayed through the social actors' actions, the things that they do in a given context, or something that they do with regard to their occupations or roles

using suffixes such as *-er*, *-ant*, *-ent*, *-ian*, *-ee,* as in "interviewer", "celebrant", "correspondent", "guardian" and "payee" (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 42). Government officials and people in power are often functionalised. Identification happens when social actors are identified not in terms of their actions, but in terms of what they are, for example, "age, gender, provenance, class, wealth, race, ethnicity, religion" (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 42). In the following example, the physical identification, "large mustache" signifies "a sense of rigid disciplinarianism" (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 45).

"'What are you doing there?' shouted the man with the large moustache."

(van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 44)

In appraisement, the social actors are given the evaluation of "good or bad, loved or hated, admired or pitied" (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 45), realised through use of nouns and idioms, for instance "the darling", "the wretch"—or "thugs" as in:

"[Eighty] young white thugs attacked African street vendors."

(van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 45)

3. Impersonalisation: Impersonalisation in texts is mainly employed for back-grounding the social actor's attribution (identity or roles), giving impersonal supremacy or dynamism to an action, or including positive or negative gradations to the social actors' actions or utterances. In order to create impersonalisation, either abstract nouns, or concrete nouns with meanings that exclude the semantic qualities of "human", are used.

van Leeuwen distinguished two types of impersonalisation: abstractions and objectivation. In this study, only abstraction is employed because it appeared more

frequently within the texts than did impersonalisation. "Abstraction occurs when social actors are represented by means of a quality assigned to them by the representation. For example "poor, black, unskilled, Muslim, or illegal" immigrants are assigned the quality of being problematic and this characteristic is used to represent them (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 46).

4. Role allocation: In role allocation, the social agent's specific role is emphasised, for example, by asking questions such as who takes on the role of an agent (actor) and who is a patient (goal) (see van Leeuwen, 1996, pp. 42–45). Activation and passivation are important subcategories of role allocation. van Leeuwen (1996) examined the notion of agency through both of these subcategories. He drew a distinction between them because a particular social actor's representation can be presented as either an active participant (e.g., active agents) or passive participant (e.g., agentless patients) in a given action. In passivation, the "social actors (who) are treated as objects in the representation" are subjected (van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 44) while the people or parties who are undergoing an activity are beneficialised. In the following example, "young white thugs" are activated (doers) whereas "African street vendors" are passivated (receivers of an activity).

> "[Eighty] young white thugs attacked African street vendors."
>
> (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 33)

5. Individualisation: Another important distinction is the individualisation of social actors. For example, when social actors are represented as individuals, the term individualisation is used. In the following example, the elite social actor is individualised by singularity.

"The Minister for Sport and Recreation, Mr. Brown, said the childhood drowning rate was higher than developed countries [sic]."

<div align="right">(van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 37)</div>

6. Assimilation: Assimilation occurs when social actors are referred to as groups, (e.g., Australians, Muslims). It can be differentiated in terms of aggregation and collectivisation. In aggregation, participants are classified and treated as statistics, facts, and figures, particularly in reference to opinion polls, surveys, marketing research, etc. The following is an example of aggregation in use of the word "surveys".

"This concern, the report noted, was reflected in surveys which showed that the level of support for stopping migration altogether was at a post-war high."

<div align="right">(van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 37)</div>

Collectivisation is normally exhibited via the first person plural (we) and nouns such as nation, community, and Australia. van Leeuwen (2008, p. 38) stated that "experts" are also collectivised (e.g., "the committee", "the surveys"). In the following example, assimilation is realised by mass noun "community".

"The 250,000-strong Sikh community has pressed for the right to have Mounties in turbans."

<div align="right">(van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 38)</div>

The entire system for representing social actors is complex. Some categories may overlap with other categories. However, van Leeuwen's sociosemantic categories provide a useful tool for investigating the aspects that can discriminate between social actors as well as for examining the hidden ideologies embedded in discourse.

4.6 Thematic narrative analysis: The method for analysing interviews

For analysing the interviews that I conducted with sex-trafficking victims, Riessman's (2008) thematic narrative analysis was selected. Thematic narrative analysis provides a creative way for compartmentalising text, identifying themes within it, and facilitating the depiction of these themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001). In thematic narrative analysis, the content of the narratives is emphasised and therefore should be regarded as a "foundational method for qualitative analysis" (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 78). Because of its flexible, diverse, and complex nature (Braun & Clark, 2006), thematic narrative analysis can be used on small stories (described below).

The small stories that emerged as salient from the victims' interview data were organised into different themes and interpreted based on *what* is said, not *how* it is said. Engaging a thematic narrative approach with an emphasis on small stories was intended to help me to understand the sex-trafficking victims' lived experience in sex work and capture the way they represent themselves within their discourse as well as to "sing up many truths/narratives" (Byrne-Armstrong, 2001, p. 112) embedded in their stories. The guiding assumption is that the victims' stories by and about themselves are meaningful.

Sex-trafficking victims' real-life narratives are powerful stories recounted by those who have survived sexual exploitation, and because their stories are barely ever published in newspapers, it is important to know how the victims represent themselves within their stories. As claimed by Bindel (2006, p. 5), women who have been exploited for sexual purposes have a unique story to tell listeners in that they have been "raped, abused, denigrated and damaged by the sex of prostitution". In reality, it could be difficult to gain access to them, but it is this group who represent the bulk of women in the underground commercial sex economy.

4.6.1 Small stories approach

In order to investigate how sex-trafficking victims have represented their sex work experience and their self-representations in narratives, I have employed the small story approach, a specific direction from the larger tradition of narrative analysis. Small stories are the "ephemeral narratives emerging in everyday mundane contexts" (Watson, 2007, p. 371). This approach nonetheless, has often been "disregarded in the analysis of interview data that are sought to provide rich description or meaningful accounts" (Ryan, 2008, p. 5).

The works of Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008, p. 379) about small stories indicate the differences between big stories and small stories in narrative analysis. Unlike big stories (e.g., autobiography, life history narratives, and memoir) which have long gained emphasis in research that involves narrative analysis, researchers are now more "interested in how people use small stories in their interactive engagements to construct a sense of who they are" (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008, p. 382). The small story approach is intended to detach itself from the overemphasis on big story biography as "the sole and privileged" within the domain of identity analysis. Telling stories is a natural occurrence in people's lives, and individuals one way or another have stories of life experience that they want to share with others.

Because small stories function as a representation of who people are, it is necessary to examine the stories narrated by marginalised individuals to make sense of what is happening "from inside". In this study, what Bamberg and Georgakopoulou's (2008) refer to as small stories are identified through speakers' narratives about their sex work and associated events in a conversation with me as interviewer.

4.6.2 Victims' agency

Through the narration of the small stories, we can also determine how much or how little agency the speakers have, or had, in their experiences. According to Milne (2013, p. 35), agency refers to the capacity of individuals to act independently and make their own choices. Victims of sexual exploitation are different from other kinds of trafficked victims because they have often been continually subjected to physical abuse and have suffered unresolved emotional trauma that makes it difficult for them to rebuild and make informed choices in their lives. In other words, the victims' agency is burdened when their choices are placed under systemic constraints that violate their human rights (Meyers, 2013). So, exploring the level of agency that victims of sex trafficking apply in their lives can only be achieved by analysing their stories. Within this study I do not claim that thematic narrative analysis is the best method for analysing the sex-trafficking victims' stories, but it is arguably useful in revealing the implicit meanings that underlie the narratives of the interviewees.

4.7 Summary

In this chapter I have described the three methodological approaches that were used in this study, namely the DHA, sociosemantic network of social actors, and thematic narrative analysis. The overall research design of the study was presented in Section 4.2. In Section 4.3, I described in detail the concept of CDA. Following this, the two approaches used to analyse the newspaper texts, the DHA and sociosemantic network of social actors, were discussed in Section 4.4 and Section 4.5, respectively. Finally, the third approach used to analyse the interview narratives, thematic narrative analysis, was described in Section 4.6.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I describe the methodological background that applies to my analyses of the newspaper texts and interview narratives. Following this brief introduction, in Section 5.2, I describe the need for triangulation in research. Section 5.3 contains the methodological framework of the study. In Sections 5.4 and 5.5, I describe the data collection and analytic procedures for both the newspaper texts and interview narratives, respectively. The chapter ends with a summary in Section 5.6.

5.2 Triangulation in research

Because there is often no single method that is capable of covering an entire topic under investigation (Bryman, 1988; Denzin, 1970), it has become customary in social science research to employ some form of triangulation or combination of methods in the study of a particular phenomenon. In addition to triangulation and mixed methods, the interdisciplinary nature of critical discourse analysis (CDA) allows researchers who use it to work with other disciplines and theories that are helpful in explaining social phenomena (Fairclough, 2005). For Wodak (2009, p. 9), "triangulation means that discursive phenomena are approached from a variety of methodological and theoretical perspectives taken from various disciplines." My approach to the analysis of the data is also eclectic in the sense that it benefited from CDA frameworks developed previously, in particular the discourse-historical approach (DHA) (Reisigl &Wodak, 2001) and sociosemantic network of social actors (van Leeuwen, 1996, 2008). The different research approaches that I employed in the study are illustrated in Figure 5.1.

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                        ┌──────────┐
                        │ Approach │
                        └──────────┘
        ┌──────────────────┼──────────────────┐
 ┌─────────────┐   ┌─────────────┐   ┌─────────────┐
 │ Discourse-  │   │Sociosemantic│   │ Thematic    │
 │ historical  │   │network of   │   │ narrative   │
 │ approach    │   │social actors│   │ approach    │
 └─────────────┘   └─────────────┘   └─────────────┘
        │    ┌──────────────┐              │
        │    │   Newspaper  │       ┌─────────────┐
        │    │    texts     │       │  Interview  │
        │    └──────────────┘       │  narratives │
        │                           └─────────────┘
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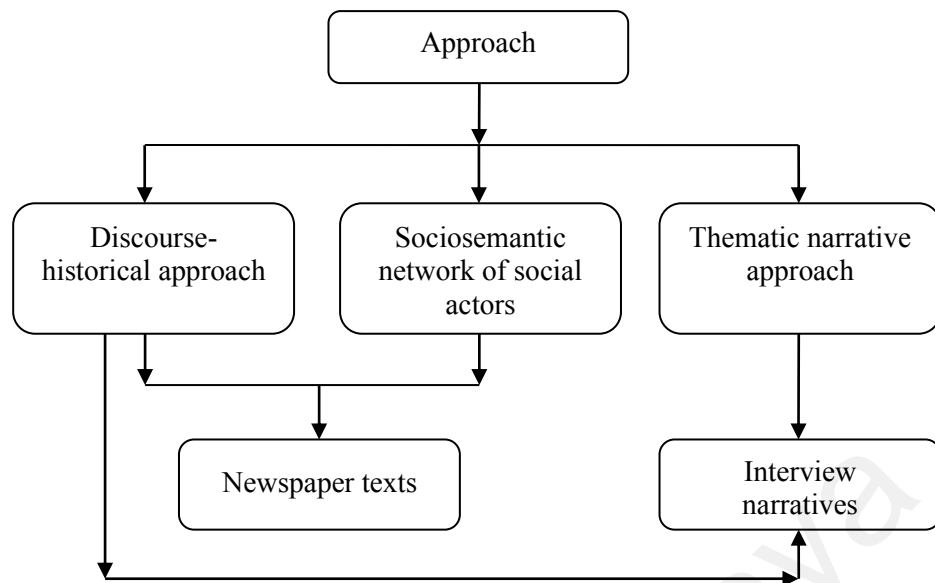
Figure 5.1: Research approaches employed in the study

As indicated in Figure 5.1, the newspaper texts are examined using the analytical tools in DHA and sociosemantic network of social actors. Both of these approaches which fall under the umbrella of CDA, advocate societal change and the redressing of discrimination in society. Because in part of this research I am interested in examining the discriminatory practices that exist about sex-trafficking victims in the newspaper, using methods associated with CDA is highly appropriate. Independent of these two approaches for investigating newspaper text, in this study I investigate interview narratives from women in sex work by adopting a thematic narrative analysis approach (Riessman, 2005, 2008) with a focus on small stories.

In this study, the victims' interview narratives are considered to be a *field of action* within DHA. The concept of field of action refers to a segment of social reality that comprises the "frame" of a discourse (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009). According to Reisigl and Wodak (2009, p. 90), "a discourse about one particular topic can spread to other field and relate to or overlap with other discourses". Because different types of texts can

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be produced in various fields, I included the sex-trafficking victims' interview narratives to compare with the newspapers' representation of the victims. By including the different fields of action, it is possible to gain an in-depth understanding of the way sex-trafficking victims have been represented in Malaysia.

5.3 Methodological framework

The flowchart in Figure 5.2 presents the overall framework of the research which comprises data types, data collection methods, and data analysis methods. The complete description of each category is presented in Section 5.4 (analysis of newspaper texts) and Section 5.5 (analysis of interview narratives).
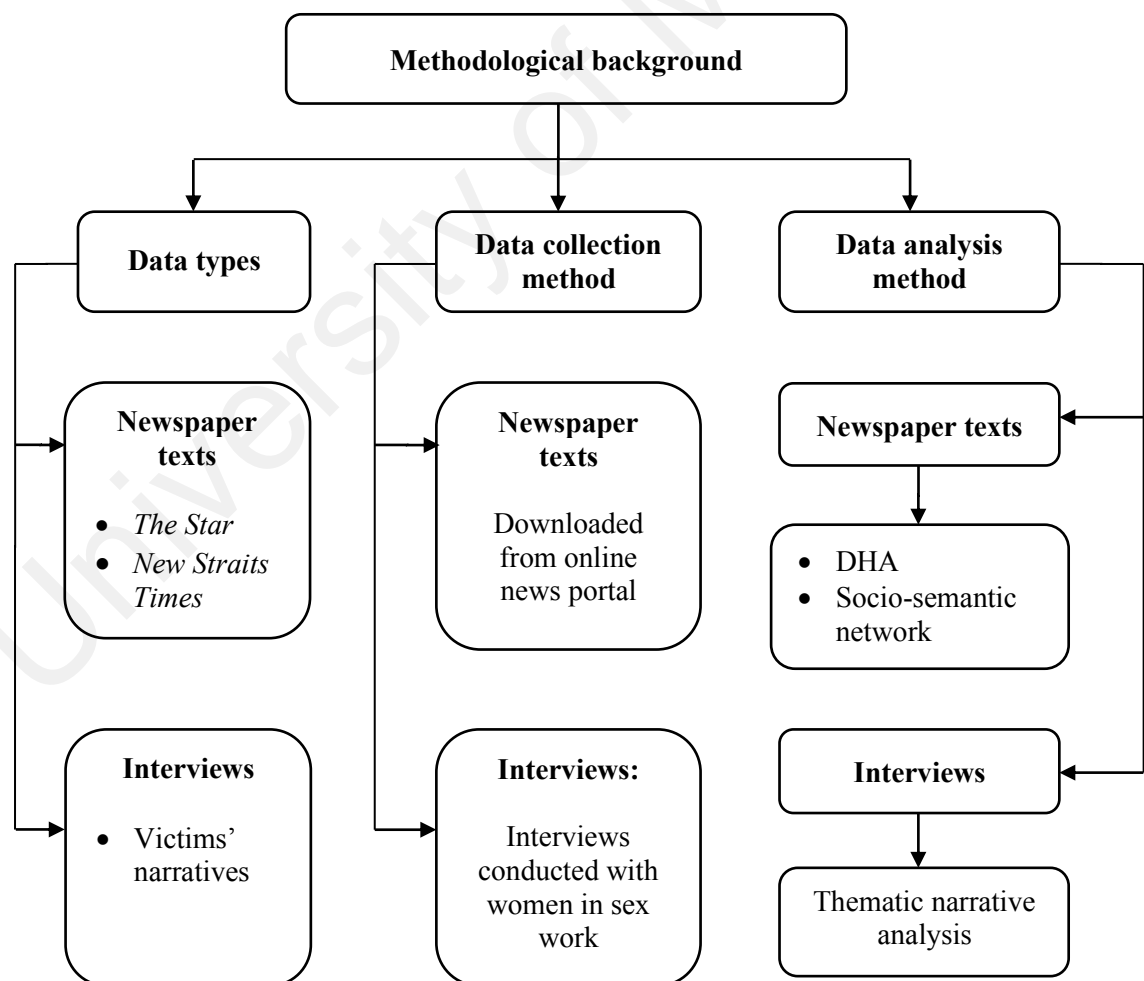
Figure 5.2: Overview of methodological framework

5.4   Analysis of newspaper texts

This section contains a description of how the newspaper data were collected, coded, and analysed.

5.4.1   Type of data

One of the two main forms of data chosen for this study was articles from online newspapers. I decided to choose online articles because of the large volume of material available in digital form. The two national Malaysian newspapers, *The Star* and *New Straits Times* were selected for examining media coverage on the issue of sex trafficking because they are the country's leading English-language newspapers and they have a large circulation (Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2012). *The Star,* the leading English-language newspaper in Malaysia, is broadly controlled by the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), the second-largest alliance in the governing Barisan Nasional (BN) party. According to the Audit Bureau of Circulations (2012), *The Star* had an average daily circulation of 288,916 copies as of December 2012 and is also the most extensively read English-language newspaper in the country. Second to *The Star* is the *New Straits Times*, another prominent daily serving the market since 1845 with an average of 93,321 copies sold daily (July 2012–December 2012). Because of their large circulations and readerships, both newspapers were selected as the main sources for data.

I chose only English-language newspapers for this study because their readers are often the elite groups who are likely to be policy makers. This makes it all the more important that this study is conducted because the issues it raises might help to bring about change to the policies related to sex-trafficking victims. Collection of newspaper texts began in January 2010 and ended in June 2016. Initially I anticipated that

collection of these texts would take place from January 2010 until December 2012. However, during the data collection process, I decided that the collection of data should be extended to another three and a half years, that is, until June 2016. The six-and-a-half-year duration allowed for a thorough analysis of news reports about sex trafficking and is significant because during that time there had been greater government surveillance of sex trafficking in the country. In order to ensure the articles had their origin in the two newspapers, all syndicated articles (articles that are bought from other sources and reprinted under their own copyright) were excluded from the corpus. Articles were selected if they dealt with:

- the arrest or conviction of sex-trafficking victims,

- sex-trafficking victims' rescue, or

- sex-trafficking victims' personal stories.

5.4.2 Data collection method

An electronic search of both newspapers was employed to identify articles relevant to the research. Search engines, for example, Google and Yahoo, were extensively used to facilitate searches. Similar news reports that appeared in both websites were eliminated in order to prevent data redundancy. Articles retrieved comprised news reports related to the government, statements from experts and stakeholders (government officials, enforcement officers, representatives from nongovernment organisations, human rights groups, etc.), and narratives by the sex-trafficking victims themselves. The downloaded news reports were saved in a dedicated folder and systematically organised according to newspaper and year for easy reference. The keywords used in the search were *sex trafficking*, *sex work*, *sex workers*, *prostitute*, *prostitution*, *trafficked victims*, *hookers*, *China dolls*, *sex slave*, and *call girls*. A total of 120 articles (approximately 40,437 words) about sex trafficking were retrieved from the two newspapers' archives.

5.4.3 Method of analysing newspaper data

This section contains a detailed description of the analytic methods of Reisigl and Wodak (2009) and van Leeuwen (1996, 2008) that were employed to analyse the newspaper texts. To do this, I bridged the key theoretical-methodological concepts of discourse that enabled me to link the words and actions related to social actors with the broader historical-political context of the media. This formed the basis for the methodological procedures in investigating the representation of sex-trafficking victims in texts. The findings related to newspaper texts are discussed in Chapter 6.

5.4.3.1 Coding

Articles from the two newspapers were carefully examined "line by line and word by word to determine the concepts and categories that fit the data" (Berg, 2004, p. 281). At the initial stage of coding, salient text was flagged. The next step involved the selection of linguistic categories. Each article was examined in detail to identify patterns of meaning within words, phrases, or sentences relevant to the representation of sex-trafficking victims. In this procedure, the important sections were labelled for further analysis. Each line in the selected article was coded to identify the DHA strategies (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009) and the sociosemantic network of social actors (van Leeuwen, 1996, 2008). This process was performed on every article. The final phase of the coding process entailed the interpretation of data. Figure 5.3 illustrates this.

5.4.3.2 In-depth linguistic analysis of social actors

The analysis of the newspaper data was intended to answer Research Questions 1(a) and 1(b):

RQ1:   (a)   How are sex-trafficking victims as social actors represented in newspaper texts?

        (b)   What discursive strategies are used to construct the representation of sex-trafficking victims in newspaper texts?

| Examining selected articles line by line to identify salient text | Step 1 |

| Scrutinising each news article to identify patterns of meaning | Step 2 |

| Labelling and coding important sections in the article | Step 3 |

| Interpreting and presenting data | Step 4 |
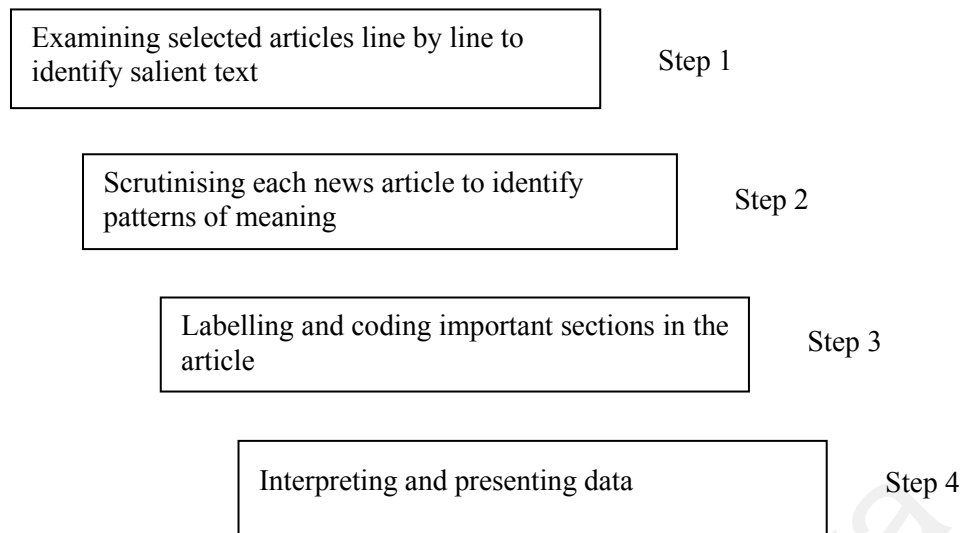
Figure 5.3: Newspaper coding process

In order to answer Research Questions 1(a) and 1(b), I employed specific analytical categories to investigate the representation of social actors particularly sex-trafficking victims. Only the most salient representations in the newspaper texts were selected for analysis. This was performed using three of the analytical tools from Wodak's DHA strategies (referential, predication, and argumentative). The selection of the three strategies over the rest is particularly important due to their relevance in examining the sex-trafficking victims' representations in texts because the way a particular group is characterised influences the way we perceive and relate to it. The referential and predication strategies used in the newspaper analysis were analysed in conjunction with van Leeuwen's (1996, 2008) sociosemantic network of social actors. The arguments manifested in the newspaper discourse were analysed separately using DHA's argumentative strategies.

5.4.3.2.1 Integrating the discourse-historical approach and sociosemantic network of social actors

Wodak's and van Leeuwen's frameworks complement each other effectively because they share the goal of facilitating the analysis of social actors in texts. van Leeuwen's

categorisation of sociosemantic network of social actors operates at the inter- and intra-textual levels and therefore can be integrated within the referential and predication strategies in the DHA.

The referential strategy aims to provide answers to questions about how victims of sex-trafficking as a marginalised group are named and referred to linguistically. The list of referential strategies from Reisigl and Wodak (2001, pp. 48–52) that were used in this study in naming the social actors are such as ethnification, spatialisation, de-spatialisation, explicit dissimilation, and collectivisation. The micro linguistic devices employed within the referential strategy entail the exploration of grammar (e.g. deictic pronouns), anthroponyms (derogatory nouns associated with social actor in terms of sexual orientation), and other types of linguistic means such as ethonyms, xenonyms, de-toponymic anthroponyms, and toponyms (refer to Table 4.2 in Chapter 4). Additionally, van Leeuwen's (1996) sociosemantic network of social actors that assigns particular roles to social actors were incorporated in the analysis. The analytical categories used were suppression, backgrounding, nomination, categorisation, impersonalisation, role allocation, individualisation, and assimilation realised through specific linguistic items (refer to Figure 4.2 in Chapter 4).

Within the predication strategy, the positive and negative attributions of social actors were evaluated using several microlinguistic devices that could be realised through evaluative lexicons (e.g., adjectives, adjectival phrases, and verbs). The predication strategy cannot be separated from the referential strategy because "some of the referential strategies can be considered to be specific forms of predicational strategies, because the pure referential identification very often already involves a denotatively as

well as connotatively more or less deprecatory or appreciative labelling of the social actors" (Wodak & Reisigl, 2003, p. 386).

5.4.3.2.2 Argumentative strategies

Argumentative strategies focus on the arguments employed by various social actors (e.g., enforcement officials, ministers) in the newspapers with regard to sex-trafficking victims. Within the strategies of argumentative, the focus of analysis was on topoi (presence and attributions of argumentative strategies in texts). The argumentative aspects invested in texts are usually ideologically laden, and how the arguments are put forward can be unpacked through specific devices such as topoi. The most salient topoi that emerged from the newspaper data were selected for analysis. The topoi identified in the present research to justify or legitimise the presentation of self or others were the topoi of responsibility, humanitarianism, victimisation, control, threat, number, and burden.

5.5 Analysis of interview narratives

The second data set that I analysed was the sex-trafficking victims' personal stories obtained through interviews. This was accomplished using Riessman's (2008, p. 54) method of thematic narrative analysis to obtain an in-depth understanding of how women in sex work represent their sexual exploitation as well as themselves.

5.5.1 Type of data

The first step for performing a thematic narrative approach involves interviews with a small number of participants. According to Gill, Stewart, Treasure, and Chadwick (2008), interviews are employed in qualitative research to investigate individuals' viewpoints, experiences, attitudes, or motivations on certain issues. Interviews are also

regarded as being able to "provide a 'deeper' understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative methods" (Gill et al., 2008, p. 292). For the present research, information from interviews could be significant as it is likely that some important information could not be procured easily from the newspapers. The following section includes descriptions of how the interview data were collected.

5.5.2   Background to interviews

The interviews were included in the study because I felt it was important to give voice to the victims so that they could share "their side of the story" based on their experiences. The data from the interviews provided rich qualitative material about the respondents' opinions, feelings, and attitudes. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000, p. 267) state that "the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life: it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable".

5.5.2.1   Interviewees

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 15 women who had different backgrounds and trajectories. They were from Indonesia, Thailand, India, Vietnam, and Myanmar. All interviewees became involved in sex work primarily through coercion and deception. The selection of the interviewees was based on the participants' accessibility at the time of the interview, their having shown involvement in sex work, and their ability to speak in one of the three languages (English, Malay, and Tamil) that I am fluent in (refer to Section 8.6). Only 10 women were interviewed initially. However, to ensure adequate representation of the victims' stories, I asked 10 additional women to participate, five of whom agreed to be interviewed (refer to Section 8.6). The participants' ages ranged from 22 to 39 years, and all voluntarily agreed to participate in the interviews.

5.5.2.2 Interview locations

Of the 15 women, 12 were interviewed in June or July 2016 at the Rumah Perlindungan Wanita Zon Tengah (RPWZT), a temporary national shelter for women who have been rescued from prostitution and trafficking, managed by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development. The remaining three women were street-based sex workers, and I interviewed them in April 2016 at a location agreed to by the participants with the assistance of WAKE Organisation (Pertubuhan Wanita dan Kesihatan, Kuala Lumpur), a nongovernment organisation that conducts outreach programs for sex workers. Raymond (2013) has argued that it is important to seek the assistance of reliable sources or organisations that provide services to women in sex trafficking and those who have experienced sex work. Following Raymond's suggestion, I interviewed women who had "lived that content" (Raymond, 2013, p. xi) with the support of trusted organisations. In Table 5.1, background details about the interviewees are provided.

5.5.3 Interview procedures

In this section, I describe all procedures associated with the interviews.

5.5.3.1 Identifying prospective interviewees

Prospective interviewees were identified and interviews were conducted at the national shelter for rescued sex workers, and in the field, with street-based sex workers.

5.5.3.1.1 Women at the government shelter

Gaining approval to conduct interviews with the sex-trafficking victims at the national shelter entailed a series of extended processes. Initial consent was obtained from the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development in order to gain access to the women (refer to Appendix B). This process took approximately 2 months. Upon obtaining the ethics approval from the Director General, interview arrangements were

made with the officers at the shelter (RPWZT) and the selection of participants took place. Some women at the national shelter did not self-identify as victims of sexual exploitation and therefore were not willing to be interviewed.

Table 5.1: Interviewee details

No.	Country of origin	Participant	Age	Marital status	Date
1.	Indonesia	Mia	39	Divorced	June 9, 2016
2.	Indonesia	Tini	38	Married	April 26, 2016
3.	Indonesia	Lina	30	Widow	July 27, 2016
4.	Indonesia	Mindy	25	Single	July 27, 2016
5.	Indonesia	Rika	31	Married	June 9, 2016
6.	Indonesia	Ida	23	Single	June 9, 2016
7.	Indonesia	Rara	23	Married	June 9, 2016
8.	Thailand	Tuk	31	Separated	June 9, 2016
9.	Thailand	Pim	22	Divorced	June 9, 2016
10.	Thailand	Som	28	Single	July 27, 2016
11.	Thailand	Zara	34	Married	April 26, 2016
12.	India	Meena	28	Divorced	July 27, 2016
13.	India	Vithya	30	Separated	July 27, 2016
14.	Vietnam	Candy	24	Divorced	July 27, 2016
15.	Myanmar	Maya	26	Single	April 26, 2016

5.5.3.1.2 Street-based sex workers

Arrangements for accessing the street-based sex workers were different from those at the government shelter. Because of the furtive nature of sex work, gaining access to the women was difficult. Appointments were made with the organisation WAKE, and, with the help of their staff, several potential interviewees were identified.

5.5.3.2 Conducting the interviews

Once the initial arrangements had been finalised, the interviews were conducted according to the day and time agreed to by the interviewees, both at the national shelter and in the field. The anonymity of the interviewees was assured and pseudonyms were used. A letter of consent (refer to Appendix C) was signed by both the interviewees and me as researcher. The interview questions were predetermined, but in situations where unforeseen lines of inquiry arose during the interview, additional questions were asked, subject to the direction of the interview. Each interview lasted on average between 20 and 30 minutes which addressed the women's:

- Personal information
- Employment procedures
- Perceptions of the media
- Future hopes

5.5.3.3 Interview barriers

Researching women in sex work is "alive with ethical and methodological challenges" (Easton & Matthews, 2016, p. 12). This is especially true when the research involves a sensitive topic, for example sex work. Also, because of the covert nature of the work that these women were involved in, I anticipated that it was not going to be easy for them to open up immediately. One crucial issue that emerged was that of trust. As stated by Kelly (2005), building trust with victims of trafficking is important because it determines the amount and quality of information collected in research. However, it is difficult to expect trust from a person who has experienced trauma (Schauben & Frazier, 1995). Therefore, before each interview was conducted, I attempted to establish effective rapport with the participant to build trust and ensure her willingness to share her personal stories with me. At the early stage of the interviews, the participants' responses were fragmented and constant prompting was required on my part, but this

gradually decreased as each interview progressed. Follow-up interviews were not anticipated because it was likely that the participants would have been sent home to their country or could not be located. Another problem that emerged was the language used by the participants when recounting their experiences. With the exception of participants from Indonesia and Myanmar, and one from India whose mother tongue was Tamil, the participants had to resort to speaking English. This created problems because not all of them could speak English fluently (refer to Section 8.6).

5.5.3.4   Ethical considerations

Ethical issues are some of the main concerns when conducting interviews. With regard to the present study, researching the topic of sex trafficking is not easy because of its highly sensitive nature. It deals with aspects of people's selves that are in some way likely to be intimating or personally discrediting. Therefore, it was extremely important that this research be carried out with care and empathy for the participants. Gray (2004, p. 235) warned that research participants "should not be harmed or damaged in any way by the research … It is also important that interviews are not used as a devious means of selling something to the respondent." Every step in the research starting from the choice of topic and extending to the findings of the research involves potential ethical issues (Parahoo, 2006). According to Payne and Payne (2004, p. 66) "ethical practice is a moral stance that involves conducting research to achieve not just high professional standards of technical procedures, but also respect and protection for the people actively consenting to be studied".

5.5.3.4.1   Informed consent

One important aspect emphasised in the ethical conduct of social research with interviewees is gaining the participants' consent before the interviews are conducted.

According to Easton and Matthews (2016, p. 18), specific consideration should be given to this part of research, especially when conducting interviews with vulnerable individuals. Considering the importance of informed consent in research, prior to the interviews occurring, all participants were briefed clearly, both verbally and in written form, about the purpose of the study (see Allmark et al., 2009; Smythe & Murray, 2000). This provided assurance that the participants willingly agreed to participate in the research. Because these research data would not, and will not, be used in any other studies, no other additional written forms of assurance were given to the participants (see Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp. 70–71).

5.5.3.4.2 Safeguarding interviewees' anonymity

To protect their identities, all interviewees were assured that their real names would not be recorded in the research. Instead, they were given pseudonyms, chosen either by me or the participants themselves, throughout the research (see Cresswell, 2008). Other details (e.g., dates, places, and names) that might lead to identification of the participants were also not revealed in the research.

5.5.3.5 Instrumentation (semistructured interviews)

In this research, I employed semistructured interviews for which I prepared open-ended questions. Those questions are reproduced in Appendix D. Corbetta (2003, p. 270) described aspects of semistructured interviews in the following way:

> The order in which the various topics are dealt with and the wording of the questions are left to the interviewer's discretion. Within each topic, the interviewer is free to conduct the conversation as he [sic] thinks fit, to ask the questions he deems appropriate in the words he considers best, to give explanation and ask for clarification if the answer is not clear, to prompt the respondent to elucidate further if necessary, and to establish his own style of conversation.

This type of interview gives the researcher the opportunity to pose questions that had not been anticipated at the beginning of the interview. Curry, Nembhard, and Bradley (2009) stated that open-ended questions are more effective and less intimidating than are surveys for those who historically have been marginalised in research. Semistructured interviewing not only elicits the interviewees' experiences on a surface level but also enables researchers to stimulate and conduct a deeper investigation of the given situation if interviewees struggle to answer questions. This can be performed through a technique called "probing" (Gray, 2004, p. 217).

Kajornboon (2004, p. 75) has pointed out that when conducting semistructured interviews, the interviewer need not adhere meticulously to an "interview guide" because this type of interview provides ample space for the interviewees to voice their opinions. The questions used in the present study were adapted from Kvale's interview guide (Kvale, 1996, pp. 133–135) which contains the following nine kinds of questions for qualitative research:

1. Introducing questions: 'Please tell me about …?'; 'Have you ever . . .?'; 'Could you please explain in detail…?'What happened when…?

2. Follow-up questions: to allow the interviewee to expand his/her answer. For example 'you mentioned something about…Could you explain more?'

3. Probing questions: 'Could you please tell more about…? 'Could you provide some examples…? What do you mean by?

4. Specifying questions: 'What happened to you?' 'What was your reaction?'

5. Direct questions: 'Were you happy with…?' 'Are you satisfied with the way…?

6. Indirect questions: 'What assumption can you make by the way these people think of you? 'Is that how you exactly feel?'

7. Structuring questions: 'I would like to switch to another topic'.

8. Silence: provides chances for the interviewee to reflect and break the silence.

9. Interpreting questions: 'Did you mean that…?'; 'You are saying…?'

For this research, only selected questions from the question guide that appeared relevant at a particular point in the interview were used. Each question was carefully constructed to avoid offending the participants. Because the research deals with a sensitive and perhaps taboo topic, one-on-one interviews were chosen as being more likely to yield honest and detailed personal narratives without interference from other participants. Participants were also permitted to raise questions about the research with me as researcher or to withdraw from the interview at any time.

From an ethical viewpoint, handling topics that are sensitive and agonising during an interview can cause the participants to be traumatised and emotional. In such situations, as the interviewer, I had to be solicitous and discrete (see Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 73). Some participants showed emotional responses and unwillingness to continue while I was interviewing them, but the other 15 interviewees were determined and therefore completed the interviews (refer to Section 5.5.2.1).

5.5.4 Transcribing interviews

The process of transcribing data can be a useful point of transition between data collection and analysis as a part of data management and preparation (Patton, 2002, p. 244). Transcribing the interview data gave me the opportunity to go back to the recorded interviews as many times as I needed to ensure clarity for analysis. The audio recordings obtained from all the interview sessions were reviewed and I transcribed them into written form according to the Jefferson (2004) transcription annotation system. This system is provided in Appendix E. Each of the interview transcripts was read through several times to ensure accuracy. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the transcription process can be time consuming, but it informs the early stages of the data analysis and allows for a comprehensive understanding of the data. Additionally, in

order to ensure the precision of the interview transcripts, I consulted a certified interpreter to check the transcripts. The verbatim (word-for-word) transcription method was selected for this research in order to maintain the originality of the recorded interviews.

5.5.5 Method of analysing interview data

This section includes information about how the interview transcripts were organised and analysed in terms of themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As mentioned in Chapter 4, in this study I examined the interview data for emergent themes via a thematic narrative analysis with particular emphasis on the exploration of small stories (Bamberg, 2006a) located within victims' narratives. The focus is on the content of the stories (Riessman, 1993, 2008) rather than how or why the stories were told. I therefore structured the analysis according to the main themes that emerged from the victims' interviews. The findings from the thematic narrative analysis are discussed in Chapter 7. This was examined with regard to Research Questions 2(a) and 2(b):

RQ2:   (a)   What themes emerge from the victims' narratives about their lived experiences and self-representations?

         (b)   How do the small stories within victims' narratives reflect their lived experiences and self-representations?

5.5.5.1 Thematic analysis

To answer Research Question 2(a), the interview narratives were read repeatedly to locate common and recurring patterns of meanings within data. The meanings that were formulated from participants' statements (small stories) were then grouped together to form themes (refer to Section 4.6). Themes that stood out (refer to Table 7.1 in Chapter 7) were organised into main themes (see Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009,

p. 222) according to the ways the women represented themselves in their small stories. Through thematic narrative analysis it was possible for me to gain rich insights into the subjectivities of the women involved in this study.

5.5.5.2 Women's representations of their lived experiences and of themselves

In Research Question 2(b), the salient themes were analysed to unfold the victims' lived experiences in sex work and their self-representations. According to Bamberg (2006a, p. 63), the words *small stories* "refer to stories told in interaction; stories that do not necessarily thematize the speaker, definitely not a whole life, but possibly not even events that the speaker has lived through – and now, retrospectively, reflects upon and recounts often termed 'personal stories' or 'narratives of personal experience'". With regard to this, in this study, short excerpts from the women's interviews were identified and analysed as a creative way of understanding how the women represented their sexual exploitation as well as themselves.

Analysing the way individuals represent their sexual exploitation and themselves within their narratives can be very revealing especially with this social group whose identities are embedded and spread across multiple short segments of their narratives. Although small stories are often neglected as narratives by researchers, they are highly useful for understanding the interviewees' experiences and their self-representations (refer to Section 4.6.1 on small stories approach). In order to find out how women in sex work articulate their experiences and self-representations, linguistic resources such as lexical items (specific words and expressions), verbs, and adjectives that appeared in the interviewees' small stories were evaluated. The linguistic choices are important because they help the narrators to position themselves, for example, "as victims of one circumstance or another in their tales, giving over to other characters the power to

initiate action, not themselves" (Riessman, 2002, p. 702). Narrators can also take on the role of agentive beings who have control over certain events and actions through their language choices. By exploring the small stories within the patterned themes, I was able to identify the connections across victims' experiences that influence the way those victims represented themselves.

5.6 Summary

In this chapter I described the methodological background employed in the analysis of newspaper texts and interviews. In Section 5.2, I explained the need for integrating the three different approaches in this study by means of triangulation. The overall framework of the study was included in Section 5.3. In the next two sections (5.4 and 5.5), I described how the newspaper and interview data were obtained and analysed.

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPER TEXTS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the findings about newspaper representations of sex-trafficking victims that emerged from my use of Wodak's discourse-historical approach and van Leeuwen's sociosemantic network of social actors. After this brief introduction, in Section 6.2, I reveal how sex-trafficking victims are represented in newspapers through the referential and predication strategies. These strategies are employed together in the analysis because they are both closely linked to each other. In Section 6.3, I discuss the argumentative strategies employed in the newspapers to justify the arguments for and against sex-trafficking victims. The overall discussion of results obtained from the three strategies (referential, predication, and argumentative) is presented in Section 6.4. The chapter ends with a summary in Section 6.5.

The analyses within this chapter are focused on addressing Research Questions 1(a) and 1(b):

1. (a)   How are sex-trafficking victims as social actors represented in newspaper texts?

    (b)   What discursive strategies are used to construct the representation of sex-trafficking victims in newspaper texts?

6.2 Analyses based on referential and predication strategies

Following in-depth analysis of 120 news articles relating to sex trafficking (refer to Section 5.4), this research offers insights into how sex-trafficking victims have been represented by the mainstream English-language newspapers in Malaysia. Table 6.1

presents the salient representations of the victims identified in *The Star* and *New Straits Times* corpus analysed using Reisigl and Wodak's (2001) and van Leeuwen's (1996) analytical categories (refer to Section 5.4.3.2).

Table 6.1: Representations of victims in the mainstream newspapers

Section	Types of representation	Subsection	Categories of analysis
6.2.1	Victims as loose women	6.2.1.1	Impersonalisation
		6.2.1.2	Ethnification
		6.2.1.3	Explicit dissimilation
		6.2.1.4	Collectivisation
6.2.2	Victims as sexual enticers	6.2.2.1	Appraisement
		6.2.2.2	Functionalisation
6.2.3	Victims as outsiders	6.2.3.1	Spatialisation
		6.2.3.2	De-spatialisation
6.2.4	Victims as data and statistics	6.2.4.1	Assimilation
		6.2.4.2	Nomination
6.2.5	Victims as social threat	6.2.5.1	Appraisement
		6.2.5.2	Role allocation
6.2.6	Victims as offenders	6.2.6.1	Collectivisation
		6.2.6.2	Suppression
		6.2.6.3	Individualisation
6.2.7	Victims as victims	6.2.7.1	Role allocation
		6.2.7.2	Backgrounding
		6.2.7.3	Individualisation

6.2.1 Representation of victims as loose women

Language plays a remarkable role in defining the sexual exploitation of women by the way the words are comprehended and acted upon. Investigation of referential strategies employed by *The Star* and *New Straits Times* revealed that generally sex-trafficking victims have been represented by the image of a loose woman through various depreciative name-callings. They are seen as being different from other people and as people who lack moral standards for having engaged in sex work. This will be demonstrated in Subsections 6.2.1.1 to 6.2.1.4 under the categories of impersonalisation, ethnification, explicit dissimilation, and collectivisation.

6.2.1.1 Impersonalisation

The Malaysian mainstream media *impersonalises* women in sex work into abstraction, that is, by using words that are pejorative or derogatory, for example, "prostitutes, call girls, hookers, and sex slaves". This aspect of victim's portrayal is appealing because "impersonal representation of social actors can dehumanize social actors, take away from them as people, represent them for instance, instrumentally or structurally as elements of organizational structures and processes" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 150). Reisigl and Wodak (2001, pp. 48–52) refer to this demeaning name-calling as *anthroponyms*, that is, referring to people through their sexual orientation or habits. Excerpts 6.1 and 6.2 from *The Star* and *New Straits Times,* respectively, demonstrate examples in which the news media referred to foreign women in sex work through the depreciative label of "prostitutes" (occurred 97 times).

Excerpt 6.1
Bukit Aman Special Task Force for Anti-Vice, Gaming and Gangsterism team apprehended 48 Thailand national **prostitutes** during a pub raid along Jalan Metro Pudu. Meanwhile, 60 **prostitutes** were also arrested in Jalan Kuchai Lama during the operation.

Source: Entertainment outlets raided for prostitution, The Star, 29 January, 2016

> Excerpt 6.2
> In the anti-vice operation, police and MPSJ officers had raided the unlicensed hotel and detained 22 foreign **prostitutes**, including 12 male patrons.
>
> *Source: Selangor allowed 4,000 massage parlours, NST, 4 August, 2012*

Foreign women in sex work have been marked as prostitutes in news reports rather than as victims of sex trafficking. The debate over the terms prostitutes and trafficked victims is highly polarised in the Malaysian legal system because the current legislative policies (Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants) has yet to recognise the differences that exist between these terms. The absence of appropriate human trafficking legislation may prove to be detrimental to victims if they are mistakenly stigmatised with women who provide sex for money and this may socially and economically disenfranchise them.

As indicated in Excerpts 6.1 and 6.2, the word "prostitute" reinforces the construction of "otherness" because the media tends to underscore women as sexual commodities more than the illegality of the work itself. When victims are identified as prostitutes, they are defenceless and susceptible to arrest and deportation due to their being positioned as criminals. Consequently, when society is inundated with negative depictions of the victims, over time those depictions give people the impression that the use of pejorative labelling of these women is acceptable.

Apart from the classification of trafficking victims as prostitutes, the news media has demonstrated other kinds of naming that downgrade the women (Excerpts 6.3–6.7). Some of the extreme referential strategies that appeared in the newspapers are realised through the use of defamatory labels such as "hooker" (2 times), "slave worker" (3 times), "call girl" (4 times), and "sex slave" (16 times). The label "sex worker" occurred

75 times across *The Star* and *New Straits Times*. The *anthroponyms* present the women in an unfavourable light, a characteristic that distinguishes them as Others relative to ordinary people.

Excerpt 6.3
One of her captors threatened to upload her nude pictures on YouTube if she refused to be a **hooker**.

Source: Beaten up and forced into sex, The Star, 29 December, 2011

Excerpt 6.4
"The Uganda High Commission also did not inform us of any girl being rescued," Immigration enforcement director Zahari Abd Aziz said. He was commenting on news reports that three Ugandan girls were rescued after being lured to work as **sex slaves** in Malaysia.

Source: Ugandan sex slaves a thing of the past, says dept, The Star, 18 April, 2015

Excerpt 6.5
The women were expected to be **sex workers** for a year to pay off the human traffickers who brought them into the country.

Source: Dozens of foreign women forced to entertain up to seven men daily, The Star, 31 October, 2013

Excerpt 6.6
Such a scenario would undoubtedly lead to more women ending up as **slave workers** after being conned into coming here with the lure of well paying jobs.

Source: End this modern day slavery, NST, 31 March, 2012

6.2.1.2 Ethnification

Another class of reference made to women in sex work is what Reisigl and Wodak, (2001, pp. 48–52) refer to as *ethonyms* (ethnification). In Excerpt 6.7, *The Star* referred to women from the Asian regions as "Asian girls". This type of labelling is extremely demoralising for the women as it implies the high involvement of women from Asian countries in sex work and that these women have low moral standards.

Excerpt 6.7
It reported that the syndicate would download the photographs of the **Asian girls** and upload them on its own page that offered **call girl** services.

Source: FB photos illegally downloaded for call girl service, The Star, 14 July, 2012

6.2.1.3 Explicit dissimilation

Women from China are *explicitly dissimilated* in the newspapers, therefore placing them in a category that is different from the in-group. Explicit dissimilation is realised through the lexical element, *xenonyms* (Wodak, 2001). This category is clearly discriminating in which the social actors are viewed as outsiders or members of otherness. The exodus of young women from China has led to use of the term "China dolls" by the locals (occurred 34 times). Referencing the Chinese nationals as China dolls (an example of explicit dissimilation), is politically and ideologically charged as the news media is circuitously offensive to women of Chinese nationality by sexually objectifying and humiliating them. The negative framing of Chinese women in some way generalises that Chinese immigrant women coming to Malaysia for employment opportunities are outsiders implicated in sex work. Excerpts 6.8–6.10 provide evidence of this.

Excerpt 6.8
According to the group's spokesman, **a friend who had befriended a China doll**, learnt that these **China dolls** could send about RM5,000 per month to China.

Source: Address prostitution issue immediately, pleads group of concerned women, The Star, 12 July, 2011

Excerpt 6.9
Those seeking the sexual services of China dolls were willing to travel through a one kilometre dusty gravel road in a rubber plantation in Pekan Gurney, Manjung.

Source: 10 China dolls held in estate, NST, 8 May, 2010

Excerpt 6.10
A sultry **China doll** has allegedly come in between a couple here, with the wife claiming the foreign woman had snatched away her husband and leaving her and their four children in a

The unconstructive labelling of sex-trafficking victims in the newspapers brings to our attention the underworld criminal activity they are associated with. Although sex-trafficking victims have mostly been pejoratively labelled, the clients who seek their services are commonly referred to in a less negative light as "a friend who had befriended a China doll" (Excerpt 6.8) and "those seeking the sexual services of China dolls" (Excerpt 6.9). Obscuring the identity of the clients clearly demonstrates the media's ideological stance, namely that it is not in favour of acknowledging the clients' actions but rather emphasises the actions of the victims.

6.2.1.4 Collectivisation

Another way in which the referential strategy can be seen in newspapers is through examples of *collectivisation*, "the reference to social actors as group entities, but without individualising them" (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 53). In Excerpts 6.11 and 6.12, collectivisation is exhibited through the use of *collective nouns* (Ugandan women, foreigners) and the use of *deictic pronouns* (they and them). Pronoun interpretation is central in maintaining the obscurity of references in the Malaysian news media.

Excerpt 6.11
KUALA LUMPUR: **They** were promised jobs here as maids or hotel staff with a monthly salary of US$1,000 (RM3,150), but 21 **Ugandan women** saw their dreams turn into a nightmare when **they** were forced into prostitution.
Source: 21 Ugandan women rescued in PJ flat raids, NST, 18 October, 2011
Excerpt 6.12
The government also incurs high costs in handling **foreigners** caught for immigration offences and criminal acts, as the Prison Department has to fork out RM35 a day to sustain **them** plus to prosecute and repatriate **them** after serving the sentences.
Source: Rescind circular or face dire outcome, NST, 20 March, 2012

Among the deictic pronouns, *subject pronouns* (e.g., they) and *object pronoun* (e.g., them) are used in the news reports to represent the Other, when making specific reference to women in sex work. It demonstrates how personal pronouns are used in news reports to shape the identities of the victims as an out-group and to direct public opinion toward the actions of the dominant social actors. van Dijk (1984) describes such pronouns as "demonstratives of distance" (p. 125) because their main function is to create judgements and contrast in the groups being described.

In Excerpt 6.13, the *New Straits Times* has used *pronouns*, (e.g., they, their, them) throughout its news report. These pronouns play a significant role in distancing the disadvantaged social actors from the rest of the community. The use of pronouns in this news report functions as an important element for studying the womens' representation. Although labelling and collectivising women in sex work as prostitutes is negatively charged, stripping the women of identity by using pronouns can carry an additional negative load.

Excerpt 6.13
"The girls admitted **they** were prostitutes. All the 13 victims testified that **Wong** was **their towkay** who facilitated **their** entry into Malaysia, received **them** directly at the border and had contact with **them** until the day of arrest."

Source: 7 years' jail for trafficking in women, NST, 22 April, 2011

The analysis of newspaper texts in this study has so far publicised and categorised women in sex work through demeaning labelling. The perpetrators are referred to more decently by their names "Wong" or in terms of their line of work "towkay" (business owner especially a Malaysian Chinese person) (Excerpt 6.13). Here, the social actors (prostitutes and perpetrator) have been represented to suit the interests of the media. In other words, media shapes the social actors' images according to its own attitudes and

in a way that it wishes to present them to the readers. Excluding or not referring to the women in a respectful way intensifies the vulnerability of trafficked women as more "visible" and this is because men are seen as the privileged based on the concept of the "patriarchal dividend" (Connell, 2000, p. 25).

6.2.2 Representation of victims as sexual enticers

Analysis of texts from *The Star* and *New Straits Times* indicated that the media overtly draws attention to the physical characteristics, charm, and beauty of women in sex work. The intensification of this bodily attractiveness of the women in a slithery way may affect them negatively. The media coverage adopts a cheap sensualist attitude that creates an unfavourable image of the women as if they are content being in the business. This kind of representation impedes the representation of women as victims of sex trafficking. The representation of the victims as sexual enticers will be demonstrated in Subsections 6.2.2.1 and 6.2.2.2 under the categories of appraisement and functionalisation.

6.2.2.1 Appraisement

As stated by van Leeuwen (2008, p. 45), the identity of the social actor in texts can be categorised through the nomination mechanism. Women in sex work are *appraised* (an aspect of *categorisation*; van Leeuwen, 1996) in negative terms through the use of *adjectives* and *adjectival phrases* (Excerpts 6.14–6.22). The women's physical traits are emphasised (e.g., pretty, looked far older, young sexy, young foreign women, bustiers and exotic shrubbery, half naked women, busty Chinese-looking) and evaluated through promiscuous descriptions (e.g., wearing a bikini, some in their underwear and others

totally naked, revealing dresses and skirts, dressed sexily, low-cut dresses, revealing body-hugging blouses, GROs[3] in mini-skirts).

In this analysis, adjectives can be regarded as a component of the predication strategy due to their evaluative nature. The application of such lexical choices further constructs the social portrait of trafficked women. The attributions given to the women, mostly related to their appearance, promote the idea that the value of women in sex work merely comes from their provocative attire and appearance and is not based on their personal characteristics. Examples of adjectives and adjectival phrases that carry negative connotation within the context of usage are shown in Excerpts 6.14–6.17.

Excerpt 6.14
IMAGINE opening the window of your condominium for some fresh air, only to see **half naked women** frolicking in the swimming pool below or them ushering men into their units.

Source: Too close for comfort, The Star, 21 July, 2012

Excerpt 6.15
KUALA LUMPUR: The Twitter account has an avatar with a picture of **busty Chinese-looking** woman **wearing a bikini**.

Source: Tweeting for sex in KL, The Star, 23 April, 2012

Excerpt 6.16
MALACCA: Enforcement officers from the state Immigration Department raided a budget hotel in Jalan Tun Ali and found 11 Indonesians, **some in their underwear** and **others totally naked**, waiting for clients.

Source: 11 nabbed naked and in underwear waiting for clients, The Star, 6 May, 2014

Excerpt 6.17
She was **very pretty, but looked far older her years**. Given a different set of circumstances she could have been a model or an actress living a life of luxury, instead of someone who is forced to spend her days in despondent servitude.

Source: Terror and Horror, The Star, 11 July, 2010

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[3] GRO is an abbreviation for guest relations officers.

By exaggerating and sensationalising the physical attractiveness of the women, the media is discrediting and blaming them for committing sexual offences. The media's description of the women is not the same as for men. The men were portrayed without additional descriptions for example, "men" in Excerpt 6.14, and "clients" in Excerpt 6.16. In contrast, the women's physical attractiveness is elaborated through the use of adjectives, and their behaviour is often related to sexuality "ushering men into their units" (Excerpt 6.14), "waiting for clients" (Excerpt 6.16). Such descriptions are not only "consistently sexual, condescending or infantilizing", but a strategy to blame the victims (Benedict, 1992, p. 20).

6.2.2.2 Functionalisation

Analysis of the English-language newspapers confirms that sex-trafficking victims are frequently *functionalised* pejoratively; the media tends to publicise the women's actions with the kind of work they are engaged in, for example, young sexy masseuses, foot masseuses, most of whom are young foreign women, are authentic or double as sex workers (Excerpt 6.18). In agreement to this, Brock (1998, p. 11) stated that "women working in prostitution become prostitutes in the eyes of others; that is, publically they are more identified with their work than are people in other jobs".

Excerpt 6.18
MIRI: Offers by foot reflexology centres to male customers to hire **young sexy masseuses** for "takeaway" and "home delivery" services are raising alarm bells. Suspicion abounds as to whether these **foot masseuses**, **most of whom are young foreign women, are authentic or double as sex workers**.

Source: Concern over foot reflexology centres offering young sexy China dolls for hire, The Star, 4 July, 2011

In this article, working as masseuses has negative connotations because prostitution in Malaysia mostly takes place in "massage parlours, discos, pubs, private houses"

("Prostitution in Malaysia", 2014) as well as in five-star hotels, beauty parlours, health spas, and reflexology centres (Mail, 2011). Therefore, even if reflexology centres are legitimately managed, people are likely to have a preconceived notion that women who work in such places are linked with sex work. Other ways in which women have been portrayed as sexual enticers are through their indecent actions and conduct, for example, "soliciting for clients, involved in immoral activities, busy entertaining their guests, wiggle to disco songs extolling the virtues of oral sex while drinking, toasting, dancing and hugging their clients" as demonstrated in Excerpts 6.19–6.22.

Excerpt 6.19
Certain parts of Miri City have become red-light districts because of the mushrooming of these so-called foot massage centres, mostly styled as "reflexology centres". **China dolls in revealing dresses and skirts can be seen soliciting for clients** along the five-foot ways leading to these centres, as well as in coffeeshops and restaurants.

Source: Miri cops arrest dozens of masseuses, The Star, 19 January, 2010

Excerpt 6.20
The women, who were **dressed sexily**, were believed to be **involved in immoral activities**.

Source: Students among 21 and China dolls rounded up at cafe, The Star, 28 March, 2013

Excerpt 6.21
Aged between 22 and 35, the women, mostly wearing **low-cut dresses** and **revealing body-hugging blouses**, were caught while **busy entertaining their guests.**

Source: 70 foreign women detained in raid, NST, 6 September, 2013

Excerpt 6.22
In some places, **GROs in mini-skirts**, **bustiers** and **exotic shrubbery wiggle to disco songs extolling the virtues of oral sex while drinking, toasting, dancing and hugging their clients**.

Source: Local dolls do it as well, The Star, 26 July, 2011

Sex-trafficking victims who are portrayed through indecent behaviours are not only given a negative image but the news is sensationalised with the evocative portrayal of women as sexual objects. The focus toward the women becomes more noticeable as offenders when total *exclusion* of perpetrators occurs. There is no trace of the

perpetrators, nor are the clients mentioned anywhere in the texts, thus turning readers'

attention away from them. This strategy is loaded by ideology because the identity of

the perpetrator is hidden from public view or suppressed, leaving the readers to shift

their focus from the traffickers and clients toward the victims.

6.2.3 Representation of victims as outsiders

Another strategy evident in the mainstream English-language newspapers is the

representation of sex-trafficking victims as outsiders. Analysis proves that the media has

made reference mostly to women from Southeast Asian regions (e.g., China, Cambodia,

Vietnam, and Indonesia) through *identification* such as "foreign prostitutes, female

foreigners, foreign women, girls from neighbouring countries or women from a

neighbouring country" (Excerpts 6.25–6.29).

Because these women are non-nationals, the newspaper portrayal of them is negative,

as being the country's opponents. The word "foreign" carries a negative connotation by

itself. When the media labels the women as foreigners, it can make the women feel

unwanted and it also refers to something that many people are fearful of. This will be

demonstrated in Subsections 6.2.3.1 and 6.2.3.2 under the categories of spatialisation

and de-spatialisation.

6.2.3.1 Spatialisation

In Excerpts 6.23, 6.24, and 6.25, foreign women in sex work have been categorised,

more specifically identified, in terms of their age (e.g., in her 20s, between 16 and 37

years old, aged 24 and 27) to indicate the potential age groups susceptible to becoming

victims of sex trafficking. They are also identified in terms of their provenance (refer to

Section 4.5.2). This type of *identification*, is referred by Reisigl and Wodak (2001) as

spatialisation. This category is realised by means of *toponyms* for example, "Kampala, Uganda" (Excerpt 6.23), "Vietnam" (Excerpt 6.24) and "Ukraine" (Excerpt 6.25). Toponyms were used throughout the mainstream newspapers (*The Star* and *New Straits Times*) to make reference to the countries where the women had come from. Associating the women with their age and place of origin is perhaps something worth noticing as this information may draw reader's attention to the news that foreign women in Malaysia are engaged in immoral activities.

Excerpt 6.23
Yola, **in her 20s**, left her home in **Kampala, Uganda**, a few months ago after she was enticed by a "recruitment agent" to work as a maid. Yola never worked as a maid. Instead, she was sent to China where she was forced to service men against her will. A month later, she was sent here, where she was again forced to entertain clients.

Source: Lured, Beaten and then Raped, The Star, 18 October, 2011

6.2.3.2   De-spatialisation

The category of *de-spatialisation* is realised linguistically through *de-toponymic anthroponyms*. Within the category of de-spatialisation (see Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, pp. 48–52), the media frequently employed de-toponymic anthroponyms when referring to women from foreign countries. In this context, de-toponymic anthroponyms are similar to what van Leeuwen refers to as *classification*. Classifying sex-trafficking victims in such a way (i.e., as foreigners) elicits feelings of discomfort among readers and the tendency to visualise sex trafficking as a crime committed by an outsider.

Extracts from newspaper texts (Excerpts 6.24–6.29) demonstrate that the media has employed de-toponymic anthroponyms through the use of *adjectival phrases* such as "Vietnamese women, Ukranian women, female foreigners, foreign prostitutes, girls from neighbouring countries, and women from a neighbouring country".

Excerpt 6.24
…40 **Vietnamese women**, between 16 and 37 years old were arrested and they are believed to be working as guest relations officers at the outlet.

Source: Vice ring busted in Malacca, NST, 3 September, 2015

Excerpt 6.25
Two **Ukrainian women** who were believed to be waiting for clients …. Initial investigations revealed that the women aged 24 and 27 had been soliciting for the purpose of prostitution for a couple of days since they arrived on Jan 18.

Source: Ukranian women nabbed for suspected prostitution, The Star, 26 January, 2013

Excerpt 6.26
Fourteen **female foreigners** allegedly working as sex workers were detained after a raid at a health spa by the Kuala Lumpur police D7 team.

Source: Alleged sex workers nabbed, 70 condoms found at health spa, The Star, 22 April, 2016

Excerpt 6.27
Foreign prostitutes and migrant workers who claimed to be victims of human trafficking are just trying to avoid prosecution and get a free pass home.

Source: Doubts over human trafficking claims, The Star, 4 July, 2014

Excerpt 6.28
(1) A social activist …Anne Keyworth, who runs a home for such victims, said that more **girls from neighbouring countries** were being brought in as prostitutes, more often than not against their wishes.

Source: Trafficking up `due to more budget flights', NST, 25 August, 2010

Excerpt 6.29
(1) Bakri added that the most recent success was the arrest of six locals, including two women, in Sabah for smuggling 26 **women from a neighbouring country** early this month.(2) The victims, including three underage girls, were brought in for the flesh trade.

Source: 4 band together to rescue 1,700, NST, 22 June, 2010

By presenting foreign women as outsiders via de-toponymic anthroponyms, the media is categorising them as the "radical other" (Wodak & Iedema, 2004, p. 167). This has a negative outcome because sex-trafficking victims are not viewed as victims of an illicit activity but as outsiders who constitute a possible threat to the social unity of the country in which they reside (Malaysia).

A similar type of media reporting that is prevalent in the Malaysian newspapers is the absence of traffickers and clients in sex-trafficking news. Instead of presenting the social actors (traffickers and clients) as the ones responsible for sex trafficking, the newspapers present them as legitimate third party outsiders. Because the traffickers receive less attention from the newspapers, the negative image of foreign women as a commodity becomes heightened. This is evident in Excerpts 6.28 and 6.29 through the perpetrators' actions "brought in".

(1) "...girls from neighbouring countries were being <u>brought in</u> as   (Excerpt 6.28) prostitutes..."

(2) "...three underage girls, were <u>brought in</u> for the flesh trade"   (Excerpt 6.29)

Generally, the media's treatment of the foreign women who commit sexual offences elicits moral unease within the community. Newspaper readers are made to believe that women who participate in sex work are not Malaysians but from foreign countries. This kind of news reportage is misleading because, by not revealing the actual situation (the women have been sex trafficked), the media can cause the women to be re-victimised because they are not considered as victims of sex trafficking but as offenders.

6.2.4 Representation of victims as data and statistics

Investigation of news reports about victims of sex trafficking indicate that foreign women in sex work are dehumanised by use of numbers. They are mostly *assimilated* (social actor quantified as homogeneous groups). Assimilated social actors can further be characterised using quantifier terms, for example, *aggregation* (data and statistics).

Quantification is a common and essential part of the media discourse especially when reporting national issues. According to van Dijk (2000), the constant use of

numbers indicates the extent of the danger and this is particularly evident in the case of sex-trafficking victims. This will be demonstrated in Subsections 6.2.4.1 and 6.2.4.2 under the categories of assimilation and nomination.

6.2.4.1 Assimilation

Analysis of the newspapers reveals that sex-trafficking victims are *assimilated* via *aggregation*. van Leeuwen (2008, p. 49) stated that "aggregation is often used to regulate practice and to manufacture consensus opinion". In this newspaper analysis, the inclusion of data and statistics depicts the social actors as a "horde" of people who are a threat to Malaysians (van Leeuwen, 2008). Also, by drawing attention to numbers and the victims' country of origin, the media bolsters unfavourable and alarming predictions of the social disruption caused by the foreign women.

In Excerpts 6.30–6.32, foreign women detained for prostitution were given attention in the media reports through *definite quantifiers* (e.g., 25,113 foreign women, 63 women from Vietnam, three from the Philippines, one from Nepal, 6,275 women compared to 2,862 last year, women from Vietnam topped the list with 2,133, 1,369 from Thailand and 1,661 Chinese nationals).

Excerpt 6.30
Police statistics revealed **25,113 foreign women**, believed to be prostitutes, were detained from 2010 up to June this year during Ops Noda and of the number, about 30 per cent had student visas.

Source: Varsity students' offer sex services online, NST, 13 August, 2012

Excerpt 6.31
The women were caught off-guard when a team of policeman raided the premises. They were busy entertaining their customers. "We detained **63 women from Vietnam**, **three from the Philippines** and **one from Nepal**".

Source: Almost 70 GROs nabbed in Jalan Perak raid, NST, 17 December, 2015

Excerpt 6.32

Federal Secret Societies, Gambling and Vice Division (D7) principal assistant director Senior Asst Comm Roslee Chik said **police rounded up 6,275 women compared to 3,862 last year**. "**Women from Vietnam topped the list with 2,133** arrested followed by **1,369 from Thailand** and **1,661 Chinese nationals**," he said yesterday.

Source: More foreign women nabbed for prostitution, The Star, 14 June, 2014

In Excerpt 6.32, Senior Asst Comm Roslee Chik reported the large number of women arrested for prostitution "6,275 women compared to 3,862 …". By disclosing the increased number of women in sex work, the media is fuelling fear among the public through the voice of an influential social actor. The inclusion of statistics in this news report is intentional. The media is drawing the readers' attention to caution them about the large number of foreign women involved in illegal sex work.

Furthermore, by accentuating the numbers and the victims' country of origin (e.g., women from Vietnam, Chinese nationals), the media is potentially generating unfavourable and alarming predictions of the social disruption caused by the foreign women. Here, aggregation is important because the media uses this as a strategy to portray the women as a group of criminals for participating in sex work. Meanwhile, the enforcement officers are *collectivised* via the *noun* "police". By collectivising the police, the newspaper is presenting the police force as a powerful body that is responsible in undertaking effective measures to curb prostitution in the country.

In Excerpt 6.33, recounted from the perspective of news media, "35,683 foreign women" from neighbouring countries have been detained for "alleged" prostitution. By emphasising the quantity based on credible statistics, the news has only one semantic purpose, that is, to connect the foreign women with problems that arise from sex trafficking.

Excerpt 6.33
In the last three years, **35,683 foreign women** were arrested for alleged prostitution under "Ops Noda". Women from China, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines topped the list.

Source: Not a single case, NST, 17 March, 2012

As demonstrated in Excerpt 6.33, foreign women in sex work are passivated significantly, unlike the active role of the dominant social actors such as the Malaysian enforcement officials. *Passivation* of social actors, according to van Leeuwen (1996, p. 44), occurs when social actors take on the activity or being "at the receiving end of it". Investigation of news texts shows that trafficked sex victims referred to in terms of statistics (35,683) are portrayed as passive participants in the event of arrest (e.g., "…foreign women were arrested"). Sex-trafficking victims are *subjected* or *beneficialised* (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 33) in cases where the Malaysian authorities act upon them, in this case by arresting the women for alleged prostitution.

6.2.4.2 Nomination

On the other hand, the social actors in superior positions are activated with regard to the arrests of foreign women for their involvement in sex work. In an article reported in *New Straits Times* in 2012 (Excerpt 6.34), the State CID Chief Assistant Commissioner Hamdan Majid in active voice, makes reference to numbers to women from neighbouring countries. In this report, the newspaper has included outside information, indicated by quotation marks, to represent the original words of the State CID Chief Assistant Commissioner in Statement (3) "In the first raid, 28 women from China, four from Vietnam… 52 women from China, six from Vietnam, 52 women from China ... In the final raid, 11 women from China". By integrating outside information with their own interpretation, the media makes its news more expressive and lively.

> Excerpt 6.34
> (1) **State CID chief Assistant Commissioner Hamdan Majid**, said 11 men, aged from 21 to 45, were detained for further investigation. (2) A total of 102 women, all foreigners, aged between 21 and 45, were detained for alleged prostitution. (3) "**In the first raid, 28 women from China** and **four from Vietnam** were detained. In the second raid, **52 women from China**, **six from Vietnam** and **one from the Philippines** were detained. In the final raid, **11 women from China** were detained," he said.
>
> *Source: 102 foreigners caught at world's oldest trade, NST, 10 March, 2012*

In Excerpt 6.34, the accessed voice of the police authority (Hamdan Majid) is formally *nominated* in the form of an *honorific*, that is, his presence in the newspaper is stated with his rank in the government office. The government officer is also identified with regard to the position held by him. By including the authorial voice of the social actor, the news becomes more trustworthy because the information is presented as coming from a source that is presumably accurate. This explains why the government officials' voices are often given exposure in media texts.

The media attempted to create a feeling of anxiety among the public by portraying and associating foreign women with numbers with little detail beyond the statistics. Due to unremitting media coverage, the general public are encouraged to conceive of sex workers from outside Malaysia as the archtype of villains. In short, because of its ability to manipulate the perceptions of the public, the media shapes and constructs the reality of sex trafficking.

6.2.5   Representation of victims as social threat

Foreign women in sex work have also been represented as threats and associated with an increase in social problems. By presenting them as a social threat, the Malaysian media underpins the negative representation of trafficked victims. The threat that the women pose comes from their role as agents who weaken society by jeopardising the country's economy and causing damage to family relationships. This will be

demonstrated in Subsections 6.2.5.1 and 6.2.5.2 under the categories of appraisement and role allocation.

6.2.5.1 Appraisement

The media includes elements of *appraisement* that contribute to foreign women's representation as an economic threat. Appraisement, according to van Leeuwen (2008, p. 45), is a reference made to social actors that presents them either positively or negatively using nouns or noun phrases.

(1) Economic threat

Excerpt 6.35 shows that the media has portrayed women in sex work as being (3) "a force that would undermine nation-building efforts of this country". Here, the media's construction of women in sex work as a "powerful body" that is linked to negative outcomes reinforces society's unfavourable perception of this group. It is interesting to note how the media creates space for female "sexual objectification" through such reporting.

Excerpt 6.35
(1) More than 50 women gathered at a closed-door meeting … to **appeal to the government to seriously look into the issue of prostitution, which they claimed was "ever increasing**". (2) "The **domino effect** it (prostitution) has on the society is huge – the health risk, the family well being and **economic effect** it has on the society," said a group spokesman ... (3) She said that the issue of prostitution needed to be addressed immediately and all agencies ... including politicians and enforcement agencies like Miri City Council, the police and the Immigration Department, must work together to ensure that the "oldest profession" would not become **a force that would undermine nation-building efforts of this country**.

Source: Address prostitution issue immediately, pleads group of concerned women, The Star, 12 July, 2011

Statement (2) from Excerpt 6.35 is a direct quotation from the group spokesperson that contains elements of appraisement that contribute to victims' representation as a

threat. In this sentence, the *adjectives*, "domino and economic" accompanied by the *noun* "effect" not only assigns agency to the women as a threat but also presents them as a catastrophe to the country's financial system.

The report is recounted through the voices of two unspecified agents: a news journalist and a women's group spokesman. Their voices are interspersed with each other. The agents' voices are represented mainly in direct discourse, suggesting some level of recontextualisation has taken place. The attributed voice of the news reporter in Statements (1) and (3) clearly support the women group's stand which is strongly unfavourable about prostitution because the group fears that prostitution would damage the country's economy, so the government and other agencies should intervene to address this problem. The recontextualised voice of the group spokesman in this article therefore carries a large amount of influence. This is because the actual words used in the news reportage can create impact because the public learns about issues and looks upon the media as a source of information that is presumed to be genuine.

(2) Family institution threat

Apart from causing economic problems, foreign women in sex work are portrayed unconstructively for causing damage to people's relationships. Excerpts from *The Star* (Excerpt 6.36) and *New Straits Times* (Excerpt 6.37), recounted from a reporter's voice, indicate that housewives are disturbed by the presence of China dolls because they fear losing their husbands to these foreign women.

Housewives are portrayed in the newspapers as victims of the out-group (China dolls). This can be seen through expressions such as "major concern, grave concern, worried, and afraid of losing".

Excerpt 6.36
(1)The presence of many China dolls being employed in reflexology, massage and spa centres in the state remains a **major concern** among housewives, especially those living in Miri city. (2) Welfare, Women and Family Development **Minister Datuk Fatimah Abdullah** said this became a hotly debated issue during the ministry's outreach programme in Miri recently. (3) According to the minister, most of the women had expressed their **grave concern** about foot reflexology centres, claiming many of these centres were offering "sexy China dolls for hire".

Source: Sexy 'takeaway' China dolls, The Star, 25 April, 2012

Excerpt 6.37
Director Mahasan Mustapa said local women and other residents were **worried** about the presence of many foreign.women, whom they suspected offered sexual favours while working as guest relations officers (GROs) in hotels and restaurants. "The public, especially housewives, are willing to come forward to give tip-offs as they are **afraid of losing** their husbands."

Source: Worried wives turn informers, NST, 16 January, 2012

The main voices heard in Excerpts 6.36 and 6.37 are the voices of prominent social actors (Minister Datuk Fatimah Abdullah and Director Mahasan Mustapa). The authorial voices are included in the text to caution the public about the problems associated with China dolls and guest relations officers. Because the news is narrated from the viewpoint of influential government officials, readers do not know the exact cause of the problem, and reading the news from a single perspective can possibly change society's opinions about the women.

The victims are not given space anywhere in the texts to defend their human rights. Instead, the newspaper is more interested in characterising the women in a negative way rather than their victimisation. The absence of the Other group's voices is significant as it indicates the newspaper's ideological underpinnings; the newspaper gives importance to elite officials' voices (the in-group) while totally excluding the out-group's point of view. For this reason, the absence of the out-group's voices can be considered significant.

6.2.5.2 Role allocation

The strategy of victim blaming can be seen in the different roles assigned to social actors, that is, whether they are active or passive participants in discourse. The *activation* and *passivation* of social actors is seen as one of the important categories within the inclusion strategy (van Leeuwen, 1993, p. 105; refer to Section 4.5.2 for a detailed explanation). In analysing the representation of sex-trafficking victims, the Malaysian media has allocated the role of active agents to trafficked victims for bringing problem to people's relationships (Excerpts 6.38–6.40).

Excerpt 6.38
A sultry China doll has allegedly come in between a couple here, with the wife claiming the foreign woman had **snatched away her husband** and leaving her and their four children in a lurch ahead of the Chinese New Year festivity.

Source: China doll snatched away my husband, claims woman, The Star, 19 January, 2014

Excerpt 6.39
Prostitution, the oldest profession in the world, seems to have surfaced as a public issue in Sarawak with the rising number of China dolls. Their presence is being blamed for **rocking the relationship** between husbands and wives.

Source: Local dolls do it as well, The Star, 26 July, 2011

Excerpt 6.40
They are also concerned foreign female masseurs could **lead the men** here, particularly husbands, **astray**. "We understand that many women are anxious about the **damage** that China girls can have on their families."

Source: Ladies in arms, The Star, 10 July, 2011

As can be seen in the above excerpts (6.38–6.40), China dolls are described as active agents or doers in the actions of "snatching, rocking, leading astray, and damaging". By portraying the Chinese women as the dynamic force in terms of their negative actions, the media shifts the entire blame onto China dolls while the clients' actions were excluded. They are portrayed as good people who have been affected or victimised by

the situation. This bipolar representing "Us" as good and "Them" as bad is a common strategy that can be observed in the Malaysian English-language newspapers.

6.2.6 Representation of victims as offenders

The Malaysian news media has conceptualised foreign women in sex work through the offender orientation for contravening the Malaysian Immigration Law. It is obvious that the local police are more concerned with the immigration status of the victims than with showing interest in the exploitation of the women. The representation of foreign women in sex work as offenders will be demonstrated in Subsections 6.2.6.1 to 6.2.6.3 under the categories of collectivisation, suppression, and individualisation.

6.2.6.1 Collectivisation

Sex-trafficking victims are represented as law violators for "overstaying, working without a permit, entering the country without valid documents" (Excerpt 6.41), "breaching the condition of their social visit passes and for not possessing valid entry permits" (Excerpt 6.42), and as people who "failed to produce valid travel documents [and] did not have work permits" (Excerpt 6.43). This can be seen in the *collectivisation* of the victims as a communal human agency rather than as individuals, with breaching the legislation often performed as a collective identity "the women, the foreigners, all the suspects, all the women and foreign women" (Excerpts 6.41–6.43).

Excerpt 6.41
The women were unable to produce valid travelling documents or working permits. ...The man was arrested for harbouring illegal foreigners. **The foreigners** were detained for violations of the Immigration Act 1959/1963 including overstaying, working without a permit, and entering the country without valid documents.

Source: No happy ending for foreign sex workers, NST, 29 October, 2012

Excerpt 6.42
All the suspects were detained for breaching the condition of their social visit passes and for not possessing valid entry permits.

Collectivisation is "a type of assimilation which involves collectively representing people without using statistics" (Baker & Ellece, 2011, p. 17). This phenomenon is believed to draw a connection between the readers and trafficked victims for resisting their entry into the country which substantially fortifies the bifurcation of the in-group and out-group.

In Excerpt 6.43, the media has collectivised the women as "all the women, foreign women" in Statements (2) and (3) through *collective nouns*. The news report included the voice of the Assistant Commissioner Mohamad Mat Yusop through indirect reporting to give authority to his voice when he talked about the legal provision of the Immigration Act and Section 373 of the Penal Code. Reported speech, a common form of intertextuality, allows the media to include what others have said and paraphrase in their own way to shape readers' view of the given information.

Excerpt 6.43
(1) Klang district police chief Asst Comm Mohamad Mat Yusop said 15 customers were also arrested and later **released after their statements were recorded**. (2) He said **all the women**, aged between 18 and 40, and 10 workers had been remanded for further investigations under the Immigration Act and Section 373 of the Penal Code for the suppression of brothels. (3) He added that some of the **foreign women** failed to produce valid travel documents while some others did not have work permits.

Source: Cops find nude women inside spa's secret rooms, The Star, 4 March, 2010

In this Excerpt (6.43), the Assistant Commissioner positions himself as a powerful social actor who is responsible for taking legal measures to address the offences committed by women in sex work. This is evident in Statement (2). In this statement, the police official (Mohamad Mat Yusop) is presented as an active social actor in which

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he is positioned in the first part of the sentence. Sex-trafficking victims are mostly passivated as being subjects to action taken by the government ("... all the women, aged between 18 and 40, and 10 workers had been remanded for further investigations ..."). This is in accordance with the role of the Malaysian government as an active participant in maintaining the security of the country. When the government is depicted as opposing the entry of foreigners without proper documentation, their role is often activated in the media texts.

Evidence of bias that involves victims and the customers can be noticed within the news reports with regard to the Immigration Act and Penal Code. Detained women are kept in custody (remanded) for investigation for the "suppression of brothels" (Excerpt 6.44) and for "soliciting for sex" (Excerpt 6.45), while the customers had been "released after their statements were recorded" (Excerpt 6.43) or "released after questioning" (Excerpt 6.45).

Excerpt 6.44
"He said all the women, aged between 18 and 40, and 10 workers had been **remanded** for further investigations under the Immigration Act and Section 373 of the Penal Code for the **suppression of brothels**".

Source: Cops find nude women inside spa's secret rooms, The Star, 4 March, 2010

Excerpt 6.45
The woman was detained under Section 372B of the Penal Code for **soliciting for sex** while the man was **released after questioning**.

Source: 10 female foreigners caught during Ops Noda Khas, The Star, 26 April, 2014

This conception of discriminating women in sex work from other social actors (customers) and classifying the former as a social Other helps to explain their difference in treatment relating to legal enforcement. Rather than offering assistance to protect trafficked victims from danger, the legislation continues to stigmatise them. In

situations where women and men are mutually involved, it is unfair to put the entire blame on women.

Analysis of the news corpus has led to the finding that the media reflected power relations in their reporting of sex-trafficking stories via their selection of sources. Trafficked women in sex work are seldom viewed as victims of trafficking because the news media continually places them in the criminal position through loaded *action verbs* such as "nabbed, rounded up, arrested, and remanded" (Excerpts 6.46–6.49) and "picked up, caught, raided, and detained" (Excerpt 6.50). On the other hand, the police force was represented as having control, exerting their power over the weaker social actors. Often the raids are conducted when authorities receive tip-offs or are suspicious about the legitimacy of the immigration status of trafficked victims. This is another common strategy employed by the media to passivate victims of sex trafficking in its news reports.

Excerpt 6.46
SIBU: A China national is among five foreign women **nabbed** at a massage parlour located some 200m from the central police station here.

Source: 10 female foreigners caught during Ops Noda Khas, The Star, 26 April, 2014

Excerpt 6.47
Aged between 22 and 35, the five women from Nigeria and two from Uganda were **rounded up** during an Immigration Department raid at about 9pm on Thursday.

Source: African 'students' caught for prostitution, The Star, 12 December, 2015

Excerpt 6.48
Meanwhile, 60 prostitutes were also **arrested** in Jalan Kuchai Lama during the operation.

Source: Entertainment outlets raided for prostitution, The Star, 29 January, 2016

Excerpt 6.49
Supt Nashir said they had **remanded** the Chinese nationals for 14 days under the Immigration Act for violation of their social visit passes.

Source: 31 nabbed in vice raid, The Star, 16 April, 2010

6.2.6.2 Suppression

The *exclusion* of enforcement officers is evident in some news articles (Excerpts 6.46–6.48). The main actors responsible for the arrests of the foreign women are not mentioned. Conversely, foreign women are foregrounded in the articles more frequently than they are backgrounded or suppressed (refer to Section 4.5.1). This is obvious in cases where the women are portrayed as subjects of arrest. As can be seen in news excerpts 6.46–6.48, the newspaper has focused on foreign women and prostitutes as wrongdoers with regard to their arrest.

"...five foreign women <u>nabbed</u> at a massage parlour..."	(Excerpt 6.46)
"...five women from Nigeria and two from Uganda were <u>rounded up</u> during an Immigration Department raid..."	(Excerpt 6.47)
"...60 prostitutes were also <u>arrested</u> in Jalan Kuchai Lama..."	(Excerpt 6.48)

In all the three statements, the enforcement officers are absent. The total exclusion of the agent (enforcement officers) leaves no trace of them. The social actors are *suppressed* because there is no reference to them except for their actions. van Leeuwen (2008, p. 29) referred to this type of exclusion as "radical exclusion". The suppression of the enforcement officers is realised through *passive agent deletion* (refer to Section 4.5.1 for a detailed explanation). This realisation is employed to exclude the particular social actor(s) (enforcement officers) from the news discourse but shifts attention toward the crime committed by the victims.

In contrast, the enforcement officers are portrayed as acting positively with regard to the arrests of foreign women through their actions "remanded, raided, and detained" as in the following examples:

"Supt Nashir said <u>they had remanded</u> the Chinese nationals..."   (Excerpt 6.49)

(4) "The women were caught off-guard when <u>a team of</u>   (Excerpt 6.50)
<u>policeman raided</u> the premises."

(6) "<u>We detained</u> 63 women from Vietnam, three from the
Philippines and one from Nepal"

Excerpt 6.50 contains a number of words that portray the women as criminals for participating in sex work "picked up, arrested, caught, raided, detained". These lexical choices not only diminish the identity of the women but highlight the position of the police as active agents in performing their duties. Categorising sex-trafficking victims as criminals and threats not only undermines the victims' agency and self-respect but denies them adequate support from the government which may result in secondary victimisation.

Excerpt 6.50
(1)A total of 67 guest relation officers (GROs) were **picked up** during an anti-vice operation codenamed 'Ops Noda' in the city yesterday. (2) Principal assistant director of police's Anti-Vice, Gaming and Gangsterism (STAGG) unit, SAC Khairi Ahrasa said they were **arrested** at an outlet in Jalan Perak here. (3) "We had monitored the outlet beforehand. (4) The women were **caught** off-guard when **a team of policeman raided** the premises. (5) They were busy entertaining their customers. (6) **We detained** 63 women from Vietnam, three from the Philippines and one from Nepal."

Source: Almost 70 GROs nabbed in Jalan Perak raid, NST, 17 December, 2015

6.2.6.3 Individualisation

Newspapers tend to draw on authorised resources such as an assistant director of police and enforcement officers when reporting news about the arrests of sex-trafficking victims. When narrating the actions of police officers, the media allows the *individualisation* of influential characters (e.g., Supt Nashir, SAC Khairi Ahrasa) and gives them more space to speak through direct quotes. This is one of the strategies

employed in the newspapers to portray official voices as having more authority and power over the Other social actors.

Another prominent aspect is that the authority of the police is emphasised through their official ranking (Excerpt 6.50). The police as social actors, whether they are *titulated* (Principal assistant director of police's Anti-Vice, Gaming and Gangsterism Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police Khairi Ahrasa) or *classified* (police), are still represented as having power and authority. The use of direct speech in Statements (3) to (6) in Excerpt 6.50 gives endorsement to SAC Khairi Ahrasa for his taking the women into custody. Direct quotations put readers in touch with what people in the news actually said and therefore can be the key to a successful story. Use of quotation marks also implies that the media has included outside information and separated its own voice from the voice of the police authority to show the intensity of the actions taken by the police force in arresting the sex offenders.

6.2.7 Representation of victims as victims

Although most of the news articles on sex trafficking discourse have associated victims with criminality and immorality, only a few articles have portrayed the women as victims. Christie (1986, p. 18) reported that victims of sex trafficking are stereotyped based on the image of an "ideal victim" who is "vulnerable, young, innocent, defenceless, innocent and worthy of sympathy" (Greer, 2007, p. 22). Therefore, only some victims who achieve the legitimate status of "ideal victim" may receive public attention, while those who remain perceived as undeserving victims are often ignored by the media (Greer, 2007, p. 22). This will be demonstrated in Subsections 6.2.7.1 to 6.2.7.3 under the categories of role allocation, backgrounding, and individualisation.

6.2.7.1 Role allocation

Analysis of the newspaper texts revealed that only a small number of news articles portrayed the victims as *beneficiaries* (undergoing suffering). Excerpts 6.51 and 6.52 show how *New Straits Times* and *The Star* established power relations by including the voices of people in dominant positions and excluding the voices of the affected victims. The government voice is often *activated* with regard to sex-trafficking news. However, when the focus of the news is shifted to the victimisation of the women, they are *passivated* as being the subject to the perpetrators' actions. This is indicated in the following examples:

"They were <u>discovered</u> through an opening…"

"Nor Omar said they were <u>held captive</u> in the hotel…"

"The women… were <u>forced into prostitution</u>

"The women were <u>forced to entertain</u> up to seven men daily"

Excerpt 6.51
(1) Team leader Deputy Superintendent Nor Omar Sappi said the brothel's spa was located on the first floor while the second floor had 20 rooms. (2) However, it took an hour to search for the foreign women as they were well-hidden in the one-metre wide room. (3) They were **discovered** through an opening beneath a towel rack. (4) Nor Omar said they were **held captive** in the hotel after arriving in Malaysia two months ago. (5) ''The women, who came on social visit passes, were **forced into prostitution** with clients paying RM170 for an hour of service.''

Source: Sex workers rescued from 'fortress' brothel, NST, 7 May, 2012

Excerpt 6.52
The women were **forced to entertain** up to seven men daily and subjected to intolerable living conditions, said Federal Anti-Vice, Gambling and Secret Societies Division (D7) principal assistant director Senior Asst Comm Datuk Abdul Jalil Hassan.

Source: Dozens of foreign women forced to entertain up to seven men daily, The Star, 31 October, 2013

The voice of the police officers, Deputy Superintendent Nor Omar Sappi and Asst Comm Datuk Abdul Jalil Hassan realised by *nomination*, is included in the news reports not only as privileged social actors but to confirm the authoritative position that they

have in society. This means that the Malaysian media is serving a particular function within the ideological system in that it speaks for the government more than it does for the victims.

Therefore, in Excerpts 6.51 and 6.52, when the police authorities describe victims' suffering it not only intensifies the women's vulnerabilities but also calls for pressing action from society as well as the legislative body. The exclusion of exploiters is obvious in both excerpts. The perpetrator responsible for the women's victimisation has been completely excluded since there is no reference to the doer anywhere in the text although the doer's actions are described.

In Excerpt 6.53, the syndicate members are given the role of active agents in relation to their actions. This can be seen in Statement (1) "worked them non-stop", Statement (3) "beating and raping" and in Statement (4) "refused to let them free". When the focus is shifted to the women, the representation of the women is oriented toward their passivation. The women are *de-agentialised* as the recipients of the abuse as in Statement (1) "locked up" and Statement (2), "holed up".

Excerpt 6.53
(1) Twenty-one women, many of them in their 20s, were **locked up** as syndicate members **worked them non-stop** for 10 hours daily for the past three months. (2) The women were **holed up** inside four units of the Mentari Court apartment in Bandar Sunway. (3) Syndicate members kept the women in line by **beating and raping** them if they refused to "work." (4) It was learnt that although many of the victims had raised enough money through their "work" to pay off the debt bondage, syndicate members still **refused to let them free** by lying to the them that their debt was still pending.

Source: Sex Slaves Freed, The Star, 18 October, 2011

6.2.7.2 Backgrounding

The media tends to partially exclude or background the traffickers' role, not portraying traffickers as the villains in the trafficking action. This kind of *backgrounding* is realised linguistically through *simple ellipses in nonfinite clauses with –ed participles* (many of them…were <u>locked</u> up, the women were <u>holed</u> up) as indicated in Excerpt 6.53. Here, the excluded social actors are included elsewhere either in the same clause or in another part of the phrase, or sentence. By backgrounding the traffickers' role, the news media is reducing the explicit focus on the excluded social actor and shifts the attention to the affected victims.

Other examples of activation and passivation of social actors can be seen in Excerpts 6.54–6.57. The analysis of media reports reveals that the media has used some predication strategies through the use of a *common verb* "rescue" to describe the Malaysian enforcement officers' active actions as "heroic" while the women are described as incapable of taking any action and as the beneficiaries of the actions. The police are given admirable qualities, often accompanied by statistics that highlight their success stories, for instance "rescued 23 Vietnamese women, rescued seven women, eleven sex slaves were rescued and rescued more than 1,700 victims".

Excerpt 6.54
THE police recently **rescued 23 Vietnamese women** believed to be victims of human trafficking when they raided a night club in Menara PGRM, Cheras.

Source: Cops rescue 23 women as they close in on human trafficking ring, The Star, 2 March, 2013

Excerpt 6.55
KUALA LUMPUR: Police **rescued seven women** believed to be human trafficking victims and nabbed two others for questioning during a raid at an entertainment outlet here last night.

Source: Seven human trafficking victims rescued from Jalan Imbi karaoke outlet, NST, 5 March, 2016

> Excerpt 6.56
> KOTA KINABALU: **Eleven sex slaves were rescued** by police in two separate raids in Penampang early Wednesday.
>
> *Source: Sabah police rescue 11 sex slaves in Penampang, The Star, 7 October, 2015*
>
> Excerpt 6.57
> Joint action by the authorities under the Anti-Trafficking in Person Council (Mapo) has **rescued more than 1,700 victims**, mainly women, from the hands of human traffickers and syndicates.
>
> *Source: 4 band together to rescue 1,700, NST, 22 June, 2010*

Additionally, the media portrays the powerless state of the victims within human rights. The Malaysian government activates itself as a "hero" for providing shelter for the homeless sex-trafficking victims. This is demonstrated in Excerpts 6.58 and 6.59 through the phrases "placed in a safehouse" and "sent to a protection home".

> Excerpt 6.58
> The victims, between the ages of 17 and 35, have been **placed in a safehouse**.
>
> *Source: Cops rescue 8 Vietnamese women in raid, NST, 24 March, 2012*
>
> Excerpt 6.59
> KUALA LUMPUR: Five Indonesian women were rescued from a human-trafficking syndicate which had forced them into becoming prostitutes. The women were **sent to a protection home**.
>
> *Source: Bukit Bintang bust sees 5 Indonesian women rescued from human traffickers, NST, 23 March, 2016*

In general, the Malaysian mainstream English-language newspapers are very much inclined to portray the government as having high values and compassion toward sex-trafficking victims. There was not a single article that depicted the government or the enforcement officers as having a lack of sympathy, committing mistakes, or being abusive: In the media, sex-trafficking victims are never victims of the Malaysian government but instead are victims of traffickers.

6.2.7.3 Individualisation

Sex-trafficking victims are *individualised* in instances where the news media highlights the victims' exploitative stories (Excerpts 6.60–6.62). This is realised through the *first person singular pronouns* (I, my) and *first person plural pronouns* (we, our, and us). Only a handful of editorials allowed trafficked victims to have a sense of agency through their own stories. Some of the women were assigned a pseudonym for example, Zheng (Excerpt 6.60), Delima (Excerpt 6.61), and Kasturi (Excerpt 6.62), to avoid revealing their real identities. Pronouns are a useful rhetorical device and are often used by people in dominant positions such as politicians and ministers. However, trafficked victims used pronouns to emphasise their victimisation through their personal stories. Some of the pronouns derived from Excerpts 6.60–6.62 have been bolded in the texts.

Excerpt 6.60
I WISH **I** was **dead**," **Zheng** (not her real name), a prostitute, said to a client at a clandestine sex trade centre tucked away in a bungalow in the heart of Kuala Lumpur. "Every day **I** have to have sex with at least 15 men. Many are dirty, and one or two are rough and dangerous, but **I** have **no choice**. **I** do it for **my** family, but **I'm** not even sure they're getting the money **I** earn. They think **I'm** making an honourable living."

Source: Terror and horror, The Star, 11 July, 2010

Excerpt 6.61
Delima, from West Java, claimed to have been promised a lucrative salary by an agent called "Ibu Illy" to work abroad. "**I** was locked in **my** room and was not allowed to go out. **I** was so **depressed** that **I** felt **suicidal**. "**Our** lives have been **scarred** and things will never be the same again," said Delima, who vowed to look for "Ibu Illy" and hand her over to the authorities.

Source: Duped into prostitution, The Star, 10 September, 2011

Excerpt 6.62
Another victim, **Kasturi** (not her real name) was also duped by "Ibu Illy", who told the 23-year-old she could work as a maid in Japan. "That was why **I** was willing to leave **my** kampung. Never in **my** life did **I** want to be a prostitute. "**We** were paid based on how many customers **we** had in a day. **We** were forced to entertain at least six to seven men daily. "Even then, **our** pimp sometimes refused to pay **us**. **We** were also forced to work when **we** were sick," Kasturi added.

Source: Duped into prostitution, The Star, 10 September, 2011

Sex-trafficking victims are represented through the lexical choices expressed in their narratives. As indicated in the above excerpts, sex-trafficking victims are given space and agency to voice their emotional pains through direct quotations. Words such as "dead, no choice, depressed, suicidal, and scarred" intensify their victimisation. Society needs to know what is happening to the victims, and reading their personal stories through their voices can bring them closer to society and this could be one of the best ways to help victims recuperate and obtain required assistance. Analysis of newspaper texts revealed that victims have been depicted as being inferior and lacking agency through the selection of lexical items. Instances where victims of sex trafficking were represented as vulnerable and powerless can be seen in Excerpts 6.63–6.65.

Excerpt 6.63
"There are others however, who **just accept the situation they are in**," says Wong. Among them was a girl who **could not tolerate** it anymore and tried to run from her pimps. She was **unfortunately** caught.

Source: Heinous tales, The Star, 10 April, 2012

Excerpt 6.64
Acting on a tip-off, a police team went to the second floor of an apartment near RH Plaza and found 22-year-old woman **trembling in fear**.

Source: Alleged molester arrested; woman saved from vice trade, The Star, 5 February, 2013

Excerpt 6.65
Zheng, then 26, was not self-pitying or sorrowful, but **her words sounded bleak and bereft of hope**, says the client, who wants to remain anonymous.

Source: Terror and horror, The Star, 11 July, 2010

As illustrated in these excerpts, the weakness of the victims is achieved through the selection of lexical items and phrases: "just accepts the situation they are in", "could not tolerate" (Excerpt 6.63), "trembling in fear" (Excerpt 6.64) and "her words sounded bleak and bereft of hope" (Excerpt 6.65). Their vulnerability is intensified through words such as "accept, could not, and unfortunately" (Excerpt 6.63).

6.3 Analyses based on the argumentative strategy –analysis of topoi

Seven noticeable topoi were identified in the media discourse about sex-trafficking victims. These were the topoi of responsibility, humanitarianism, victimisation, control, threat, number, and burden. They are discussed in Subsections 6.3.1 to 6.3.7. The analyses of newspaper excerpts in those Subsections indicate how the social actors (e.g., key ministers, journalists, NGO officials) revealed different types of topoi to advance their positive or negative justifications about sex-trafficking victims.

6.3.1 Topos of responsibility

The role of the Malaysian government is accentuated by the topos of responsibility which, in this case, is based on the conditional "if the Malaysian government is compassionate toward the plights of trafficked victims, the government should take necessary action". The government has taken initiatives such as organising effective training of prosecutors to deal with human trafficking through the topos of responsibility so that they (prosecutors) are well-versed in the subject matter and "that those caught and charged with the offences would not escape punishment due to lack of expertise" (Excerpt 6.66).

Excerpt 6.66
Prosecutors handling human trafficking cases will be given training in the subject, said Deputy Home Minister Datuk Wira Abu Seman Yusop. He said this was to ensure **that those caught and charged with the offences would not escape punishment due to lack of expertise**. "The Attorney-General's Chambers is looking into speeding up the prosecution process for human trafficking cases.

Source: Human trafficking – prosecutors to get training, The Star, 8 August, 2010

In Excerpt 6.66, the Deputy Home Minister Datuk Wira Abu Seman Yusop released a statement that guaranteed the conviction of traffickers and offenders through the provision of appropriate training. In order to keep human trafficking at bay, it is the

responsibility of the Malaysian government to undertake some form of action. The public then has to accept and perceive the government's responsibility as a genuine attempt to punish only those who have committed offences and not the real victims.

The Malaysian government's responsibility toward sex-trafficking victims is further elaborated in terms of providing them assistance (Excerpt 6.67) through the topos of responsibility. Rather than neglecting the victims or deporting them immediately to their home country, the government has built more shelter homes to accommodate the growing number of victims. Social actors maintaining dominant positions in the Immigration Department (Director-General Datuk Abdul Rahman Othman) and the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development's minister, Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, are both in agreement concerning the welfare and safety of the victims.

Excerpt 6.67

Immigration director-general Datuk Abdul Rahman Othman said the department was looking into providing additional **assistance to facilitate human-trafficking victims**. This includes providing **more safe houses** to put up with the huge numbers of the victims. "We are adding three safe houses this year…It is important to ensure the speedy recovery of human-trafficking victims to facilitate the prosecution process, Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil said. She added that shelter homes would help victims by **boosting their spirits** and catering to their needs. The safe houses also conduct **rehabilitation programmes as well as soft skills training** for the trafficking victims.

Source: 4 band together to rescue 1,700, NST, 22 June, 2010

The two powerful social actors (Datuk Abdul Rahman Othman and Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil) as representatives of the Malaysian government have taken up the responsibility to protect foreign victims who have been brought into the country as prostitutes, and so the Malaysian government views itself as being accountable for the victims' wellbeing. Because sex-trafficking individuals are categorised as victims and in

need of help, they are entitled to the human rights and security from the government. Therefore, providing safe houses would cater to the needs of the victims and help restore their mental state. This is performed through additional activities such as rehabilitation programmes and soft-skills training for the victims.

The topos of responsibility is further exhibited through other types of aid given to human-trafficking victims by nongovernmental organisations such as Suhakam (The Human Rights Commisson of Malaysia) and the National Convention of Women's Organisation. Trafficked victims who are placed temporarily at shelter homes are given medical check-ups, English classes, aerobics, dance activities, and cooking lessons (Excerpt 6.68).

Excerpt 6.68
PETALING JAYA: Non-governmental organisations are doing their part to help human trafficking victims in shelter homes until they can return to their homeland. "Suhakam had helped to arrange **medical check-ups for the victims**. National Convention of Women's Organisation deputy president Datuk Faridah Khalid said her organisation has conducted several programmes for victims. "Our team would teach them **English every week, conduct aerobics and dance activities, as well as cooking lessons**," she said.

Source: NGOs at forefront in aiding victims of human trafficking, The Star, 10 September, 2011

6.3.2 Topos of humanitarianism

In addition to the topos of responsibility, analysis of the *New Straits Times* and *The Star* indicates that both newspapers employ the topos of humanitarianism to demonstrate the Malaysian government's compassion in protecting the dignity of women involved in vice activities. The topos of humanitarianism is similar to the topos of responsibility except that the topos of humanitarianism has a greater concern for human welfare. This is in line with Wodak's conception of the topos of humanitarianism, namely that "if a

political action or decision does or does not conform to human rights or humanitarian convictions and values, then one should or should not perform or make it" (2001, p. 75).

Evidence of humanitarianism can be seen in Excerpt 6.69. The article stated that photographs of underclothed women caught in vice raids will no longer be published in newsprint media in order to "safeguard their dignity". The media depends on such visuals to sensationalise their news to attract greater readership. However, by doing so, reporters do not realise that they are violating the women's human rights. In order to protect the women of their human rights and represent them in a positive way, the Malaysian government, particularly the Federal Criminal Investigation Department, has agreed to provide "special police robes" to women detained during the raids.

Excerpt 6.69
WOMEN involved in vice activities will no longer be exposed to the harsh unrelenting flashbulbs of cameras as they will be provided with **special police robes to safeguard their dignity**. Federal Criminal Investigation Department principal assistant director (secret societies, gaming and vice) Datuk Abdul Jalil Hassan said the directive to provide robes came into effect on July 1. "Many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) had come forward and engaged police in dialogues to safeguard the dignity of the women." They pointed out that pictures of **scantily-clad women** being published in the media and shown on television are unfair as **they infringe on the women's rights**.

Source: Robes for those held in vice raids, NST, 22 August, 2012

Datuk Abdul Jalil Hassan said that nongovernment organisations have pointed out that it is unacceptable to expose "scantily-clad women" in the media as "they infringe on the women's rights". Taking such a decision not only implies the Malaysian government's sympathetic attitude toward the condition of the women but also draws attention to the humanitarian aspect in that the women are treated with dignity.

The topos of humanitarianism can also be seen in Excerpt 6.70. In this news article, Andrew Khoo, the chairman of the Human Rights Committee of the Bar Council,

justified the respectful treatment of trafficked victims as "they are treated poorly – they're confined to approved shelters, and do not have any freedom/liberty". He further stated that when victims are not given any incentives or moral support to provide evidence against their traffickers, the prosecution of traffickers is made more difficult.

Excerpt 6.70

Andrew Khoo, chairman of the Human Rights Committee of the Bar Council, says now that we are on the Tier 2 watch list, the government must guard against complacency. The lack of high-profile prosecutions shows that many of the trafficking networks continue to operate smoothly, which clearly frustrates Khoo, who is "certain that syndicates are indeed involved in the trafficking of persons into or through Malaysia". Confronting and exposing them becomes all the more difficult because victims of trafficking are not given any incentives to encourage them to step forward and provide evidence or testify at trials. "We should apply the Whistleblowers Act to victims and offer them safe custody in Malaysia. Right now **they are treated poorly– they're confined to approved shelters, and do not have any freedom/liberty**.

Source: Technical, but crucial, The Star, 11 July, 2010

In another excerpt (Excerpt 6.71), the topos of humanitarianism began with a positive tone but ended in a negative manner in that sex workers were given metaphoric reference as being thorns. Sex workers are portrayed as deprived of a decent living at the onset of the article, but toward the end it is reported that "sex workers are now seen as thorns in what mostly [sic] perceive as a modern and cultured society". The metaphor thorn is derogatory and nonhumanitarian in its message. The topos of humanitarian with reference to Statement (2) can deny the women the rights to lead a normal life since they are not treated humanely.

Excerpt 6.71

(1) WE always see them lounging at the dark alleys, next to grimy drains that are home to scurrying rats…(2) These **sex workers are now seen as thorns in what mostly perceive as a modern and cultured society**. (3) It is sad to note that many are denied a chance to redeem themselves solely because of the nature of their job.

Source: Everyone deserves a second chance, NST, 22 December, 2011

6.3.3 Topos of victimisation

The Star and *New Straits Times* have drawn on the topos of victimisation to represent sex-trafficking victims as helpless and immobilised individuals. Although stories about the victims are reported in the media, these stories are recounted mostly in the voices of the journalists. Excerpts 6.72 to 6.74 demonstrate the victimisation topoi (in bold). These descriptions legitimise the topos of victimisation which calls for sympathy and attention toward the victims.

Excerpt 6.72
The high school graduate, along with several other women from China, had been working at the outlet for more than a year but only received their salaries occasionally. They were also **forced to endure slave-like** working conditions. Fortunately for them, the police were alerted and a patrol car arrived just in time to prevent Wang and her friends from doing something drastic to **escape the hell hole** they were in. The rescued women have since revealed that they were **forced to work 364 days** a year from 11am to 1am and only received a maximum of RM18 from each customer they massaged.

Source: End this Modern Day Slavery, NST, 31 March, 2012

Excerpt 6.73
He said the two victims were **locked** in a room and **forced to have sex** without payment. "One of them was also **forced to have unnatural sex** to satisfy customers," he added. Sakib explained that the two women tempted into coming to Malaysia under the pretext of working as waitresses with high salaries. "Their huge debt with the syndicate was used as a reason to **threaten and force them into prostitution**," he added.

Source: Two women saved from sexual slavery in Klang, NST, 26 May, 2016

Excerpt 6.74
Among them was a girl who **could not tolerate** it anymore and tried to run from her pimps. She was unfortunately caught. The pimp then gathered the others around, started **stripping her naked, and hung her upside down** from the fan with her toes touching the centre as it spun. "**The pain** experienced elicited loud screams from the girl, so loud that the rest of her mates could never forget it," says Wong of the group who asked her for help. "The **tortured** girl was never seen again."

Source: Heinous Tales, The Star, 10 April, 2012

Actual voices of sex-trafficking victims are also made heard in the newspapers that tell stories of their suffering and plight. However, only piecemeal coverage is provided (Excerpt 6.75). The victims are quoted directly especially when they talk about suicide

attempts and being in a condition of enslavement for example, "I was locked in my room and was not allowed to go out. I was so depressed that I felt suicidal", "We were also forced to work when we were sick." Words such as suicide, locked, depressed, warned, forced, and scarred are powerful and can evoke readers' emotions, and they carry more impact when the words are expressed in victims' own voices.

Excerpt 6.75

When Delima (not her real name) was told that she had secured a job as a domestic helper in Singapore, the Indonesian was elated. She was horrified when her employer turned out to be a pimp and her place of work and new home was a brothel in Bukit Bintang. For weeks, she cried and even contemplated **suicide**. "**I was locked in my room and was not allowed to go out. I was so depressed that I felt suicidal**. The pimp **warned** me that the authorities would put me in jail," said Delima.

Another victim, Kasturi (not her real name) was also duped by "Ibu Illy", who told the 23-year-old she could work as a maid in Japan. "We were paid based on how many customers we had in a day. **We were forced** to entertain at least six to seven men daily. We were also **forced to work when we were sick**," Kasturi added. "**Our lives have been scarred** and things will never be the same again," said Delima, who vowed to look for "Ibu Illy" and hand her over to the authorities.

Source: Duped into prostitution, The Star, 10 September, 2011

Overall, the media constructs victims of sex trafficking as undergoing extreme torture and enslavement. Portraying them as victims not only justifies action by the authorities to rescue more victims in the same predicament, but at the same time the topos of victimisation heightens the disparity between the powerful "Us" and the powerless "Them" that can be detrimental to the victims. In other words, the topos of victimisation can be associated with both positive and negative outcomes.

6.3.4 Topos of control

The Malaysian media draws heavily on the topos of control with regard to foreign women's involvement in sex work. The broad discourse of controlling and restricting the illegal activities is evident in both newspapers. A clear message within the news

media, and thus to the general population, is that the government is taking concerted action against those involved in prostitution.

Excerpt 6.76 contains arguments for immediate action. The control over foreign women in prostitution such as "deny future entry, arrested, directive had been issued" in some way creates the notion of a scuffle between the Malaysian government (Us) and foreigners involved in illegal activities (Them). The article justifies the implementation of the directive because soliciting for prostitution is illegal in Malaysia (Laws of Malaysia, Act 574 Penal Code, Section 372B) and the high demand for prostitution has increased the number of sex-trafficking cases. The police force is regarded as the country's main law enforcement bureau responsible for the prevention and control of sex-related crime.

Excerpt 6.76
Last month, police had approached the Immigration Department to fingerprint these women in hopes it would use its discretionary powers to **deny future entry** to these foreigners suspected of being involved in vice. In the last three years, 35,683 foreign women were **arrested** for alleged prostitution under "Ops Noda". In an immediate reaction, Attorney-General's Chambers Prosecution Division chief Tun Abd Majid Tun Hamzah said a **directive had been issued** that since the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (ATIP) had come into effect, investigation papers on foreign women caught during vice raids must be opened under ATIP.

Source: Not a single case, NST, 17 March, 2012

Evidence of the topos of control can be observed in Excerpt 6.77 in which Supt Adzhar Othman, the Labuan police chief, said in an authoritative voice, "We will not allow". This is intended to send a clear message that prostitution is prohibited on the island (Labuan) and that "strict law enforcement was needed". The proposed enforcement is justified in the news article because the island is well known for its low crime index and the authorities want to maintain its good record.

Excerpt 6.77
Labuan police chief Supt Adzhar Othman said this was to ensure that such activities did not mushroom here. "The island is known as a clean island with a low crime index, and we want to maintain it that way. **We will not allow** the island to become a sex haven, either," he said today. Alluding to the recent case of five women who were forced into prostitution after being promised restaurant jobs by an agent here, he said this proved **strict law enforcement was needed**.

Source: Labuan police focus on human trafficking, gambling, NST, 18 September, 2012

Excerpts 6.76 and 6.77 demonstrate the Malaysian government's unremitting intention to adopt a prohibitive approach by imposing stringent laws against sex offenders. By quoting the police chief's exact words, the newspaper attempts to assure readers that the Labuan police are serious in maintaining the reputation of the island and are therefore obliged to take rigorous action to curb prostitution.

In another news excerpt (6.78), crime analysts and enforcement officers call for control of the country's border "at entry checkpoints" to prevent the access of foreign women. Although the article stresses the consequences that may arise as a result of Malaysia's porous border, the article fails to offer immediate action in response to the issue. The article merely informs readers about the condition and the consequence of the Malaysian government's unrestricted border control, but invokes neither a positive nor a negative form of argumentation.

Excerpt 6.78
PUTRAJAYA: Crime analysts and law enforcement officers warn the country faces dire consequences if the government circular that effectively did away with stringent border controls **at entry checkpoints** is not rescinded immediately. They said the socio-economic implications would be far-reaching if the situation was left unchecked and the border controls were not reinstated.

Source: Rescind circular or face dire outcome, NST, 20 March, 2012

6.3.5 Topos of threat

The discourse on sex trafficking in Malaysia also leads to another important discussion in which foreign women, especially those from China, are seen as dangers to society, which gives rise to the topos of threat. With reference to the topos of threat, Wodak (2001, p. 75) states that if "there are specific dangers and threats, one should do something against them".

Chinese nationals who come to Malaysia to work in the sex trade as prostitutes are not well received by the locals. The influx of these women to the country has raised concerns among married women who claim their husbands are going after China dolls and "ignoring their responsibilities toward their family" (Excerpt 6.79).

Excerpt 6.79
Perak Criminal Investigation Department chief Datuk Mohd Dzuraidi Ibrahim said ten women from China, aged between 32 and 44, who worked as guest relations officers and 16 customers were detained during the operation. Dzuraidi added that before the raid, the police had received many complaints from wives of men who had taken these foreign guest relations officers as their mistresses and ended up **ignoring their responsibilities toward their family**.

Source: 10 China dolls held in estate, NST, 8 May, 2010

Similar examples of the topos of threat can be seen in Excerpt 6.80 which puts forward the argument that foreign guest relation officers should not be allowed to proliferate considering the friction they cause in family relationships. The threat demonstrated in the article as "husbands spending a lot of time – and money" on China dolls is a type of emotional threat faced by many wives who fear that their husbands will succumb to China dolls' temptation and go astray.

The topos of threat in the newspaper texts on the whole represents foreign women in prostitution as problematic not only within the institution of the family but also at the national level. Some examples of economic and health threats presented in the English-language newspapers are "money being drained out of the country and the possibility of these women being HIV carriers" (Excerpt 6.81) and "health risks they could give" (Excerpt 6.82).

The Malaysian government also fears that the large amount of money generated through prostitution "... up to RM30, 000 each in only 20 days" will damage Malaysia's financial stability. This is consistent with a media source that reported Malaysia being "placed 17 out of 26 countries with the highest revenue from the sex industry" ("Prostitution in Malaysia", 2014).

The topos of threat is also evident in the Malaysian media referring to the consequences of accepting foreign women into the country. Excerpt 6.83 provides evidence of these consequences.

Excerpt 6.83

Let Jalan Hang Tuah be known as a popular tourism stretch, not as a hooker street, an angry Datuk K. Basil said. "Prostitution has been around for sometime in the back alleys of the street, but no measures were taken to stop it," the city councillor told The Star after raising a storm during the Malacca Historic City Council meeting here yesterday. He said a thriving prostitute hub could smear the city's image as a popular tourist destination. "**This is disgraceful for Malacca. We have to shoo away the prostitutes**," he said adding that the back alley was close to a community hall where wedding receptions and concerts take place. Mayor Datuk Zainal Abu has however, assured prompt action after Basil appealed to the council and the police to clear the back alleys by the end of the year.

Source: Clear streets of prostitutes, The Star, 22 December, 2011

As a Muslim-majority nation, Malaysia views sex work as problematic because of the negative effects it has on the country. Jalan Hang Tuah, an iconic tourist street in Malacca, has become the home for underground sex work. The city councillor (Datuk K. Basil) expressed the threat posed by the women "could smear the city's image". Hence, when Datuk K. Basil commented that "This is disgraceful for Malacca. We have to shoo away the prostitutes" he indicated the topos of threat. Considering the threat and the problems posed by foreign prostitutes, Mayor Datuk Zainal Abu has given assurance that actions would be taken to put a stop to all vice activities operating in the city.

6.3.6 Topos of number

The media makes reference to sex-trafficking victims through statistics and numbers—the topos of number. The mainstream English-language newspapers use the topos of number effectively to indicate the large number of foreign women participating in prostitution in the country and that specific action should be taken against them. Drawing reference to numbers such as "46,135 foreigners, 5,956 foreigners, and 11,832

last year and 8,078 foreigners" (Excerpt 6.84) not only creates fear among the public of the rising number of prostitutes, but, on a larger scale, Malaysia will be linked to notoriety despite continuous efforts to combat prostitution.

Excerpt 6.84
POLICE have detained a total of **46,135** foreigners believed to be involved in prostitution from 2008 until September this year, the Dewan Rakyat was told. Deputy Home Minister Datuk Wira Abu Seman Yusop said the Government was aware of such activities and would not hesitate to take stern action to curb the problem. "In 2008, we nabbed **5,956** foreigners, **7,638** in 2009, **12,631** the following year and **11,832** last year. As of September, we detained **8,078** foreigners," he told Mohsin

Source: 46,135 foreign prostitutes arrested since 2008, The Star, 9 November, 2012

The topos of number in this news excerpt is biased against foreign women because they are often associated with immoral conduct. Although there are instances where local women have been victimised and forced into prostitution, the media hardly reduces the women to numbers. The topos of number imparts the idea that prostitution in Malaysia is largely operated by foreign women and this paints a negative image of those women. In Excerpts 6.85 and 6.86, the media made reference to the topos of number by highlighting the large numbers of foreigners who work as guest relations officers and prostitutes (e.g., 30 GROs from Thailand, 70 foreign women). The topos of number used in this news report is prejudicial because it associates the women with low morality for their involvement in sex work.

Excerpt 6.85
State deputy police chief Datuk A. Thaiveegan said 450 members from enforcement agencies rounded up foreign guest relations officers and issued compounds to motorists between 9pm and 3am. He said the raiding party rounded up **30 GROs from Thailand**, aged between 21 and 30, and detained a local man, believed to be their manager, from a night spot in Datuk Keramat here.

Source: 30 foreign GROs held in raids, NST,10 November, 2014

> Excerpt 6.86
> The Johor Immigration Department arrested **70 foreign women** at an entertainment outlet in Stulang Laut on Wednesday. State Immigration enforcement unit deputy chief Masri Abdul said the raid followed complaints by members of the public about the presence of foreign women in large numbers.
>
> *Source: 70 foreign women detained in raid, NST, 6 September, 2013*

In contrast to the topos of number being used negatively, there are instances where foreign women have been portrayed positively. The topos of number is positively used in terms of the number of women rescued from sexual exploitation, as demonstrated in Excerpts 6.87 and 6.88 where reference is made to rescuing "184 foreign women" and rescuing "six women from India, four from Pakistan, three from Nepal and two from Bangladesh".

The numbers are intended to show readers the government's efforts in taking measures to curb prostitution through rescue attempts. The topos of number being used positively in these news excerpts not only emphasises the number of victims being rescued, but also highlights the enforcement officers' achievements in their rescue operations.

> Excerpt 6.87
> KUALA LUMPUR: Police **rescued 184 foreign women** believed to be victims.of human trafficking.during a raid on a nightclub in Jalan P. Ramlee here yesterday.
>
> *Source: Police save 184 foreign women, NST, 4 January, 2015*
>
> Excerpt 6.88
> Bukit Aman anti-vice, gambling and secret societies division head Senior Asst Comm Datuk Jalil Hassan said police **rescued six women from India, four from Pakistan, three from Nepal and two from Bangladesh** during a raid on a premises at 12.30am yesterday along Jalan Inai here.
>
> *Source: Human trafficking syndicate busted, The Star, 22 July, 2013*

Wodak (2001, p. 76) explained that the topos of number can be subsumed under the tenet that, "if the numbers prove a specific topos, a specific action should be performed or not be carried out". So, the negative use of the topos of number emphasised in the newspapers on the whole is justified because there is a need to conduct rigorous enforcement to impede the entry of foreign women involved in vice activities.

6.3.7 Topos of burden

Another type of topos identified in the newspapers is the topos of burden. Investigation of this topos is necessary as it may shed some light on how sex-trafficking victims are perceived by the Malaysian government. According to Resigl and Wodak (2001, p. 76), the topos of burden is founded on the premise that "if a person, an institution or a country is burdened by specific problems, one should act in order to diminish these burdens".

Within the topos of burden, foreigners are portrayed as a burden to Malaysia in that their presence is said to have increased the country's expenses in handling those caught for immigration and criminal acts because the Prison Department has to "fork out RM35 a day to sustain them plus to prosecute and repatriate them after serving the sentences" (Excerpt 6.89).

Excerpt 6.89

Meanwhile, police said the influx of foreigners had **placed additional demand** on their resources in handling the spike in crimes such as public disturbances, drunk and disorderly behaviour, prostitution and gambling. The government also **incurs high costs** in handling foreigners caught for immigration offences and criminal acts, as the Prison Department has to **fork out RM35 a day to sustain them plus to prosecute and repatriate them after serving the sentences**.

Source: Rescind circular or face dire outcome, NST, 20 March, 2012

Expressions such as "placed additional demand" and "incurs high cost" may influence readers' perceptions and incline them to believe that foreigners are problematic to the nation because the government will have to allocate money to manage them. With the government experiencing high expenditure for "immigration offences and criminal acts" involving foreigners, the topos of burden implies that the Malaysian government should restrict and control foreigners coming to Malaysia to avoid the financial and socioeconomic burden on the country.

6.4 Discussion

In this chapter I have attempted to provide an in-depth exploration of media texts that shape the representation of sex-trafficking victims in Malaysia. The results of the analysis are discussed in this section beginning at Section 6.4.1 with the analyses of referential and predication strategies, followed by the analyses of argumentative strategies in Section 6.4.2.

6.4.1 Analyses of referential and predication strategies

The Malaysian media on the whole is supportive of the government regardless of the way sex-trafficking victims are represented. As pointed out in Chapter 2 of this thesis, the Malaysian government is an authoritarian regime that has control over the media via rules and sets of laws but, at the same time, permits a certain amount of freedom. Under this dictatorial system, the Malaysian press is expected to serve the state and show its support for the actions and policies of the government. Because the media functions under the control of successive governments, when reporting sex-trafficking issues, the newspapers try to portray the good image of the government by including the government's agenda in its news reports. In order to do this, the media draws a lot of attention to the voices of prominent social actors (e.g., enforcement officers, ministers)

through direct and indirect reporting. When the newspapers include information from a well-established person, the news is considered to be truthful because it is conveyed through a reliable source.

Findings from the referential and predication strategies revealed that foreign women in sex work have generally been portrayed as criminals and illegal immigrants. This could be seen in the analysis of inclusion where sex-trafficking victims have been presented as deviants, for example as a social threat and as law offenders. Because of this, often sex-trafficking victims become subjects of marginalisation because the media is more interested in highlighting the immigration status of the victims rather than viewing their problem as a human rights crisis. Also, when the media explicitly excludes discussion about the actions of the traffickers or predators as well as men's demand for sexual pleasure (Ong & Chu, 2014), the offences related to them appear less serious in comparison to victims' actions. Goehrun (2013, p. 14) argued that "if arrest rates of men and women differ so markedly in a crime that typically involves members of both genders and the difference cannot be attributed to the legal framework alone, there must be a discrepancy in enforcement". Moreover, with the number of foreign women arrested for prostitution, the Malaysian media has considered the sex-trafficking issue as a problem associated with foreign victims who make up the majority of women trafficked for sexual exploitation. As a result, the Malaysian government is compelled to intervene to restrict their entry to the country and is more likely to view the matter with a criminal approach. This strategy is seen as a way to legitimise the Malaysian government's supremacy in responding to sex-trafficking problems.

Foreign women in sex work therefore tend to be viewed through the lens of immigration, prostitution, and crime, all of which position them as both victims and

criminals—and often in an inferior position with regard to the Malaysian authorities and society. Do Carmo (2015, para. 5) stated that when sex-trafficking victims "encounter the authorities, the likelihood of being believed is balanced against their immigration status. As a result, their cases are often received with at best scepticism and at worst a strong rebuke that they should not have come here to scrounge off our benefits." The hidden message is that trafficking victims are treated as illegal immigrants first and human beings last. "Women in prostitution are therefore at a clear disadvantage under current systems of enforcement and face legal discrimination that only further disadvantages them within an already patriarchal societal framework" (Goehrun, 2013, p. 15).

Analysis of the newspaper texts exposed sex-trafficking victims as having been referenced through derogatory labelling and slanderous descriptions. This type of negative representation can lead to their stigmatisation and marginalisation in society, thus being excluded from participating meaningfully in any kind of activities within a community (Jenson, 2000). Although Kotrla (2010, p. 185) argued that "no longer should derogatory and demeaning words such as prostitute, slut or sex worker be tolerated" this degrading labelling is evident almost routinely in the Malaysian mainstream newspapers. This is of great concern to the victims because through the labelling processes, not only does society perceive them differently but the victims also tend to believe that they are different. These images that the news media creates, whether accurate or not, can also influence policies because policies are routinely based on images that are presented in the media (Loseke, 2003; Weitzer, 2007).

Findings from the analysis of sex-trafficking victims' representation in media further reveal official voices being given emphasis in media texts while other voices are

markedly absent from the text. News reports about sex-trafficking victims are mainly narrated from a third party's viewpoint, and therefore the victims seldom get any opportunity to voice their views. The exclusion of victims' voices means, they are given less emphasis by the newspapers and this kind of representation is obvious in the Malaysian English-language newspapers. The direct and indirect types of news reporting in the mainstream English-language newspapers play an important role in the representation of sex-trafficking victims. Indirect reporting of news provides free space for media writers to modify the context of the news in a way that suits their ideological purposes. Direct reporting is also included in the news reports to support and strengthen the media's positions and arguments. Usually this will include voices of prominent and influencial social actors such as government ministers, politicians, or police personnel. The elite voices have greater access to the media for informing the public about their views on important issues including human trafficking and sex trafficking. Therefore, any information that comes directly from these social actors are usually included in the news, and the media take this opportunity by enlisting them to support their own agenda. Fairclough (1995, pp. 62–63) stated that "the news media can be regarded as covertly transmitting the voices of social power-holders", largely because "access to the media is the most open to socially dominant sectors, both as 'reliable sources' and as 'accessed voices'".

6.4.2 Analyses of argumentative strategies

My analysis of argumentative strategies (topoi) revealed that both *The Star* and *New Straits Times* have used a number of topoi to justify the arguments for and against sex-trafficking victims, in this case the topoi of responsibility, humanitarianism, victimisation, control, threat, number, and burden. Analysing the topoi was not straightforward because within a single article, or even within a sentence, different types

of topoi emerged that could be categorised as either negative or positive. Generally, sex-trafficking victims are not well received by the Malaysian government as their presence is said to cause many problems both to the nation and its people. Therefore, topoi of control, threat, number, and burden were employed to justify the negative construction of sex-trafficking victims. The topoi of control, threat, and number are prevalent in both newspapers because through these topoi the public make their judgments about the victims.

Through the topoi of responsibility and humanitarianism, sex-trafficking victims are portrayed positively as people who are in need of protection and human rights. As a way of showing empathy to the victims, the government has provided more shelters and various activities for the victims while they are under the protection of the government. However, despite the media showing some compassion toward the victims, it aims primarily to characterise the Malaysian government as the saviour and the women as victims. The victimisation of trafficked victims is legitimised by the topos of victimisation in which the sufferings endured by the victims is made known to the public so that victims' condition can be better understood. Also, the demonstration of victimisation in the newspapers is advantageous for the victims as a way for them to gain attention from policy makers and government bodies, but these elements of victimisation can seldom be found in the Malaysian mainstream newspapers. What is presented to the readers is based on stories conveyed either by journalists or from a third person's point of view and not stories told by the victims themselves.

The control topos represents sex-trafficking victims in Malaysia as individuals who are different from normal people. Women in sex work are represented as law breakers who are categorised and positioned as the Other. Within the topos of threat, sex-

trafficking victims are feared for draining the nation's finances, causing friction in family relationships, and carrying of transmittable diseases. The topos of number was used negatively by the media to accentuate the number of foreign women entering the country as sex workers. Conversely, the topos of number used in a positive way supports the government by emphasising the number of women rescued by the enforcement officers. The representations of sex-trafficking victims demonstrated in both English-language newspapers echo a general discourse that implies a positive representation of the Malaysian government while sex-trafficking victims are represented as the negative-Other. Referencing the women as the Other through their sexual conduct evokes a negative attitude toward the victims. Griffiths and Nesdale (2006, p. 736) believe that through this "othering", society develops stereotypes and prejudice toward the out-groups and that our attitude toward this group is reflected in these stereotypes, justifying the space between "Us" and "Them". The representation of foreign women in sex work regardless of their trafficking condition and exploitation are generally perceived undesirable by the government and the community and that it is right to control their entry as a way to maintain a secure and peaceful nation.

6.5 Summary

In this chapter I have presented the findings obtained from two mainstream English-language newspapers about how sex-trafficking victims are represented through the discourse-historical approach's three strategies (referential, predication, and argumentative). The referential and predication strategies were investigated in Section 6.2, and the argumentative strategies were investigated in Section 6.3. The overall discussion of the findings was presented in Section 6.4.

CHAPTER 7: ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW DATA

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I explore the ways in which victims construct their lived experience of sexual exploitation through small stories and how sex work had affected their self-representations. After this brief introduction, Section 7.2 contains an overview of the themes identified in victims' narratives. Following this, in Sections 7.3 to 7.6, I discuss the four themes that emerged from the interviews (providers, powerless victims, dispirited victims, and empowered actors) supported with relevant quotations from the interviewees' small stories. The findings of the interviews are summarised in Section 7.7, and the chapter is concluded with a summary in Section 7.8.

7.2 Victim voices in narratives

For the most part, the analysis of newspaper data in Chapter 6 presented a one-sided view of the victims, mainly from the voices of dominant actors. The absence of victims' voices in the newspapers has implications for victims' lives and contributes to negative public opinion (refer to Section 2.4.2). In order to give voice to sex-trafficking victims, within this chapter I report the thematic narrative analysis conducted on interview transcripts from interviewees who told me about their experience in sex work and how that experience had affected their self-representations (refer to Section 4.6). CDA analysts have always been criticised for not giving voice to the opinions of the "other party" and people in general and that they are rather one-sided in presenting their findings. Also, Creswell and Clark (2011) state that employing one type of methodological approach may not be adequate to answer certain research questions or to get a picture of an entire story.

In attempting to address this concern and adopt a more balanced approach to the study, the interview narratives of sex-trafficking victims were examined. Using Riessman's (2008) thematic narrative analysis, I investigated the women's actual experience in sex work through their voices and how the small stories within the women's narratives reflected their self-representations (refer to Section 5.5.5).

The four main themes in this chapter are analysed based on narratives (small stories) produced by research participants during the interview sessions. The small stories that participants include as events in their accounts may not adhere to a clear storyline but are important building blocks for me to understand their narratives. This will be discussed in Sections 7.3 to 7.6. Each main theme is divided into subthemes, as presented in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Main themes and subthemes resulting from interview narratives

Thesis section	Main themes	Sub-themes
7.3	Providers	Employment
		Short-term agreements
		Economic insecurity
7.4	Powerless victims	Physical abuse
		Sexual abuse
		Verbal abuse
		Incarceration
		Denial of basic needs
7.5	Dispirited victims	Stigmatisation
		Loss of hope
		Shame
7.6	Empowered actors	Positive attitudes
		Economic independence

The narrative analysis is based on the second pair of research questions:

RQ2: (a) What themes emerge from the victims' narratives about their lived experiences and self-representations?

(b) How do the small stories within victims' narratives reflect their lived experiences and self-representations?

7.3 Providers

A prominent theme that recurred throughout the interview narratives revolved around the representation of women as providers. In most developing countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, and other Southeast Asian nations, poverty becomes a driver that exacerbates the living conditions of people, thereby forcing many women to leave their country in search of employment. Although many women found the reality of work in Malaysia was far from what they had envisioned, they had to pursue their intentions for various reasons. Within this theme, three subthemes emerged from the interview data. These were employment (see Section 7.3.1), short-term agreements (see Section 7.3.2), and economic insecurity (see Section 7.3.3).

7.3.1 Employment

Analysis of the interviews indicated that all participants were from poverty-stricken families and this was the motivating factor for them to travel abroad in search of employment. Traffickers and middle persons took advantage of this situation and deceived the women into believing that good and legitimate job opportunities awaited them in a foreign country. Many women were duped by the false promises given to them by employment agencies not knowing whether those agencies were legitimate or not. Others were lured into relationships with men who gained their trust before forcing them into sex work. Almost all the women interviewed indicated that they had been enticed into sex work under conditions that left them no choice.

Small stories about employment

Prior to coming to Malaysia, Meena, an Indian national, worked as a cook (*samayal vellai*) in a women's hostel in India. Her decision to work in Malaysia was mainly due to constant pressure from her family to earn extra money (*Kaasu kammiya irrukke naale thaan veettu vehllaikune kettu vanthen*). Being a single parent and having no one to turn to, Meena agreed to work in Malaysia as a domestic helper not knowing the agony that lay ahead. She made arrangements with an employment agency through a woman she befriended at her workplace. In her narrative, Meena represented sacrifice through her decision to work abroad (Excerpt 7.1).

Excerpt 7.1   (Meena)

(sigh) ore **hostel ladies India leh vehlleh pathukittu irunthen**. ***Samayal vellai***. ***...Kaasu kammiya irrukke naale thaan veettu vehllaikune kettu vanthen***. *Sehri, vange veettu vehllaiku vangene kuttikittu vanthange madam=*

(sigh) **one hostel in India I was working. Cook work**. ... **because money was not enough I asked for domestic helper work.** Okay, come and work as domestic helper and they brought me here madam=)

Meena related how she was convinced by her friend to meet the employment agent for work recruitment. That friend tapped into Meena's vulnerability by deploying persuasive language such as *nallavange* (good person), *Naa appedithan pohnen* (I went like that also), *Nalla idama irukku* (good place), *Nalla pathukittangge* (They took good care of me), and *Nalla sambalam unakku undhe* (good salary for you) (Excerpt 7.2). Because Meena was eager to find new opportunities in another country, these promises seemed very attractive and gave her hope.

Excerpt 7.2   (Meena)

*Therinjhevangge muliayamma, ore ladies muliamma naan vanthen madam. **Inthe agent kette po**. **Nallavange**. **Naa appedithan pohnen**. **Nalla idama irukku**. **Nalla pathukittangge**. **Nalla sambalam unakku undhe**. Appadinu sonnangge madam.*

(Through someone that I know, through a lady I came madam. **Go to this agent. Good person. I went like that also. Good place. They took good care of me. Good salary for you**. She told me that madam.)

When she arrived in Malaysia, Meena was employed as a domestic helper by an Indian family. It was only 3 months later that she was taken to a brothel where she realised that she had fallen prey to sex work. By then it was too late for her to escape. Without valid travel documents, her situation was frightening because she had very limited knowledge of the country she had been taken to (Excerpt 7.3).

Excerpt 7.3   (Meena)

*Averu innggenu vanthu (0.3) inthe vehllaiku anuppivittaaru ennai madam. **Tappane [vehllai]***
He came here (0.3) this work he sent me madam. **Wrong [work]**)

In her narration, Meena used different ways to refer to sex work. In Excerpt 7.3, the adjectival phrase "wrong work" (*tappane [vehllai]*) was used in a subtle way as she was reluctant and embarrassed about herself.

In Excerpt 7.4, she referred to sex work as "*inthe maathiri vehllai*" (this kind of work) and "*vibacharam*" (prostitution) to describe the immorality of work she was engaged in. Because Meena lacked agency, she was not in a position to resist her exploitative condition and so was entrapped into sex work for 8 months for the amount of RM 30 "*muppathu velli ...*" (thirty ringgit).

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Excerpt 7.4   (Meena)

=**inthe maathiri vehllai** *seiyuruvangge (0.1)* **vibacharam** *nadatharuvangge.*

(=**this kind of work** they do (0.1) they run a **brothel**.)

ah: sex. **muppathu velliki vehllai** *mattum senjittu pehruvaange madam.*

(ah: sex. For **thirty ringgit work** they come and go madam.)

A similar story of deception was recounted by Vithya, 30 years of age, who came from the district of Hyderabad, the capital of the southern Indian state of Telangana. Like Meena, Vithya made the decision to work in Malaysia to support her two young children and ageing parents. Ever since her husband had absconded with another woman, Vithya single-handedly struggled to support her family. She worked for 3 months as a domestic helper in Malaysia before she was sent to a brothel for sex work. She was promised new employment, but her hopes were shattered when she realised that her agent had deceived her into sex work. Her deception is evident in her words, "*after working only:: ini (this) working, sex working*" (Excerpt 7.5). In the following excerpt, Vithya clearly shows that she was not aware that she had been deceived until she was informed about the work.

Excerpt 7.5   (Vithya)

...**After working only:: ini** ('this' in Malay) **working, sex working** *but just two months.*

The stories recounted by Meena and Vithya are similar in terms of the way they were deceived into sex work. Traffickers initially gain the trust of the victims through tempting promises, and once they are far away from their families the women are left without any support. The choices that Meena and Vithya made in their lives to work abroad shows how much self-reliance they had before leaving their village, but when

they arrived in Malaysia they lost all their confidence and became victims of sex trafficking.

In Excerpt 7.6, Ida described her deception through expressions such as "*Datang ke sini: (.) jauh berbeda dar- dari Indon*" (Came here: (.) far different fr- from Indon) and "*lain dari kenyataan*" (far from reality). In both statements, what is striking is that the victim (Ida) was given false information about the nature of the work promised to her in the foreign country. Traffickers created false hope for the victims through charm, and then deceived them into sex work.

Excerpt 7.6   (Ida)

Datang ke sini: (.) jauh berbeda dar- dari Indon

(**Came here: (.) far different fr- from Indon**)

*...baik-baik datang sini untuk kerja: (.) tapi saya sampai je sini seperti itu. Tambah lagi kalau dari portal (.) **lain dari kenyataan***

(...with good thoughts came here to wo:rk (.) but the moment I came here already like that. Moreover if from portal (.) **far from reality**)

This kind of deception is also evident in Rara's saying (Excerpt 7.7), "*datang ke mari tujuan untuk bekerja:↑ (.) sampai sini ya:↑ (.) banyak tipu lah ejen* " (came here for the purpose of wor<u>k</u>:↑ (.) arrive here ya:↑ (.) <u>a lot</u> of cheating lah agent). The stress on the word "*banyak*" (a lot) is a clear indication of the amount of false assurance given to her back in her home country.

Excerpt 7.7   (Rara)

*datang ke mari tujuan untuk beker<u>ja:</u>↑ (.) **sampai sini ya**:↑ (.) <u>**banyak** tipu lah ejen</u>*

(came here for the purpose of wor<u>k</u>:↑ (.) **arrive here ya**:↑ (.) <u>**a lot** of cheating lah agent</u>)

The small stories about deception related by Ida and Rara (Excerpts 7.6 and 7.7) show that they had very little or no agency in their decision to escape or to even look for other employment opportunities. Their choices were decided by some factors and constraints surrounding them. The poor standard of living that leaves almost no hope for the women to improve their living conditions forces these women to sieze any kind of opportunities offered to them. These women are therefore easily targeted for trafficking by people loosely associated with them or through employment links.

7.3.2   Short-term agreements

Some perpetrators successfully influenced their victims to consent to sex work by making them believe that the work agreement is temporary. Once they have gained the trust of the women, they keep them in sexual slavery conditions by means of debt bondage. In most cases, the victims are told that they will have to settle their debts to the agents or traffickers but are then deceived in terms of the amount and time needed to pay off the debt. The following are excerpts from victims' narratives.

Small stories about short-term agreements

In an interview with Mia, she recounted that her choice of coming to Malaysia as a masseuse was based on a temporary agreement of 25 days (Excerpt 7.8). Mia, an Indonesian, recalled that she was arrested by the police when she had been working for only 3 weeks as a massage therapist and sex worker in a Chinese-owned massage centre. The expressions "*cuma hanya sekejap*" (only for a while) "*perjanjian cuma dua puluh lima [hari::]*" (agreement only twenty five days) indicate that Mia was deceived into agreeing to work in Malaysia. However, upon arrival at her destination, Mia was told that she had to work for extra days if she wanted to take home more money "*Kena berpanjang: kalau nak bawak wang (.) pulang banyak=*" (Must extend: if want to take

home (.) more money=). This change in the agreement marked her loss of agency. Mia

did not have any opportunity to resist because she was already trapped in the business.

Excerpt 7.8   (Mia)

Kalau kan waktu:: (.) uh- uhh **saya nak pikirkan cuma hanya sekejap [(0.4)] perjanjian cuma dua puluh lima [hari::]** *(sebaik) tu (2.5) Dia kata apa ya?* **Kena berpanjang: kalau nak bawak wang (.) pulang banyak**=

(If right duri::ng (.) uh- uhh **I thought only for a while [(0.4)] agreement only twenty five [days::]** (Finish) that (2.5) They said what ya? **Must extend: if want to take home (.) more money**=)

Mia was appalled "*terkejutnya di situ↑*" (shocked right away↑) when she was

informed about the debt she owed her agent on the day she arrived (Excerpt 7.9)

"↑*perjanjian kan dua puluh lima hari: setelah itu uhh sampai di sini kita harus*

melunasi: hutang" (↑agreement right twenty five days: then uhh when we arrived here

we have to pay off: debt). She had no knowledge of what she was getting into. Mia

indicated in her interview that she was troubled about having to settle her agent's debt

when she had not even started working (*belum kerja belum apa (0.4) (tak) tahunya↑ (.)*

udah harus bayar hutang). At this stage, Mia displayed a transformation in her identity,

from that of an independent woman to that of a debt-bonded slave.

Excerpt 7.9   (Mia)

...↑**perjanjian kan dua puluh lima hari: setelah itu uhh sampai di sini kita harus melunasi: hutang** *.hhh selama:: **tiga puluh**=

(...↑**agreement right twenty five days: then uhh when we arrived here we have to pay off: debt** .hhh for:: **thirty days**=)

=*Ahh* ↑**terkejutnya di situ**↑ *.hh terus uhh dia kata mmm setelah itu↑(.) setelah **tiga pulu:h point** tu kita lunas, barulah ki- i- cari wang untuk sendiri [(0.8)] ah di situ la saya kali ((chuckles)) (shock) le:↑ kau buat camni tu kan kita belum .hh **belum kerja belum apa (0.4) (tak) tahunya**↑ (.) **udah harus bayar hutang** (0.5) yea:=*

> (=Ahh ↑**shocked right away**↑ .hh then uhh they said mmm after that↑ (.) after **thirt:y points** that we pay off, only then we- w- find money for ourselves [(0.8)] ah that when I felt ((chuckles)) (shock) le:↑ you do like that right we haven't .hh **haven't work haven't done anything (0.4) (no) knowledge of it↑ (.) already have to pay off debt** (0.5) yea:=)

In her narrative, Mia recounted how, in order to earn freedom by settling her debts, she was expected to accumulate a certain number of points (this refers to the number of customers) (Excerpt 7.10). The accumulation of points depended on the number of clients that Mia offered her services to. Mia agreed to collect her points because she did not have a choice to decline. She was under the control of her captor and didn't have the courage to leave.

> Excerpt 7.10   (Mia)
>
> ***Point harus kumpul*** ↑*poin:t awal [macam tu]*
>
> (**Points have to collect** ↑poin:ts at the beginning [like that])

Like Mia, Pim's decision to work in Malaysia was based on a temporary agreement. Pressed by economic circumstances and left with no alternatives, Pim accepted sex work because she urgently needed money "*I no have money*" for her family in Thailand. She strongly believed that she would be sent home after 20 days in the business "*work in twenty day*", but because she was not equipped with enough agency and knowledge of her rights, traffickers took advantage of her vulnerability. This is evident in Excerpt 7.11.

> Excerpt 7.11   (Pim)
>
> Ye: s **I no have money**: I do... he: told me: work (.) **work in twenty day** (.) **you fini(sh) you go back**.

Pim was given assurance by her recruitment agent that she could return home once she fulfilled her contract provision "*you fini(sh) you go back*". Therefore she consented to the stipulation. The idea of temporary agreement seems to have enticed many women into sex work because they were led to believe that it was not compulsory for them to work more than was required in the agreement and at the same time they could earn money for themselves. In such circumstances, victims exhibit their lack of power for not being in a position to choose other means of income. Because the women were left without other options, their decision to work as a sex worker had become a survival strategy for them on the understanding that, upon accomplishing their target, the agreement would have been finalised and they could return to their home country.

In Excerpts 7.10 and 7.11 it is evident that both Mia and Pim had demonstrated some level of agency in their decision to earn a living through sex work without which it would have been impossible for them to make ends meet. Although accepting sex work as a temporary solution to their problem was not expressed as a positive option for these women, the women were able to redefine their identity by making active decisions to participate in that form of work within their constrained circumstances.

7.3.3 Economic insecurity

Most women who cross borders in search of employment are single parents (mainly due to divorce or separation from partners) and are a vulnerable group who struggle against poverty to support their households. Jayasree (2004, p. 59) added that sex workers in India "experienced domestic violence, desertion by their husbands, being sold by their husbands or having their property seized by their husbands and later divorced". Because they had been economically dependent on their husbands, these women went in search of employment.

Small stories about economic insecurity

My interviews with Mia and Lina proved that the initial consent to work temporarily in sex work for some women was mainly because of the good money one could earn from this business. This can be seen in Excerpts 7.12 and 7.13 where both women expressed their viewpoints through phrases such as "*senang dapat wang banyak*" (easy to earn lots of money), "*enak la kerja macam tu ... dapat wang banyak! dalam satu hari () tu [kan beribu ribu kan]*" (good la work like that ... get a lot of money! In one day () itself [right thousands right]), "*duit enak*" (good money) and "*gajinya OK:↓*" (salary OK:↓). The adjectives "enak" (good) and "senang" (easy) as expressed by the interviewees, show how much sex work appeared to be lucrative for them.

Excerpt 7.12   (Mia)

*Orang fikir orang cakap uh !oh **senang dapat wang banyak**!*

(People think people say uh !oh **easy to earn lots of money**!)

enak la kerja macam tu** ah (dapat) **dapat wang banyak! dalam satu hari () tu [kan beribu ribu kan]

(**good la work like that** ah (get) **get a lot of money! In one day () itself [right thousands right]**)

Excerpt 7.13   (Lina)

*Cari **duit enak** o↑ (.) (unclear) (.) **gajinya OK:↓***

(Find **good money** o↑ (unclear) (.) **salary OK:↓**)

For many of these poverty-stricken women, any job that could guarantee money was welcome, especially if the money could help them to meet their basic needs (e.g., pay for housing, feed their family, and support their children's educational needs). Therefore, resorting to sex work was a way of surviving. Excerpts 7.14 to 7.18 provide

some of the financially related reasons given by victims for their involvement in sex work.

Excerpt 7.14   (Mia)

*ada problem: kewangan lah [.hhh] **problem kewangan untuk bayar hutang** datang sini:*

(got problem: financial lah [.hhh] **financial problem to pay off debt** came here:)

Excerpt 7.15   (Lina)

*Untuk **anak**: untuk **orang tua**:↑*

(For **children**: for **parents**:↑)

*=Ah:↑ saya mau anak saya jadi **doktor** [lah*

(=Ah:↑ I want my child to become **doctor** [lah)

*°Mm:° (.) supaya↑ (.) beli **rumah**↑ (.) beli **sawah**↑ (hh) gitu lah*

(°Mm:° (.) for↑ (.) buy **house**↑ (.) buy **paddy field**↑ (hh) like that lah)

Excerpt 7.16   (Rara)

*tujuan kita kan ingin bagi **anak-anak**↑ dan **orang [tua**↑]*

(our purpose right want to give **children**↑ and **elderly [parents**↑])

Excerpt 7.17   (Tini)

*Saya kerja sini kan perlu wang untuk **anak sekolah**:: buat anak sekolah dikampung, bapanya pun sering mabuk-mabuk:: jadi itu pasal saya kerja ini=)*

(I work here right need money for **children's school**:: for children to school in village, their father is also often drunk:: so that is why I do this work=)

Excerpt 7.18   (Maya)

*Bapa tak ada, **mak** pun **sakit di hospital** ((in tears)) siapa mahu jaga?... . Itu pasal saya kerja ini kak (0.3) mahu cari wang (0.5).*

(Father no more, **mother** is also **sick in hospital** ((in tears)) who wants to take care?... That is why I work this job sis (0.3) want to find money (0.5))

Analysis of the interviews indicated that the women in this study generally represented themselves as goal-driven. They were in need of money for various reasons ranging from settling debts to paying for children's school fees and medical expenses. Excerpts 7.14 to 7.18 contain segments from five women's responses about becoming involved in sex work. The following are excerpts from the women's stories:

"*bayar hutang*" (to pay off debt), "*untuk anak: untuk orang tua*" (for children: for parents), "*mau anak saya jadi <u>doktor</u>*" (want my child to become <u>doctor</u>), "*beli rumah*" (buy house), "*beli sawah*", (buy paddy field), "*bagi anak-anak↑ dan orang [tua↑]*" (give children↑ and elderly [parents↑]), "*anak sekolah*" (children's school), "*mak pun sakit di hospital*" (mother is also sick in hospital).

Although many reasons drove the women into sex work, for these women, involvement in sex work was essentially to support their family members (i.e., children and parents). However, for Mia (Excerpt 7.14) and Lina (Excerpt 7.15), money was important for them to settle debt (*problem kewangan untuk bayar hutang*) and to improve their standard of living (*beli rumah↑ (.) beli sawah↑*). In other words, these women were prepared to go to extremes by becoming involved in sex work merely for the sake of their family despite defying traditional values and having to lose their dignity at the same time.

The idea of earning easy money through sex work although seemed to have convinced some women however, along the way, the temporary agreement changed into compulsion. For Mia (Excerpt 7.19), the choice to be a temporary sex worker was against her will and was necessitated by her situation "*keadaan yang memaksa*"

(situation that forces). This external factor that compelled the women to give in to sex work shows that their ability to make decisions over their lives had been compromised.

Excerpt 7.19   (Mia)

*...kita kan manusia yang punya hati la: orang pun tak nak kan kerja macam tu kerana ↑keadaan [(0.2)] **keadaan yang memaksa** mereka untuk kerja macam tu [ka:n] ya*

(...we right humans who have heart la: people also don't want right to work like that because ↑situation [(0.2)] **situation that forces** them to do that kind of work [ri:ght] ya)

In her narrative (Excerpt 7.20), Ida asserted that society must understand the reasons why women become involved in sex work. In her narrative, she said "*pasti ada alasan tertentu*" (surely there are some reasons).

Excerpt 7.20   (Ida)

*Kerana: selamanya: orang-orang seperti kami kerja seperti ini (.) **pasti ada alasan tertentu** kenapa harus kerja seperti ini*

(Because: all this while: people like us work like this (.) **surely there are some reasons** why must work like this).

The verb associated with compulsion "*memaksa*" (forces), and "*pasti ada alasan tertentu*" (surely there are some reasons) in both Mia and Ida's narratives demonstrate their not having any control of their choices. The victims' selection of words to explain their submissiveness portrays how they made meaning of their choices and used the words to construct their identity. In a situation where women face extensive pressure, they consent to sex work because the work provides them immediate money to realise their economic needs that would otherwise not be possible.

Despite the large amount of money that can be reaped from sex work, (refer to Exerpt 7.12) "*dapat wang banyak! dalam satu hari () tu [kan beribu-ribu kan]*", Mia confessed that people do not know the reality of sex work. She said that although sex work provides quick money, the person can only be seen smiling from the outside "*di: ↑luar: dia bersenyum tapi hati dia menangis↓*" (Excerpt 7.21). Prostituted women are shattered inside and people don't see their grievance and pain. They are not reflecting their real selves.

Excerpt 7.21   (Mia)

*...kalian belum tau rasanya macam apa: gitu kan, orang (0.3) **di: ↑luar: dia bersenyum tapi hati dia menangis↓***

(...you all don't know how it fee:ls like that right, people (0.3) **ou:t↑si:de she smiles but her heart cries↓**)

The metaphor "*hati dia menangis↓*" (her heart cries↓) expressed by Mia symbolises her deep emotions that cannot be explained through words. Whatever the route in, prostitution was normalised by these women who saw no alternative to the lives they were leading. The women were involved in a struggle to make ends meet. In the case of Mia and other women in a predicament similar to hers, self-perceived identity is that of self-sacrificing.

7.4 Powerless victims

Another important theme that surfaced in the small stories was the victims' self-representation as vulnerable individuals. The women featured themselves significantly as not having any power over themselves. They were kept in control by their captors through the use of various forms of violence, for example, physical abuse (7.4.1), sexual

abuse (7.4.2), verbal abuse (7.4.3), incarceration (7.4.4), and deprivation of food and sleep (7.4.5).

7.4.1 Physical abuse

Women in sex work often experience forms of physical and emotional abuse either at the hands of their captors or from the clients who seek their services. The violence endured by the women was so recurrent that it had become part of their daily lives. Captors exploit victims by inflicting physical violence to keep them under their domination. The women were oppressed to the maximum and they were hardly given time for recovery due to the different kinds of physical abuse.

Small stories about physical abuse

In Excerpt 7.22, Zara, a 34 year old Thai, described how she was physically compelled by her husband into sex work because he desperately needed money to buy drugs (*suami nak duit, dia hisap dadah*). She said that not only was she burdened by her husband's demands but also that the additional responsibility of having to raise her seven school-going children was a pressing concern. These sufferings were attributed to her lack of power to resist her oppression.

Excerpt 7.22   (Zara)

*...buat kerja macam ni pun **kena paksa dengan suami (.) suami nak duit, dia hisap dadah.** Lepas tu, anak semua tujuh orang...*

(...doing this kind of work also because **forced by my husband (.) husband needs money, he takes drugs.** And then, children all seven of them...)

Because Zara was in a helpless position, she had no alternatives and had to remain in sex work. In the interview, Zara (Excerpt 7.23) related that she could not refuse because

she was afraid her aggressive husband would harm her and her children; "*dia pukul kami dengan anak-anak*" (he hits me and children), "*kena parang*" (harmed me with machete), "*libas dengan batang paip*" (whipped with pipe rod). The action verbs, "hit, harm, and whip" (*pukul, kena parang, libas*) expressed by Zara in her small story demonstrate the intensity of pressure experienced by Zara to give in to her husband's demands. Instances of how Zara was physically abused by her husband to get her to comply with his commands are indicated in Excerpt 7.23.

Excerpt 7.23   (Zara)

Kalau kita tak bagi suami: duit, dia pukul kami (0.3) dengan anak -anak*. Terpaksalah kena. Nak bagi anak makan, nak hidupkan anak-anak, sekolah semua. Zara lah semua tanggung=*

(**If I don't give money to husband, he hits me (0.3) and children**. Have to...I have to feed my children, give them life, all going to school. Zara have to support everyone=)

Sana sini *(pointing to her head),* ***kepala semua, kena parang semua dengan suami (0.2) kena libas dengan batang paip***

(**There here** (pointing to her head), **head everywhere, husband harmed me with machete (0.2), whipped with pipe rod**)

7.4.2 Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is described as "any unwanted physical invasion of an individual's body that is sexual in nature" (Bollen, Artz, Vetten, & Louw, 1999, p. 5). When a woman in sex work is raped, it is treated as normal because people assume that "rape is part of her job and that she deserved or even asked for the rape" (Farley, 2004, p. 1096). In sex trafficking, women are raped to break their resistance and make them compliant. Small stories in this section will be based on only one participant, Ida, because she was the only interviewee who acknowledged being a victim of rape.

Small stories about sexual abuse

Ida was just 23 when she first experienced rape. She described how she was raped and forced to work as a call girl (Excerpt 7.24). She explained that her friend in Indonesia assured her a career as a well-paid hairstylist in a salon that she thought could help lighten her family's financial burden "*Datang ke sini: niat ditawarkan teman kerja: di Malaysia: ...bekerja sebagai: tukang salon (.) hair↑stylist hairstylist=*".

Excerpt 7.24   (Ida)

Datang ke sini: niat ditawarkan teman kerja: di Malaysia*: dan dijumpakan seorang agen untuk (.) cakap dengan agen katanya ingin **bekerja sebagai: tukang salon (.) hair↑stylist hairstylist=***

(**Came here: friend offered job: in Malaysia**: and met the agent for (.) spoke to agent and said that wanted to **work as: hairdresser (.) hair↑stylist hairstylist=**)

Ida's life changed immediately when her agent forcibly raped her on the day she arrived and subseqently compelled her into sex work. She was stripped of her identity (Excerpt 7.25). This example clearly shows how men abuse their power to control women and take advantage of their vulnerabilities by exploiting their bodies.

Excerpt 7.25   (Ida)

*...hari pertamanya datang ke sini **kena rogol sama bos sendiri*** ((crying))

(...on the first day came here **raped by own boss** ((crying)))

In Excerpt 7.26, Ida recounted how there were times when she was chaperoned to hotels daily in the afternoon at 2 o'clock to meet her clients "*jam dua petang lagi dijemput sama seorang driver* (.)". Every night Ida was forced to serve at least 10 men, "*satu malam sepuluh orang ... minima sepuluh orang*". She described the nature of her sex work through certain verbs such as massage (*massa:j*) and entertain (*melayani*)

which she was required to do. In the interview she said that her work in Malaysia is far different from that in her own country (*jauh berbeda dar- dari Indon*). She used the adjectival phrase "far different" to refer to the false promises that were assured to her in Indonesia. Through her small story it is evident that Ida had been deceived and that things did not turn out as expected.

Excerpt 7.26 (Ida)

*Datang ke sini: (.) **jauh berbeda dar- dari Indon**. Di sini kerjanya suruh **massa:j melayani** laki-laki. (.) janjinya: (.) sampai sini **melayani** laki-laki **satu malam sepuluh orang**.*

(Came here: (.) **far different fr- from Indon**. Here the work is to **massa:ge entertain** men (.) he promised: (.) arrived here **entertained** men **one night ten people**.)

*Sepuluh. [**Minima sepuluh orang**]*

(Ten. [**Minimum ten people**])

*Dari pagi: tidu:r. Menunggu:: **jam dua petang lagi dijemput sama seorang driver** (.) ke kerja*

(From morni:ng slee:p. Waiting:: **two o'clock afternoon again and fetched by a driver** (.) to work)

Because Ida was new to sex work, she did not know anything about it (*nggak tau apa-apa*). Recalling her horrific experience engulfed by trauma and embarrassment, she narrated how the first time she was taken to a hotel, her clients assisted (*ajarin*) her to perform the sex acts (Excerpt 7.27).

Excerpt 7.27 (Ida)

"...*First time saya kerja saya **nggak tau apa-apa customer ajarin saya**: (.) **saya cuma bisa nangis: saya nggak bisa buat apa-apa**:*"

(...First time I work I **didn't know anything customer taught me**: (.) **I could only cry: I couldn't do anything**:)

In her small story, Ida described her past self as lacking the ability to resist the condition she was trapped in. Her emotional devastation could only be comforted by her rolling tears "*saya cuma bisa nangis: saya nggak bisa buat apa-apa*" (I could only cry: I couldn't do anything:). The phrase "*nggak bisa buat apa-apa*" (couldn't do anything) reveals how helpless and vulnerable she was at that time. Her deplorable condition points to her lack of agency which she expressed through crying. Ida's story demonstrates how the trafficker broke her resistance and made her compliant. The internalisation of an increased level of trauma as a result of rape left Ida in a powerless state and not in a position to regulate her emotions.

Another important aspect that emerged from her narrative is the procedures involved in sex work. The noun phrase "*...prosedur-prosedur kerjanya...*" (...the work procedures ...) as narrated by Ida in Excerpt 7.28 seems to refer to the systematic and structured nature of sex work. It presents the idea that sex work entails certain behaviour desired by the clients which is different for each of client "*Setiap customer lain-lain*" (Every customer is different).

Excerpt 7.28   (Ida)

Karena saya sama saya nggak tau kerja macam itu (1.0) saya nggak tahu **prosedur-prosedur kerjanya** *bagaimana: (1.0)*

(Because I don't know about that kind of work (1.0) I don't know **the work procedures** how: (1.0))

Setiap customer lain-lain (0.5)

(**Every customer is different** (0.5))

A similar account was present in Rara's small story (Excerpt 7.29) "*…tak paham lagi (°tu kak°) (.) [sistem↓=*" (…don't understand yet (°that sis°) (.) [system↓=). She

used the term "*sistem*" (system) to refer to the procedures and routines associated with sex work.

Excerpt 7.29   (Rara)

…***tak paham lagi (°tu kak°) (.) [sistem↓=***

(...**don't understand yet (°that sis°) (.) [system↓=**).

7.4.3 Verbal abuse

Traffickers verbally abuse their victims to create fear, feelings of isolation, and embarrassment. The women are kept in control through targets that they are required to achieve. When the traffickers' demands are not met, the women are subjected to continuous abuse that can result in severe and lasting psychological damage.

Small stories about verbal abuse

Women in sex work are degraded and verbally abused on a daily basis. In Excerpt 7.30, Ida recounted her experiences of undergoing verbal abuse for not complying with her clients' sexual needs. She repeatedly recounted the verbal abuse as "harshly scolded" (*habis dimarahi*) and "scolded" (*dimarahi*). This type of narration has implications for Ida. In an important way, the woman is blamed for not being competent in her work "*nggak sesuai dengan apa yang diinginkan customer*" (did not suit what the customer wanted).

Excerpt 7.30   (Ida)

*"... first time saya kerja (0.2) saya **habis dimarahi** sama Kapte:n (.) **dimarahi** customer karena nggak sesuai dengan apa yang diinginkan customer"*

(... first time I work (0.2) I was **harshly scolded** by Captai:n (.) **scolded** by customer because did not suit what the customer wanted)

It is a constant reality for these women that they must deal with verbal abuse. In return for her lack of compliance and as a form of punishment, Ida was ordered to do certain things to please her customers. This is indicated in her small story through verbs such as "bathe", "massage" and "have sex" (Excerpt 7.31) as in "bathe with customer" (*suruh mandi dengan customer*), "massage" them (*massaj*), and "have sex" with them (*melakukan hubungan seks*). It was excruciating for her to tolerate such experiences, yet she had to be placid and pretend to take pleasure in entertaining her clients. Such a condition gave her the self-identity of a passive victim as it accentuated her weakness for not being able to oppose the imposition.

Excerpt 7.31   (Ida)

Cu*stomer komple:n. Kapten marahi:n. (.) Esok harus kerja: tapi harus bagu:s* ↓**suruh mandi dengan customer.**

(Customer complai:ned. Captain sco:lded (.) The next day have to work: but must be goo:d ↓**asked to bathe with customer.**)

***Massaj**, lepas itu **melakukan hubungan seks**. (1.0)

(**Massage**, after that **have sex**. (1.0))

Similar forms of verbal slating were heard from Pim, Rara, and Lina (see Excerpts 7.32 to 7.34). As indicated by the women, it is common for clients who seek their services to retaliate if their sexual desires are not fulfilled. Almost all of the women have used the verb "complain" (*komplen*) in their narratives. It appears that this word is very familiar to them, suggesting the commonality of its usage in the trade. Despite the different language backgrounds, the women have learnt to use the word in their work "*Customer complain me so much me no smi:le*", "*customer selalu komplen↑*" (customer always complains↑), "*Komplen lah↑ ... tak betul buat kerja↑*" (Complain lah↑ ... not doing the right work↑).

Excerpt 7.32   (Pim)

... **Customer complain me so much** me no smi:le.

Excerpt 7.33   (Rara)

...dapat *customer selalu komplen↑*

(...get **customer always complains↑**)

Excerpt 7.34   (Lina)

Komplen lah↑ ... *tak betul buat kerja↑*

(**Complain** lah↑ ... **not doing the right work↑**)

In another case, Mindy's employer used threats, a different form of verbal abuse, to instil fear and keep her in control. Mindy travelled from her birthplace, Kupang, to work as a caretaker for her employer's ailing wife (*Mindy <u>diambil</u> untuk <u>jaga</u> dia punya isteri*). She soon learnt that the reality of her new life was far from what was promised in her home country. Her employer took advantage of her vulnerability and began to abuse her by demanding sexual gratification for 4 consecutive years (Excerpt 7.35).

Excerpt 7.35   (Mindy)

Mindy rasa macam tak ↑adil. Cuma **Mindy <u>diambil</u> untuk <u>jaga</u> dia punya isteri** *tapi dia-Mindy sudah buat kerja jaga isteri dia (.) tapi giliran Mindy punya jam tidur dia ↑<u>kacau</u>. Dia paksa <u>Mindy</u> untuk hubungan dengan dia. (.) Mindy* **tak boleh buat ↓apa-apa.** *Mindy* **cuma bisa ya ↑<u>pasrah</u> sahaja**

(Mindy feel like not ↑fair. **Mindy was <u>hired</u> to <u>take care</u> of his wife** but he- Mindy have taken care of his wife (.) but when Mindy's sleep time he ↑**disturbs**. He **forces** <u>Mindy</u> to have sexual relations with him. (.) Mindy **cannot do ↓anything.** Mindy **can only agree ↑<u>give in</u> only**)

Mindy's description of her psychological threat, her narration of fear, and her construction as a helpless abused woman is justified even though there were no signs of physical violence on her body. In her narrative, Mindy's use of verbs such as "disturbs

and forces" (*kacau and paksa*) illustrate how she was abused as well as her own sense of weakness that allowed her to be violated "*tak boleh buat ↓apa-apa. Mindy cuma bisa ya ↑pasrah sahaja*" (cannot do ↓anything. Mindy can only agree ↑give in only).

Mindy was also repeatedly threatened by her employer to undermine her "*dia banyak ugutan*" (he so much threatened). This was evident in her narrative (Excerpt 7.36) through words and phrases related to life threats "*Awak ingat awak akan balik dengan selamat ke?*" (You think you will go back safely?), "*awak mati*" (you'll die) and "*awak punya mayat...mungkin tercampak*" (your dead body … probably dumped). All these imply the man's words as being capable of maintaining his power in order to satisfy his desires.

Excerpt 7.36   (Mindy)

...***dia banyak ugutan***

(...**he so much threatened**)

*Ugut dari segi:: uh: (.) **Awak ingat awak akan balik dengan selamat ke?** awak di sini **awak mati** pun (.) awak punya: apa eh: punya: **awak punya mayat** pun takkan bawak balik **mungkin tercampak** sahaja di mana-mana (.) macam itu.*

(Threats li::ke uh: (.) **You think you will go back safely?** You here **you'll die** also (.) your: what eh your: **your dead body** also won't bring back home **probably dumped** just anywhere (.) like that.)

For Mindy, being subjected to death threats is attributed mainly to her weak and powerless condition. These kinds of threats are made to keep women in constant fear so that they will not make any attempt to escape or report their situation. Also, because they are away from family and other sources of support, finding ways to escape were impossible for women like Mindy.

7.4.4 Incarceration

Traffickers sometimes keep the women in captivity in secluded rooms and makeshift brothels to maintain control over and condition them. Because they are closely monitored, trafficked victims are so fearful and devastated that they dare not speak against their traffickers or attempt to search for help even when opportunities arise.

Small stories about incarceration

A number of instances of incarceration can be seen in the women's narratives. Pim, 32, a Thai national, was kept confined to a room in a massage parlour until the day she was rescued. Like other women, Pim decided to come to Malaysia to support her two sons and family in Thailand. She found employment at a massage parlour only to be told later that it involved sex work.

Although Pim did not take pleasure in what she was doing, "*No enjoy*", "*No: no enjoy*", she was unable to find help because the room was always locked from the outside to be opened only when the next client entered the room "*have customer (only) open...cannot go where*". This is demonstrated in her narrative in Excerpt 7.37.

Excerpt 7.37   (Pim)

No enjoy

No: no enjoy.

...**cannot go where uh my lock room**...↓Yes. **have customer (only) open...cannot go where**

The stories of other women (Rara, Tuk, and Vithya) contained a similar pattern of exploitation characterised by elements of captivity, indicated in Excerpts 7.38, 7.39 and 7.40.

Excerpt 7.38   (Rara)

*(pingin) mo lari↑ **(ada niat untuk** (unclear)) **lari dari rumah** yang kami kerja tu. (.) tapi semua (benda) pake remot↑*

((want) to run↑ **(have intention to** (unclear)) **run from the home** where we work (.) but **all (things) use remote↑**)

*[**Pake (mango)**:↓*

([**Use (padlock)**:↓

Excerpt 7.39   (Tuk)

"**Bot (Boss) lock everything↑**" "Ye(s) (.) **she lock** (.) [**me**"

"…**cannot complain↓** (.) …**do what boss say**. May: (Me:) no gip (give) money. May (Me) no (.) gip (give) food, no gip (give) <u>everything</u> (.)"

Excerpt 7.40   (Vithya)

"ini (this) working no good but my passport no have. **Me run away** ah: **no key**, **lock pa**" (lock in Chinese)

Narratives from Rara, Tuk, and Vithya (in bold) indicated that once women are trapped in sex work, there was no turning back for them or even finding ways to escape because they are often invisible in the society within which they are placed. It is like a "dead end" for most women. Captors treat the women in their custody more like prisoners and expect them to obey their commands. Evidence presented in victims' small stories illustrates how women were enslaved and transformed into sex slaves. Some of the women said that their captors used devices such as "*remot*" (remote control) and "*mango*" (padlock) to guard them and ensure they did not run away. Tuk described her experience of being locked in the room: "*Bot (Boss) lock everything↑ Ye(s) (.) she lock (.) [me*". Vithya said that she could not escape from the brothel because she did not have any access to the room key: "*Me run away ah: no key, lock pa*" (Excerpt 7.40).

The stories of enslavement narrated by the women are all in accord with the identity of a slave, a condition that denies individuals of agency. Also, utterances such as "*cannot complain, do what boss say*" in Excerpt 7.39 indicate the victim's submissiveness in responding to her abuser's commands. Women such as Pim, Rara, Tuk, and Vithya had endured suffering, and their feelings were not given any importance. They were treated more as objects than as human beings, something that can ultimately damage their personal identity.

Mindy's story of incarceration differs from other interviewees' stories in that, unlike other women who were confined to specific rooms in massage centres and brothels entertaining different men, Mindy was practically living in a situation of house arrest. Yet, her situation was essentially no different from that of other women. She was forced to provide sexual pleasure to her employer who resided in the same home. In Excerpt 7.41, Mindy provided an explanation for her lack of ability to resist:

Excerpt 7.41   (Mindy)

=Mmm. Tapi di situ (.) Mindy mahu bu- mahu buat laporan pun (.) nak buat macam mana:? (.) nak cakap dengan jiran __pun__ dia tidak kasi (.) dia tidak benarkan Mindy cakap dengan jiran.

(=Mmm. But there (.) Mindy want to- want to make report also (.) how to:? (.) **want to talk to neighbour __also__ he doesn't allow** (.) **he doesn't allow Mindy talk to neighbour**.)

Dia sentiasa ada di [rumah]

(**He is always at [home]**)

Sentiasa ada di rumah jadi tak boleh buat apa-apa. Mm mm. (2.5)

(**Always at home so cannot do anything**. Mm mm. (2.5))

Although Mindy was free to move around the house, she was prevented from communicating with anyone, including her neighbours "*nak cakap dengan jiran pun dia tidak kasi (.) dia tidak benarkan Mindy cakap dengan jiran*". Furthermore, Mindy explained that her employer was always at home monitoring her movements. Because of this, she did not have any opportunity to escape and thus succumbed to her employer's sexual demands. Also, due to her unstable emotional state, she remained incapable of making informed decisions about her life.

In Excerpt 7.42, Ida described the house where she stayed as having CCTV cameras fixed in many places to monitor her actions and to prevent her from escaping "*Keadaan rumah pun semua pakai CCTV, bagai rumah control*" (The condition at home also all have CCTV, like control house).

Excerpt 7.42   (Ida)

*Pernah (.) teringi:n lari tapi: di situ: posisinya nggak pegang passpo:rt=semua passport bos yang pega:ng. **Keadaan rumah pun semua pakai CCTV, bagai rumah control** (.) jadi nggak bisa berbuat apa-apa.*

(Have (.) really: wanted to run bu:t there: I don't hold passport=all passport boss ho:lds. **The condition at home also all have CCTV, like control house** (.) so cannot do anything.)

After 5 excruciating days, Ida managed to escape. Although most women may not have a strong sense of courage to find strategies to escape victimisation, Ida's story was completely the opposite. In her interview, she demonstrated a strong level of resilience and her undefeated spirit that provoked her to find a way out from the clutches of her trafficker. Ida felt increasingly in charge of the decision she made in her life. Such a decision reveals Ida's real self, who she is, how much agency she has in decision making, and her inclination to share her sense of identity with others. The harsh realities of sex trafficking has taught Ida to discover her own strength in life. Ida's narrative

demonstrated a sense of liberation after her rescue through her choice of adjectives "*tenang*" (calm), "*selamat*" (safe), and noun "*aman*" (relief) as shown in Excerpt 7.43.

Excerpt 7.43   (Ida)

*Saya rasa **tena:ng**, saya rasa **ama:n**. Sudah rasa **selamat***

(I feel **ca:lm**, I feel **relie:f**. Already feel **safe**)

A similar thing happened to Mindy. She regained her agency after 4 years of constant suffering. She was not prepared to continue with her life as a prostituted woman. During the interview (Excerpt 7.44), the sense of agency surfaced when she repeatedly expressed her feelings of relief and joy on her employer's arrest, "*lega*" (relieved), "*sudah seperti lega*" (already like relieved), "*tak perlu layan dia*" (don't have to serve him), "*sudah merasa bebas*" (already feel free), "*rasa bebas*" (feel free), "*bebas daripada dia punya perbuatan*" (free from all his doings). The constant repetition of the adjective "free" (*bebas*) marks the end of Mindy's enslavement, giving her a new sense of self.

Excerpt 7.44   (Mindy)

*Iya rasa macam **lega**: sebab (.) sudah menderita begitu lama kan jadi rasa: penderitaan itu sudah macam sudah (.) **sudah seperti** ↑**lega** a'ah Mindy **tak perlu layan dia**=layan dia=layan dia (.) ah sekarang Mindy **sudah merasa** ↑**bebas** a'ah (.) **rasa bebas** (.) maknanya (.) **bebas daripada dia punya** ↑**perbuatan** semua (2.0)*

(Yes feel like **relie:ved** because (.) already suffered for so long right so feel: that suffering already like already (.) **already like** ↑**relieved** yes Mindy **don't have to serve him**=serve him=serve him (.) ah now Mindy **already feel** ↑**free** yes (.) **feel free** (.) meaning (.) **free from all his** ↑**doings** (2.0)

7.4.5 Denial of basic needs

The women in this study experienced other kinds of human rights exploitation that deprived them of basic needs such as proper nourishment and adequate sleep. In some cases, victims were starved for several days until they became exhausted and agreed to give in.

Small stories about food and sleep deprivation

Several interviewees recounted that they often did not receive three meals a day "*Give food one (.) one (.) one day: gip (give) (.) two time↓*" (Excerpt 7.45), "*Give (.) food (.) one day two time*" (Excerpt 7.46).

Excerpt 7.45   (Tuk)

Ye(s) **cannot complain↓** (.) I don't know tomolo↑ (tomorrow) (.) she: a do: (.) **do what boss say** may: no gip (give) money may **no** (.) **gip (give) food no gip (give) everything** (.)

Give food one (.) one (.) **one day: gip** (give) (.) **two time↓**

I (.) **I hungry** but (.) **cannot**=

[Cannot go where:↓

Excerpt 7.46   (Pim)

Give (.) **food** (.) **one day two time**.

As Excerpt 7.45 shows, Tuk's feeble position was attributed to her narrative, "*do what boss say I (.) I hungry but (.) cannot= [Cannot go where:↓*". The modal verb "*cannot*" in her narrative indicates her absolute compliance to the trafficker as a result of fear. For Tuk and Pim, the food that they received often depended on their satisfactory performance and compliance. If they resisted, their money would be held back, they would be denied food, or they may have suffered other consequences that could put their lives at risk.

Excerpt 7.47 contains another example of how traffickers take full control of their victims. Ida was held as a sex slave for 5 days without food. She survived only on water (*air putih*). Being a trafficked victim who had undergone extreme violence, Ida lost control over her body, and her self-esteem eroded as she felt that there was no hope for her to escape.

Excerpt 7.47   (Ida)

*...selama saya kerja **nggak pernahnya dikasi makan***

(...from the time I work **never been given food**)

Cuma sekadar minum.

(**Only drink**.)

*Cuma bisa minum **air putih***

(Can only drink **plain water**)

Another situation in which women were kept in a slavery-like condition was by forcing them to work for long hours. Some interviewees reported that they did not get sufficient rest because they were expected to work gruelling hours that began in the afternoon and continued until the early hours of the morning. Excerpts 7.48–7.50 refer to this.

Excerpt 7.48   (Rara)

*=Ah **pukul tiga** <u>petang</u> **sampai pukul: tiga pagi**↓ (.) [(unclear)*

(=Ah **three o'clock** <u>evening</u> **until morning: three o'clock**↓ (.) [(unclear))

Excerpt 7.49   (Ida)

*Kerja dari **jam dua petang sampai jam lima pagi**=*

Excerpt 7.50   (Mia)

Dua belas sampai:: empat pagi

(**Twelve o'clock unti::l four o'clock morning**)

The working hours for Meena were slightly different from those of other women. She worked for 13 consecutive hours daily, entertaining up to 10 clients which usually began at 9 o'clock in the morning and continued until 10 o'clock at night (Excerpt 7.51).

Excerpt 7.51   (Meena)

*ombothu manikku pehtu, **pattu mani** varaikkum.*

(**nine o'clock** I go, until **ten o'clock**)

Working for long hours can be very exhausting. In Excerpt 7.52, Tuk explained how much she yearned for sleep but was never given the opportunity "*I want sleeping so mut (much) … but (.) cannot do anything↑*". She described her daily routine as working around the clock "*working working working, finit (finish)…working (.) (unclear) dingdong*!". She expressed "*dingdong*", the sound of the bell on a clock to indicate the time for her to stop working "[*working finit (finish)*".

Excerpt 7.52   (Tuk)

=Sometime but I working↑ (.) **I want sleeping so mut (much) … but (.) cannot do anything↑**

Working working working finit (finish) (.) may sleep (.) and then↑ want **working** (.) (unclear) **dingdong**! our can working (.) [**working finit (finish)**

Traffickers have conditioned the women's lives in such way that the women knew exactly what was expected from them. They were merely treated as sex commodities, not as human beings. The women's lives became robot-like and they were devoid of feelings. This emotional detachment is then used as a defence mechanism by trafficked victims to cope with devastation. One victim, Mia, described her morning routine in Excerpt 7.53.

Excerpt 7.53   (Mia)

=*Pukul sepuluh, sebelas (0.5) mandi: [lepas tu (.) mekap pukul dua belas]*

(=**Ten, eleven o'clock** (0.5) **ba:the** [after that (.) **makeup twelve o'clock**]

7.5 Dispirited victims

Research indicates that women who have been sex trafficked were unstable and more detached, and to have higher levels of fear and trauma than did other types of crime victims (Dovydaitis, 2010). Women who have been rescued from sexual slavery tend to exhibit different types of negative psychological symptoms. Some of these symptoms experienced by the research participants were stigmatisation (7.5.1), loss of hope (7.5.2), and shame (7.5.3).

7.5.1 Stigmatisation

Stigmatisation was a recurring general theme in the victims' small stories. Women in sex work often experience isolation and are publicly condemned because they are seen as deviant in the eyes of society. They have to put up with negative judgements, stigmatisation, and open rejection. In this section, I explore victims' interpretations of stigmatisation based on their small stories.

Small stories about stigmatisation

Interviews with participants revealed that when they are surrounded by people who recognise them for their covert work, the women were subjected to numerous kinds of name-calling and verbal harassment. When asked about the pejorative label of prostitute, Maya responded "*Banyak orang cakap ini tak da betul, tak da baik*" (Many people say this is not right, not good). Through her responses (Excerpt 7.54), it is clear that Maya is aware of the negative connotations attached to the word but she was desperate for money "*mesti mau wang*" (must get money).

Excerpt 7.54   (Maya)

=*Ya lah kak. **Banyak orang cakap ini tak da betul, tak da baik** tapi: ((crying)) **apa buat? Mesti mau wang**.*

(=Yes lah sis. **Many people say this is not right, not good** but: ((crying)) **what to do? Must get money**.)

The noun phrase "many people" (*banyak orang*) as used by Maya implies that sex work is well known to many people and that, women who are involved in sex work are often looked down upon. Maya knew that sex work is viewed by people as morally wrong but she could not do anything to avoid it. She asked, "*apa buat?*" (what to do?)" (Excerpt 7.54). Because she was desperate to earn money to pay for her mother's medical expenses, her boyfriend compelled her into sex work "*Boyfren pun suruh kerja ni*" (Excerpt 7.55).

Maya portrayed herself as a person who attempted to look for other jobs but the wages were always low (*gaji murah*). Because she is a foreigner, it was not easy for her to find jobs that paid well "gaji murah" (low salary) and this contributed to her financial burden.

Excerpt 7.55   (Maya)

*Boyfren pun tak ada bagi wang. **Boyfren pun suruh kerja ni**=*

(Boyfriend also doesn't give money. **Boyfriend also told to do this work**=.)

*Mana-mana pergi pun **gaji murah**. Tak cukup. Macam mana hidup?*

(Wherever go also, **low salary**. Not enough. How to live?)

In Excerpt 7.56, Maya shared her story about how being a sex worker had led to her stigmatisation in society. She said that when her involvement in sex work was exposed, it hurts (*sakit*) her emotionally. She did not feel good (*rasa tak sedap*) when people did not show any concern for her (*tak sayang*). This feeling of difference disassociated her from the rest of the community.

Excerpt 7.56   (Maya)

***Sakit lah** kak. **Rasa tak sedap** tu (0.2) **orang pun** (0.3) **tak sayang**=*

(**Hurts** lah sis. **Don't feel good** (0.2) **people also** (0.3) **don't care**=)

Maya explained that she feels dejected when she is being ridiculed as "*ayam*" (hen) (a derogatory, colloquial Malay expression for female sex worker) and "*pelacur*" (prostitute). She added that in instances where she is surrounded by people whom she recognises, the name-calling is more refined (*Kalau ada kawan-kawan, mulut baik sikitlah*), but when she is unaccompanied, she is subjected to stronger verbal harassment (Excerpt 7.57).

Excerpt 7.57   (Maya)

*((crying)) dia orang panggil **ayam**, **pelacur**:, tu lah.*

((((crying)) Those people call '**hen**', '**prostitute**:' like that lah)

Kalau ada kawan-kawan, mulut baik sikitlah. Kalau tak ada kawan, dia orang cakap macam tu lah. Pelacur (0.2). Tak ada baik.

(**If got friends, they say good things lah. If no friends, they call me like that lah**. **Prostitute** (0.2). Not good.)

Another participant, Rika (Excerpt 7.58), remembered her painful experience of facing social rejection resulting from her sex work. She expressed her feelings through expressions such as "heartbroken" (*sedih*), "humiliated" (*terhina*), and "not liked by peo:ple" (*enggak disukai ora:ng*).

Excerpt 7.58   (Rika)

*rasanya **sedih** (0.5) **terhina** lagi tu° [(0.2)] °a:h°*

(feel **heartbroken** (0.5) **humiliated** some more° [(0.2)] °a:h°)

*=Dan seperti apa:↑? (.) .hhh (1.6) mmm () seperti apa lagi () di:- (.) **enggak disukai ora:ng**=*

(=And like what↑? .hhh (0.8) mmm () like what more () no:- (.) **not liked by peo:ple**=)

Rika further explained that society tends to carry negative and stereotypical perceptions "*tanggapan [masyarakat] serong*" (society's perception is negative) about women in sex work. They are blamed for seducing men "*menggoda laki-laki*", and because of this they are often viewed negatively by the public (Excerpt 7.59).

Excerpt 7.59   (Rika)

*[Ah↑] [Lelaki::] mmm [Ah] (0.2) semua wanita jadi kesannya (.) **kita ini selalu menggoda laki-laki**=*

([Ah↑] [Me::n] mmm [Ah] (0.2) all women causing effect (.) **we all always seduce men**=)

> *[Ah kan] (0.2) [Ah] (5.0) =ingat Ri- ummm tujuannya **[menggoda] lelaki**:: jadi:: **tanggapan [masyarakat] serong***
>
> ([Ah right] (0.2) [Ah] (0.5) = thought Ri- ummm intention is to **[seduce] men::** so:: **[society's] perception is negative**)

The stigma attached to the women affects the way they represent themselves. According to Mia, even when women leave sex work and their way of life changes, society's perception of them remains "*ndak akan pernah hilang walaupun kita udah ber berubah. Pandangan orang lain terhadap kita tetap sama*" (Excerpt 7.60). The adjective "fatal" in Mia's narrative refers to her tragic circumstance. She explained this with regard to her life being destroyed by the sex work she was involved in.

> Excerpt 7.60   (Mia)
>
> *Ah ah **(fatal)** macam ni () .hh **ndak akan pernah hilang walaupun kita udah ber berubah. Pandangan orang lain terhadap kita tetap sama** kan?*
>
> (Ah ah **(fatal)** like this () .hh **it will never go away even though we have ch changed. Other people's perspective towards us is still the same** right?)

Because society continues to stigmatise women for their sex work, trafficked victims' human rights are often overlooked and denied. This aspect, if left unattended, may have an enduring impact on the women as they begin to acquire a sense of guilt and low self-esteem.

7.5.2 Loss of hope

Women who have been pushed into sex work often experience shattered feelings (Raphael & Shapiro, 2004) and loss of hope. The suffering that victims undergo can be so painful that they see no chance of improving their lives.

Small stories about about loss of hope

The story of Ida shows how women in sex work experience loss of hope. At the age of 24, Ida left her home in Indonesia to work as a hairstylist. In Excerpt 7.61 she recalled her excruciating experience of being deceived into sex work.

Excerpt 7.61   (Ida)

***Datang ke sini**: (.) **jauh berbeda** dar- dari Indon. Di sini **kerjanya suruh massa:ge, melayani laki-laki**. (.) janjinya: (.) **sampai sini melayani laki-laki satu malam sepuluh orang**.*

(**Came here**: (.) **far different** fr- from Indon. Here **the work is to massa:ge, entertain men** (.) they promised: (.) **came here entertained men one night ten people**.)

Ida's narrative revealed a feeling of resentment through expressions such as "*jauh berbeda*" (far different), "*kerjanya suruh massa:ge, melayani laki-laki ... sampai sini melayani laki-laki satu malam sepuluh orang*" (the work is to massa:ge, entertain men … came here entertained men one night ten people). Although her narrative is marked by extreme frustration and grief, it is essential to note how she made meaning of her personal identity. Ida's miseries had taken their toll on her optimism. Before coming to Malaysia, Ida's thoughts were far different from what she experienced in Malaysia. Employing the language of agency, (Excerpt 7.62) she said "*saya fikir kehidupannya saya akan lebih baik*" (I thought my life would be even better).

Excerpt 7.62   (Ida)

***saya fikir kehidupannya saya akan lebih baik**"*(.) *rupanya saya hancur di negara orang*

(**I thought my life would be even better**) (.) but actually I'm shattered in another person's country)

Leaving her family at a young age indicates how much courage Ida had at that time, but all her dreams were crushed when she reached her destination. She was brutally raped and sexually harassed. What is now left for Ida is a diminished identity. Her narrative in Excerpt 7.63 shows that she sees no future for herself and her life is ruined "*Ida rasa sakit*" (Ida feel hurt), "*Ida rasa hancur*" (Ida feel shattered) "*...kehilangan masa depan, harus kehilangan semua harapan*" (lose my future, have to lose all hopes).

Excerpt 7.63   (Ida)

*Ida rasa sakit=Ida rasa hancur (.) di umur yang masih- ini: harus **kehilangan masa depan, harus kehilangan semua harapan**, jauh dari orang ↑tua: saya fikir kehidupannya saya akan lebih baik (.) rupanya saya **hancur** di negara orang (.) itu yang buat saya sakit.*

(**Ida feel hurt=Ida feel shattered** (.) at this age- this: have to **lose my future, have to lose all hopes**, far from ↑parents: I thought my life would be better (.) but actually I'm **shattered** in another person's country (.) that is what hurts me.)

Nggak ada lagi masa depan

(**No more future**)

Ida has lost hope in and for herself, and verbs such as "shattered" (*hancur*), adjectives such as "lost" (*kehilangan*), and expression such as "no more future" (*Nggak ada lagi masa depan*) describe the destruction of Ida's identity. Her story is a good example of how much sexual abuse can change a person's frame of mind and hope. It was difficult for Ida to salvage her own self because what had happened to her was extremely ferocious and unimaginable.

For Meena, involvement in sex work had severely affected her personality and self-perception (Excerpt 7.64). The horrifying trauma of her past life had left Meena devastated. This can be seen in the use of heart-rending words in her narrative such as "heart shatters" (*manasu odenjehpehrum*), "<u>my life</u> lost" (*<u>vaalkaiyeh</u> elunthuten*) and

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"life is gone" (*vaalkaiyeh pohchi*). Meena's excruciating torment as a sex slave demonstrates how much the sex work had misshapen her life. Internally, she felt broken and no longer saw herself worthy after the tragedy.

Excerpt 7.64   (Meena)

manasu] odenjehpehrum *madam*

(**heart shatters** madam)

*yenh **vaalkaiyeh** elunthuten madam ((sigh)) **vaalkaiyeh pohchi** madam.*

(**my life** lost madam ((sigh)) **life is gone** madam)

7.5.3   Shame

Generally, victims tend to suffer from shame as a result of the stigma and stereotypes associated with their sex work. Many interviewees expressed concern about what their families would think of them if they found out about the nature of their work. Some women felt such an acute sense of shame about the actions they had been forced into that they feared that exposing themselves and their work to others would result in them being further dehumanised.

Small stories about shame

The story of Vithya is an example of how a sense of shame had distanced her from her family. In her interview, an important subject that emerged was the humiliation that sex work brings to her and her family (Excerpt 7.65).

Excerpt 7.65   (Vithya)

my feeling madam, this same same working *vehre* (other) lady ah, but I see you paper *ini* ('this' in Malay), *manasu* (feeling) **insult**.

> **Insult**. **Insulting** (0.4) India, **my family see ah, my no helping. My mother also. My (0.5) people, my family no helping**. This working ah:: oh:: You Malaysia go, this working ah? My mother no tell, my father no tell.
>
> **I no go house.** *Ini* ('this' in Malay) **insulting**.

Vithya could anticipate humiliation from her family when they came to know about her illicit work in Malaysia. Fearing the shame she might bring to her family and facing family rejection, Vithya despised herself for the work she was involved in, and, because of the stigma attached to her she thought it would be difficult for her to reintegrate into her family. She said, "... *my family see ah, my no helping. My mother also. My (0.5) people, my family no helping*". She stressed that she could turn neither to her family nor to people in her home community for any help because of the prospect of bringing embarrassment to them (Excerpt 7.65).

Throughout the interview, Vithya recurrently uttered the words "*insult*" (noun), "*insulting*" (adjective), and "*guilty*" (adjective) to convey humiliation for her involvement in sex work. Vithya felt shame because people may have a negative opinion of her and she sees it from their point of view. Because of this, Vithya decided not to reintegrate with her family. She said, "*I no go house. Ini* ('this') *insulting*" (Excerpt 7.65).

In another account (Excerpt 7.66), Mia believed that her sense of shame (*saya malu*) would surface when her children came to know about her sex work regardless of when she returned home. She was afraid of facing humiliation or being rejected by her family. Fearing the adverse reaction from her children and family, she had kept her sex work secret. She told them that she worked as a cleaner (*saya kerja cleaner*)**.**

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Excerpt 7.66   (Mia)

Bila saya pulang pun: seandainya anak saya tahu pun .hhh (0.4) **saya malu↓**

(Whenever I go ba:ck supposedly my children know .hh (0.4) **I'm embarrassed↓**)

Ya la **malu**↑ *(1.2) nantikan dia dengar !oh mama kau kerja macam ni! Saya dengan anak saya kan* **saya cakap sama mereka saya kerja cleaner** *.hh*

(Ya la **embarrassed**↑ (1.2) then when they hear !oh your mother works like this! **I told my children I work as a cleaner** .hh)

Ida, after her rape ordeal, no longer saw herself as being the same as other women or as part of the community (Excerpt 7.67). With sadness, she said "… *saya rasa lebih jauh beza dari perempuan-perempuan yang lain (.) saya rasa lebih rendah*" (I feel far different from other women (.) I feel low). The adjective "low" in Ida's small story shows how much she regretted for being in such circumstances.

In her words (Excerpt 7.67), the bitter experience had transformed her individuality and deprived her of identity. This negative attribution of feeling low (*saya rasa lebih rendah*) and being different (*Kerana saya beza*) can be regarded as self-stigma. Just like many other women who participated in sex work, she lacked the ability to view herself as equal to other females within society.

Excerpt 7.67   (Ida)

…**saya rasa lebih jauh beza** *dari perempuan-perempuan yang lain (.)* **saya rasa lebih rendah**

(…**I feel far different** from other women (.) I **feel low**)

Kerana saya beza

(**Because I'm different**)

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Ida realised that the stigma caused by her masseuse work did not fade even when she was at the protection home. She led a life of isolation due to her housemates' disapproval of her sex worker identity (Excerpt 7.68). Ida distanced herself and felt embarrassed (*malu rasanya*) pointing out that her housemates tended to look down (*pandang rendah*) and humiliate (*menghina*) women who had worked as masseuses. The stigma could be felt keenly even though she was in a space that was supposed to bring her comfort and protection.

Excerpt 7.68   (Ida)

Dengan: (0.2) selama saya di sini: (.) banyak perempuan yang saya kenal (.) saya tanya mereka, kerja? kerja sebagai cleaner. (.) dia tanya saya, saya bilang saya kerja massage. **Malu rasanya**

(With: (0.2) during my stay here: (.) a lot of women that I know (.) I ask them, work? Work as cleaner. (.) they ask me, I say I work as masseuse. **I feel shame**)

=**Pandang rendah**=

(=**Look down**=)

...ada yang suka **menghina** *pekerja-pekerja massage*

(... some like to **humiliate** those who do massage work)

Kerja massage *(.) orang tahu kerja massage itu: (.) kerja yang (.) di sini-* **kalau di Malaysia ini: buat kota negaranya (.) kerja yang dilarang oleh agama** *( )*

(**Massage work** (.) people know tha:t massage work (.) work that (.) here- **if in Malaysia** here: at its capital city (.) **work that is forbidden by religion** ( ))

According to Ida, working as a masseuse in capital cities such as Kuala Lumpur is often associated with deviant morality (Excerpt 7.68) "… *kalau di Malaysia … kerja yang dilarang oleh agama*" (… if in Malaysia … work that is forbidden by religion). Therefore, when Ida juxtaposed sex work with religion, it revealed much about her own

identity and fidelity to her faith and values. So, the more committed Ida was in her religion, the less likely it was for her to perceive sex work as acceptable.

7.6 Empowered actors

Studies by Wickham (2009) and Crawford and Kaufman (2008) indicate that self-empowerment is the most vital aspect for victims to recover following their sexual exploitation. Although in the previous themes women had represented themselves as worthy of sympathy and as being vulnerable, the fact that some women aimed to improve their lives challenges the conventional typecast of their victimhood. Instead, they empowered themselves during the recovery period by developing coping and survival strategies. Two of the coping strategies revealed by the women in this study are having a positive attitude (7.6.1) and anticipating economic independence (7.6.2).

7.6.1 Positive attitudes

The self-identity of a person is closely related to the concept of empowerment as empowerment helps people to develop their identities. Some women develop a positive approach toward their life because they do not want to be associated with their previous experiences. The way these women construct their experience will shape their lives.

Small stories about positive attitudes

The interviews indicated that a small number of participants were determined to pursue a normal life. The story of Mindy is a good example (Excerpt 7.69). With much struggle, Mindy was able to reclaim her sense of agency despite her abusive experiences. Although at the time of the interview she had not completely recuperated from the trauma inflicted by her abuser, this did not stop her from sharing her story.

Mindy wanted her story not only to benefit those who had experienced the same situation but also to influence society's perceptions about women in sex work.

Excerpt 7.69   (Mindy)

*Iya ... ↑Mindy **tetap tersenyum** (.) **hadapi semua** (.) Mindy **tak patah semangat** (.) Mindy **akan perjuangkan semuanya**. (.) apa yang ↑terjadi di Mindy (.) Mindy **akan perjuangkan semua** (.) kalau: iya ↑<u>biar</u> je Tuhan sahaja yang balas semua dia punya ↓perbuatan °iya°*

(Yes ... ↑Mindy **will continue smiling** (.) **face everything (.)** Mindy **will not lose hope** (.) Mindy **will keep fighting everything** (.) what ↑happened to Mindy (.) Mindy **will fight it all** (.) if: yes ↑<u>let</u> God only repay all his ↓doings °yes°)

Mindy developed a high level of agency and increased self-esteem as she embraced an optimistic view about herself. Despite enduring hardship, she was determined to continue her life with a positive approach. This is indicated through modal verbs "will continue smiling (.) face everything" (*tetap tersenyum (.) hadapi semua*), "will not lose hope" (*tak patah semangat*), and "will fight" (*akan perjuangkan*) (Excerpt 7.69).

Excerpt 7.70 demonstrates how the sexual abuse had made Mindy more resilient than before. She did not see the point of dwelling on the past, and instead felt challenged to be more hopeful and learn to accept her present identity the way it was.

Excerpt 7.70   (Mindy)

*Mindy mula-mula pandang diri itu macam sudah <u>terhina</u> macam diri itu sudah ↑**hancur** tapi (.) **kita tak boleh pandang diri kita** ↑**hancur** (.) ... **kita bawa kita punya diri itu** ↑<u>**seperti**</u> ↑**biasa** (.) **jangan kalau sudah kena seperti ini kita anggap diri kita macam** (.) ah sudah **ternoda**.*

(Mindy at first view myself like already <u>shameful</u> like myself already ↑destroyed but (.) **we should not see ourselves** ↑**destroyed** (.) ... **we have to treat ourselves** ↑<u>**like**</u> ↑**normal** (.) **don't if something happened like this we consider ourselves like (.)** ah **already spoiled**)

The small story that Mindy narrated reveals how much understanding she had achieved about herself. By talking to her inner self, "we should not see ourselves ↑destroyed" (*kita tak boleh pandang diri kita ↑hancur*) "already spoiled" (*sudah ternoda*), Mindy had assumed a new identity, new hope. She did not want to be regarded as a helpless victim but rather as a normal person.

The narratives of other women in this study also featured elements of positivity (Excerpt 7.71). Mia's way of restoring her broken life was by strengthening herself to confront all the upcoming obstacles (*memperkuatkan diri untuk uhh bertahan la ya (0.5) untuk melawan semua↑*).

Excerpt 7.71   (Mia)

*saya **memperkuatkan diri untuk uhh bertahan** ya (0.5) **untuk melawan semua↑** apa yang nanti akan datang kan .hhh*

(I'll **strengthen myself to uhh endure** ya (0.5) **to go against all↑** that comes later right .hhh)

Rara found solace and spiritual comfort through reciting the Quran "*berzikir, istifghar, banyak sembahyang, banyak mengaji*" (Excerpt 7.72). The stress on these words conveys Rara's realisation that these religious practices are important for her to attain feelings of inner peace and to be more positive "*ada lebih positif*". The prayers also brought her positive energy and endurance, and, more importantly, helped her to regain the agency that she had lost in sex work.

Excerpt 7.72   (Rara)

*Ra selalu **berzikir** (.) **istifghar** (1.0)*

(Ra always do the **zikir**, the **istifghar**) (1.0)

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> *Mm:: ada lebih positif (.) **Banyak sembahyang** (.) **banyak mengaji***
>
> (Mm, yes there is more positivity (.) **A lot of praying** (.) **A lot of reciting**)

Mindy and Rara gained autonomy and detached themselves from what had been their helpless condition. Although the sense of being free from past sex life was not shared by most of the interviewees, both of them felt it was important to highlight their attainment to others. In this way, both played an active role by defying the stereotypical view that the enslaved women are weak and submissive.

7.6.2 Economic independence

Recovering victims almost always do not intend to stay in the country where they were brought to work. Rather than spending their time at the protection home for months without any income, most eagerly awaited their freedom so that they could return to their home country to work and be reintegrated with their families.

Small stories about economic independence

Most women who were interviewed in this study raised their concerns about returning to their country upon leaving the protection home. Because the women were not placed in any employment throughout their stay at the protection home they expressed their concerns about having to send money to their families.

In such a situation, the women tended to display feelings of frustration through expressions such as "*just want go back home only*" (Excerpt 7.73), "*Harapannya nak #balik aja*" (hope to #go home only) (Excerpt 7.75) and "*harap ni mau pulang, itu saja*" (*hope to go home, that's all*) (Excerpt 7.76).

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Excerpt 7.73   (Som)

I **just want go back home <u>only</u>** that's why my feeling <u>bad</u> and <u>down</u> when I'm stay <u>here</u> (.)

Excerpt 7.74   (Candy)

...<u>now</u> I <u>stay</u> here **two month already** (1.0) **I <u>didn't</u> send money to my <u>mum</u>** ↓la:h

Excerpt 7.75   (Mia)

*Mia **sudah [sepuluh] bulan** di sini*

(Mia **already [ten] months** here)

***Harapannya nak #balik aja** satu*

(**Hope to #go home only** that)

Excerpt 7.76   (Lina)

*Cuma (.) **Lina harap ni mau pulang, itu <u>saja</u>** (.) dalam fikiran Lina=*

(Just (.) **Lina hope to go home, that's <u>all</u>** (.) in Lina's mind=)

In Excerpts 7.74 and 7.75, Candy and Mia expressed their intention to return to their country stating the number of months they had spent at the protection home "*two month already*" and "*sudah [sepuluh] bulan*" (already [ten] months). Both felt that they had been held too long at the protection home and should be sent home. It was informed during Mia's interview that some women are repatriated quickly, but others have to remain for up to almost a year depending on their court case. The women's silent suffering indicates the extent to which sexual oppression has crippled them emotionally. The long stay at the protection home had deprived the women of economic independence in a way and that was now empowering them. When questioned about what the women intended to do after leaving the protection home, some of them responded that they wanted to work in their home country. The women's inclination to return can be seen in Excerpts 7.77–7.80.

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> Excerpt 7.77 (Vithya)
>
> I **go back India**, my (me) working, **my (me) tailoring working**. **Small money okay** but aa: next time no come Malaysia.
>
> Excerpt 7.78 (Som)
>
> >>>**To stay with family** ah: (.) ... **must work in farmer (farm)** ... because this work (sex work) no good<<<
>
> Excerpt 7.79 (Rika)
>
> *saya kalau **kat kampung kerja salo:n***
>
> (me if **at village work at salo:n**)
>
> Excerpt 7.80 (Candy)
>
> ↓Maybe I **working in <u>Vietnam</u>** ↑la:h
>
> ↑**Nearby <u>family</u>**

By returning to their home countries, the women knew that any work that they did there would probably not be as remunerative as working in Malaysia because of the countries' currency exchange rate disparities. Nevertheless, Vithya wanted to develop her tailoring skills "*tailoring working*" when she returned to India (Excerpt 7.77). Som had plans to help her parents at their farm in Thailand (Excerpt 7.78) "*work in farmer (farm)*". Rika preferred to work at the salon in her village "*kerja salon*" (Excerpt 7.79), and Candy wanted to return to Vietnam and find a job closer to her family "*working in Vietnam, ↑nearby family*" (Excerpt 7.80).

Although these jobs may not offer them good money, Som wanted to leave sex work as she said "*this work no good*" and Vithya felt that the small income earned within her own country would give her a sense of satisfaction "*small money okay*". The stories that some of the women narrated during their interviews demonstrated how the traumatic life

events had brought them strength and positive life changes that enabled them to empower themselves through their own actions.

7.7 Discussion

In this chapter, I have attempted to provide a comprehensive analysis of how sex-trafficking victims represent themselves via their small stories. Employing thematic narrative analysis to small stories was particularly valuable to address Research Questions 2(a) and 2(b) (refer to Section 7.2). Because sex-trafficking victims' stories were seldom published in the newspapers I felt there was a need to investigate the voices of the victims to find out their "inside" stories.

Analysis of the interviews revealed that the women's involvement in sex work was a result of situations over which they had little control. Because most of the women were single parents and suffering from poverty, they felt the need to find employment to support their families (refer to Section 7.3.1). McGregor (2011) has pointed out that in all or most cases, extreme poverty compels women, especially those from lower social strata, into sex work. The women's decision to leave their families to earn extra money in a neighbouring country represented the women as providers because they were willing to take risks in their lives. In such situations, their choice to work abroad seems to have been a sensible decision. However, when the prospect of employment transformed into deception, the women failed to sustain their agency and became victims. As indicated in Section 7.3.2, some women who initially agreed to work as masseuses temporarily in Malaysia were also deceived into sex work upon completing the 25 days' agreement. Once they were trapped in sex work, they lost control over their lives. They became helpless and unable to escape. Also, a complete loss of agency caused the women to become submissive and continue to be involved in sex work.

In their narratives, the interviewees also tended to portray themselves as victims. They had been subjected to social discrimination and various degrees of negative stereotypes directed toward them (refer to Section 7.5.1). The derogatory labelling assigned to the women was a great concern among them because it made them feel inferior and humiliated. They were victimised through sexual and physical abuse, incarcerated, and deprived of basic rights and needs (refer to Section 7.4). When a person's identity is taken away, the victim has no other option but to submit. Studies by Bindel, Breslin, and Brown (2013) revealed that two-thirds of the women in sex work that they interviewed experienced violence. Some women who were interviewed in this study said that they also experienced verbal abuse either from their captors or from their clients, and Farley, Macleod, Anderson, and Golding (2011) reported that men who purchase sex have a sense of power over the women and believe that once they have made their payment, they can do whatever they want to the women.

Society fails to see these women as individuals or pay attention to the impossible conditions many find themselves in. Most people have little or no knowledge about how women are victimised or become involved in sex work. In order to understand what is happening in the victims' lives, the reality in sex work needs to be reported. The women in this study tended to perceive themselves as vulnerable and as having inferior status relative to that of women who have not experienced similar exploitation (refer to Excerpt 7.67). When their involvement in sex work was disclosed, they felt that they received discriminatory treatment not only from society in general but also from people in their immediate surroundings, and this has affected them emotionally. This is in line with Goffman's (1963) belief that stigmatised victims tend to lose their self-confidence when compared with other people in society.

The analysis of the interviews revealed that some of the participants (Mindy, Mia, and Rara) characterised themselves as having strong self-determination and demonstrated a positive approach to their lives (refer to Section 7.6.1). Updegraff and Taylor (2000, p. 3) agree that "a traumatic experience can serve as a catalyst for positive change". The positive transformation also means that victims have gained greater understanding of themselves through the experience and are in a position to rebuild their lives. The other interviewees were less motivated in rebuilding their identity. However, when a woman is not optimistic toward her future, she will not take steps to motivate herself to work toward her goals.

The majority of the women displayed poor mental strength and did not present themselves with the courage to embrace change in life. Mindy was quite exceptional. Despite being held as a sex slave for 4 years, in her narrative she articulated new-found agency. She actively struggled to give herself a new identity and hope. On the other hand, Rara enhanced her self-development by finding inner peace through her religious practices, and this coping mechanism helped her to lessen her suffering (refer to Excerpt 7.72). This positive attitude will not only give her confidence to move on with her new life but it may also change her feelings of being different that people have about her. Mindy's and Rara's narratives generally suggested that they had developed a greater sense of agency and assurance in their ability to live a meaningful life after coming to the protection home.

For most women, the idea of returning to normal life was very much a motivating factor. They expressed their interest in returning to their own country to unite with their families. However, reintegration is not an easy process because women involved in sex work are deemed shameful and face stigmatisation from families and people in the

community, thus making reintegration difficult (Mahendra, Bhattarai, Dahal, & Crowley, 2001). In some countries, when a woman loses her virtue, it leaves a black mark on the whole family. However, the prospect of economic independence offered the interviewees a sense of empowerment to contribute to their family monetarily. Apart from Vithya, who was aware of the small amount of money she would be earning in her village, the interviewees did not raise this concern. A possible interpretation is that the women, when they return to their home countries, are most likely to seek other employment than sex work.

7.8 Summary

In this chapter, I reported on how women in sex work represented their experiences and themselves through the narration of small stories. Four main themes surfaced from the analysis of the interview data. These themes represented the women as providers, powerless victims, dispirited victims, and empowered actors. The complete overview of the themes was provided in Section 7.2. Next, in Sections 7.3 to 7.6 the four themes were discussed in detail with reference to the participants' small stories. The findings of the interview data were summarised in Section 7.7. Overall, the thematic narrative analysis provided evidence that to some extent resists the negative media stereotypes of the victims as criminals and offenders.

CHAPTER 8: OVERVIEW AND CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I summarise, and provide the conclusion for, the research in line with the research questions. After this brief introductory section, in Section 8.2, I provide a general outline of the entire thesis. Next, in Section 8.3, the research goals and design are restated. Following this, in Section 8.4, the main findings from Chapters 6 and 7 are summarised and discussed. In Section 8.5, I integrate the findings from Chapters 6 and 7. Section 8.6 contains the limitations of the study. The implications of findings about media discourse and policy formation are considered in Section 8.7. In the penultimate part of the Chapter, Section 8.8, I propose recommendations for future research about sex trafficking. The chapter ends with a conclusion in Section 8.9.

8.2 Structure of the thesis

This thesis was conducted to examine the representation of sex-trafficking victims in Malaysia through analyses of newspaper texts and interview narratives. Chapter 1 set the stage for this research by providing the background to the study, the research problem, the gaps that the present research could fill, the research objectives, research questions, rationale for the research, the significance of research, and anticipated limitations of the research. Following this, in Chapter 2, I presented the literature related to sex trafficking. Within that chapter, previous research conducted at global and local contexts was identified and discussed. Chapter 3 was concerned with international and Malaysian legal provisions relating to sex trafficking. The important theories that frame the research, critical discourse analysis, the discourse-historical approach (DHA), sociosemantic network of social actors, and thematic narrative analysis were described

in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, the research methodology was outlined for analysing both newspaper texts and interviews; this comprised descriptions of the data types, data collection methods, and the specific methods of data analysis. The findings about newspaper representation of sex-trafficking victims were presented in Chapter 6. In Chapter 7, I presented the findings from the interviews. The thesis ends in the current chapter with a reflection about the research questions, a review of the study's main findings, a consideration of the limitations in the research and the most important implications that arise from the research findings, and recommendations for further research.

8.3 Restatement of research goals and design

The main aim of the current research was to investigate the representation of sex-trafficking victims in Malaysia. There were two subsidiary aims, namely:

- To investigate the ways in which social actors, particularly sex-trafficking victims, are represented in newspaper texts.

- To examine sex-trafficking victims' lived experiences and self-representations within the small stories of their narratives.

Drawing upon a synthesis of analytical tools and methods outlined in the DHA (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Wodak, 2001) and van Leeuwen's sociosemantic network of social actors (van Leeuwen, 1996, 2008), in this research I first investigated the representations of sex-trafficking victims in Malaysian newspaper texts. According to Foucault (1972), the way we represent and construct social actors and their actions discloses particular attitudes, ideologies, and world views that are encoded through language. To complement the newspaper analysis, I examined how victims understand

their experiences of sex trafficking and their self-representations (Bamberg, 2006b; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008). For this analysis, Riessman's (2008) thematic narrative analysis was employed (refer to Section 5.5.5). Thematic narrative analysis is important to this research as it could open new spaces for the voices of the marginalised group to be heard.

Answering research questions

The research questions in Section 1.7 that guided my investigation were addressed in Chapters 6 and 7, as shown in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1: Chapters, field of discourse, and research questions

Chapter	Field of discourse	Research questions	
6	Newspaper texts	1(a)	How are sex-trafficking victims as social actors represented in newspaper texts?
		1(b)	What discursive strategies are used to construct the representation of sex-trafficking victims in newspaper texts?
7	Interview narratives	2(a)	What themes emerge from the victims' narratives about their lived experiences and self-representations?
		2(b)	How do the small stories within victims' narratives reflect their lived experiences and self-representations?

8.4 Main findings and discussion

In this section, the main findings from Chapters 6 and 7 are summarised and discussed with regard to the research questions. The main findings concerning the newspaper and narrative analyses are presented in Sections 8.4.1 and 8.4.2, respectively.

8.4.1 Research Questions 1(a) and 1(b)

In answering Research Questions 1(a) and 1(b) in Table 8.1, the newspaper analysis revealed the country's two mainstream English-language newspapers as having generally side-lined sex-trafficking victims in a way that is repressive. Although the Malaysian mainstream English-language newspapers attempt to appear neutral and objective (Fowler, 1991), in many cases trafficked victims were conceptualised from a criminal orientation (Dalrymple, 2005) rather than as victims of trafficking. This finding is supported by the studies conducted by Brock (1998), King (1998), and Sacks (1990) indicating that sex-trafficking victims were regarded as offenders in media reports. The negative representation can therefore influence the attitudes of people toward sex-trafficking victims (Vijeyarasa, 2010, p. 590).

The findings show that victims of sex trafficking were seldom foregrounded as the affected social actors. When trafficked women's victimhood is not the focus, there is "an undercounting of the trafficking phenomenon by law enforcement" (Barrett, 2013, p. 8). There were instances where foreign women were represented in the newspapers as victims of sexual abuse but the news was infrequently reported. Because women in sex work are often associated with deviance and immoral conduct, they receive less humane attention. Instead, the media reports about the women's involvement in sex work emphasise their wrongdoings and, at the same time, draw readers' attention to the news.

Additionally, analysis of the newspapers indicated that victims were subjected to various derogatory names. Some of the archetypical labelling that were found in *The Star* and *New Straits Times* ranged from the most depreciative classifications of prostitute, sex slave, China dolls, and hooker to less deprecatory terms such as Asian girls, foreign women, and female foreigners (refer to Section 6.2). In situations where

the women were represented as the people performing the negative actions, the mainstream English-language newspapers presented them as active agents, for example, "their presence is being blamed for rocking the relationship between husbands and wives". On the other hand, the newspapers also treated the women as passive subjects being affected by other social actors as in, "60 prostitutes were also arrested in Jalan Kuchai Lama during the operation" and "the women were holed up inside four units of the Mentari Court apartment in Bandar Sunway". In contrast, the more dominant elite social actors, the government bureaucrats and enforcement officers, were almost always given ample space and their views were often presented in the active voice. Political elites use the newspapers as platforms to support their political goals which are often strategically embedded within media reportage. By giving greater priority to powerful social actors, the media create opportunities for those actors to put forward their agenda about sex-trafficking victims. This also allows the dominant actors to manipulate readers' minds about issues related to trafficked victims. Because the Malaysian media is highly controlled by the government, it is evident in the newspapers that the official voices were always in support of the government's goals and agendas (Ibrahim, Mustaffa, Kee, & Ahmad, 2011).

Another significant finding is that there were no news items that condemned or opposed the government's standpoint with regard to sex trafficking, which means that stories constructed about sex trafficking were very one-sided. The analysis of newspaper texts through the referential and predication strategies indicated that the criminalisation of victims is reflected in the choice of words used against them for violating the law (e.g., arrested, detained, apprehended, and remanded). This finding is important because it suggests that the Malaysian government is more concerned about the immigration status of the victims than with viewing them from a victim perspective.

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Othman (2006, p. 55) has pointed out that Malaysia perceives trafficking problems to be the same as smuggling issues and therefore those who are smuggled are considered illegal immigrants. The women are also represented as a social threat (e.g., a force that would undermine nation-building efforts of this country), and as law violators (e.g., working without a permit, overstaying, entering the country without valid documents).

Although the findings of the newspaper analysis represented trafficked victims as criminals, the traffickers and clients' roles in trafficking and paying for sex were not explicitly reported. Very often, the perpetrators were vaguely described and referred to in a respectful way (clients and customers), unlike the female victims who were much more explicitly described, often by their behaviours. By backgrounding or excluding the perpetrators, the focus on victims becomes more noticeable and it is therefore only this group that often becomes the target for apprehension. This can be seen in reportage such as, "all the women…had been remanded for further investigations". "The customers were arrested and later released after their statements were recorded" (Excerpt 6.43). The media emphasises the patriarchal image by hiding the clients' wrongdoings and portraying the superiority of men (Ong & Chu, 2014). This aspect of news reporting not only proves the media's bias in reporting sex-trafficking news but the focus strongly marginalises the trafficked victims. As long as the media maintains its way of reporting news about sex trafficking and practises partiality, trafficked victims will be suppressed and the demand for victims will continue to proliferate as exploiters are not challenged by any pressure from the media.

Analysis of the argumentative strategies revealed a number of topoi had been used to represent sex-trafficking victims in the media. Overall, the Malaysian government's stand according to both newspapers (*The Star* and *New Straits Times*) was similar in the

sense that the government was given an authoritative image that indicated a commitment to action against those involved in sex trafficking, whether it was traffickers or the women themselves. However, there was a mismatch that surfaced in both newspapers with regard to sex-trafficking victims. Although the government is concerned about the conditions of sex-trafficking victims (topoi of responsibility, humanitarianism, and victimisation), the women have also been represented as the negative-Other for causing problems to the nation as well as to the public (topoi of control, threat, number, and burden).

Findings from the analysis of argumentative strategies that demonstrate the government as empathising with and protecting the wellbeing of the victims can be seen when victims were provided "safehouses and rehabilitation programmes" (Excerpt 6.67), "medical check-ups" (Excerpt 6.68) and "special police robes" (Excerpt 6.69). On the other hand, the victims were also reported as threats "money being drained out of the country and the possibility of these women being HIV carriers" (Excerpt 6.81). The women are also said to cause family problems "husbands spending a lot of time – and money" (Excerpt 6.80). With these contrasting portrayals in the newspapers, the analysis of the argumentative strategies leads to an important finding. Generally, the women's presence in the country is indicated as being problematic.

8.4.2 Research Questions 2(a) and 2(b)

In this section, the findings that refer to Research Questions 2(a) and 2(b) are summarised. As indicated in Chapter 7, four main themes emerged from interviews with the victims in that they saw themselves as providers, powerless victims, dispirited victims, and empowered actors. Through my analyses in generating these themes, I exposed the reality of women's engagement in sex work and their self-representations.

Consistent with previous research (Rahman, 2011; Yen, 2008), the interviews showed that the women decided to travel abroad in search of better employment and quick income (Whelehan, 2001). However, upon reaching their destination, they were advised about the actual nature of their work and forced into sex work. In contrast to those who have been deceived and forced, Jeffreys (1999, p. 180) believed that women also voluntarily participate in sex work due to poverty and family commitments. It is understood that the opportunity of earning quick money is usually associated with an immediate and pressing problem, but exchanging their bodies for money creates permanent damage to the women's souls and personal identities. Most women in this study reported giving their consent being based on a short-term contract made with unscrupulous agents but later finding themselves trapped in situations where they were heavily exploited. Researchers such as Weijers & Lap-Chew (1999) and Doezema (2000) reported perpetrators deceiving women about the conditions of the work that they would be involved in.

Some of the interviewees said that they fell victim to debt bondage. Agents and captors used this strategy so that the women were dependent on them. They were practically left in a stateless condition with no agency to return to their country. Those who realised their slim chance of escaping trafficking were more likely to submit to sex work, but those who resisted were abused until they did submit (Rahman, 2011). The abuse comprised such things as rape, incarceration, and starvation. Their submission could be considered as relatively rapid. The multiple forms of abuse that the women endured have made them believe that it is better to give in if they want to survive. According to the U.S. Department of State (2011, p. 1),

> too often, police, prosecutors, judges and policymakers assume a victim has free will if she has the physical ability to walk away. This assumption is wholly inconsistent with what is known about the nature of pimping and sex trafficking.

The women's small stories also revealed that financial constraints and the prospect of temporary agreements were not the only reasons for their entry into sex work. One of the interviewees indicated that her involvement was mainly a result of her husband's persistent compulsion so that he could procure drugs from her earnings. This finding implies that, whether through deception or force, the women were often not in a position to make their own decisions (Santos, Gomes, & Duarte, 2010, p. 171). The findings of Chapter 7 indicate that in an exploitative situation in which that they had no choice, women instinctively became passive victims, exhibited feelings of hopelessness, or experienced a low possibility of exercising agency. Inderbitzin, Bates, and Gainey (2013) in their book *Deviance and Social Control: A Sociological Perspective,* state that living with deviance on a regular basis can drain the individual physically and emotionally.

The investigation of the interviewees' small stories revealed that the women's descriptions of themselves were overwhelmingly negative, as passive agents. Those stories depicted their vulnerability and negative stigma from the community. Very few reclaimed their agency in an attempt to recuperate from their inhumane experiences. The interview narratives demonstrated how the interviewees' vulnerability led to various forms of abuse, for example, rape, incarceration, verbal abuse, and denial of basic needs. These have been common practices within the industry because abusers want the women to be compliant and therefore weaken the victims physically and mentally. As a result, the women tend to demonstrate little self-reliance about the events that take place in their lives. Because sex work is extremely lucrative, traffickers enslaved the women in their custody so that they provided their services until they could be disposed of. Apart from some of the interviewees who exhibited remarkable behaviours of agency and resilience, many of the interviewees reported that once they

ended up in sex work, it was almost impossible for them to escape unless they were rescued. Their lives simply became robot-like and devoid of feelings. This emotional detachment is then used as a defence mechanism by trafficked victims to cope with their sense of devastation.

The reality is, women find themselves being forced to adapt to an abusive environment and experienced a total transformation in their identities. They lived the life of slaves, physically confined in small rooms, and constantly guarded. Because most of the women had come from either lower income families or dysfunctional home environments and had minimal literacy, they had little knowledge of their rights. The women were unaware of available resources and therefore did not know how to find help. Their identities were removed and they were deprived of rights to freedom. These findings are generally compatible with those of Reed (2014, p. 161) who stated that "the use of threats and intimidation is a powerful form of violence used by traffickers to instil fear and doubt in the minds of the women and to keep them captive … and to be emotionally trapped".

Another key finding was that almost all research participants suffered psychological damage that destroyed their self-confidence. Apart from some women who did not want to be depicted as victims, most of the interviewees displayed decreased self-esteem as a result of their damaged identities. Because of their involvement in underground work, the women feared being ostracised and discriminated against not only by their communities but also by their loved ones. As a result of society's "unwillingness to accept differing social identities" (Goffman, 1963, p. 3), some women in this study said they would not divulge their previous identity, fearing that disclosure would bring them rejection and shame. My findings are in agreement with Sanders (2005, p. 116) whose

research with female sex workers showed that "secrecy is crucial because sex workers fear disapproval, rejection and shame". However, those who had intentions to reveal their involvement in sex work said that although it was not an easy decision, it was important to alert others in order to prevent future incidents of sex trafficking.

8.5 Integrating findings from Chapters 6 and 7

Findings from the newspaper analysis and interview narratives both indicated that women in sex work are subjected to various kinds of derogatory labelling. Labelling such as prostitutes, call girls, hookers, and sex slaves can be found in the newspapers (refer to Section 6.2.1). The name-calling characterised the women in a negative way, and, as a result, intensified the stigma attached to them. Because name-calling already evokes negative stereotypes, calling the women "hen" (ayam), and "prostitute" (pelacur) can be insulting, affects the victims' emotional wellbeing and their relationship with others (refer to Excerpt 7.57). This is obvious in Excerpt 7.58 through the interviewee's expressions "feel heartbroken (0.5) humiliated" (rasanya sedih (0.5) terhina lagi tu).

The newspaper analysis in general indicated that sex-trafficking victims' voices have been largely neglected. The media often keeps the victimisation endured by the women hidden and therefore the public only gets to know stories about them at only a superficial level. Due to the absence of victims' voices in the newspapers, readers tend to consider what is reported in the newspapers as accurate. Although some elements of victimisation have been publicised in the newspapers (refer to Section 6.2.7), it is not sufficient to describe the women's sufferings. Their suffering was made possible through the exploration of the interviews (refer to Section 7.4). Giving the women voice allowed them to reflect on their experiences and at the same time revealed the gap that exists in current literature (refer to Section 1.3).

Society rejects women involved in deviant behaviours such as sex work and therefore stigmatises and treats them differently even if their involvement is not their fault. Because of this, the women felt disconnected from the community. The stigma applied to these women is not only harmful and damages their identity, but, as Goffman (1963) pointed out, this becomes a hindrance for the women to establish a non-stigmatising career path. Sex-trafficking victims, despite being recognised for their victimhood, are criticised by the community for causing domestic problems for example "rocking the relationship between husbands and wives", and "lead[ing] the men here, particularly husbands, astray" (refer to Section 6.2.5.2). This aspect is also evident in the interview analysis that mentioned the women being blamed for seducing men (refer to Excerpt 7.59).

The findings of the interview analysis on the whole revealed that the lives of the women in sex work are different from the media portrayal of them as criminals. The lived experience of the women in this study echoes observations that when a woman is engaged in sex work, even when it is against her consent, she is very likely to be charged within the criminal justice system for participating in sex work. The media has sensationalised trafficking by merely highlighting the women's agency as sex offenders and little about them as victims of trafficking.

8.6 Limitations of the research

The newspaper analysis was limited to only two mainstream English-language newspapers and therefore the articles used in this research may not represent all the stories about sex trafficking. Because a number of articles about sex trafficking were mixed with other issues such as refugees and labour trafficking, the search was

complicated. It was also not possible to investigate the other social actors involved in sex trafficking, for example the clients and traffickers due to limited resources.

With regard to the interviews, a major limitation was the identification of interviewees who had been victims of sex trafficking. Because most sex-trafficking victims do not identify as victims or openly admit that they have been victimised sexually as a result of the fear and stigma associated with the trade (W. C. Wong, Holroyd, & Bingham, 2011), locating genuine victims posed some challenges. Due to the complex nature of the study and the women's precarious circumstances, some of the sex-trafficking victims from the government shelter were not willing to participate in the interviews (refer to Section 5.5.3.1.1).

Moreover, for most of these interviewees, describing their trafficking ordeals to an unfamiliar person is difficult and would require a lot of courage. This, to some extent, can hinder the data collection process. Some participants became distressed, their responses were fragmented, and at times they exhibited emotional breakdown during the interview sessions. In such situations, the interviews were disrupted and they were discontinued due to participants' unwillingness to respond to the questions. As a result, the study was limited to only those women (15 participants) who responded to all questions in the interview sessions (refer to Section 5.5.2.1).

Another major issue that arose during the interviews was that almost all participants found communication difficult in settings where the Malay and English languages are commonly used. In such situations, Cwikel and Hoban (2005, p. 312) have recommended use of interviewees' native language "to ensure accuracy of data and context of the experiences". However, the absence of a trained translator at the

government shelter created problems in selecting participants for the study. Therefore, all interviews had to be conducted with participants in English (despite some interviewees having limited proficiency in English) or in Malay or Tamil languages (refer to Section 5.5.3.3).

8.7 Implications of findings

The findings of the study have a number of important implications. These are considered in Subsections 8.7.1 and 8.7.2 immediately below.

8.7.1 Media discourse

Research has proved that the media is an important source of information for the public about social problems (A. Baker, 1986; Gilboa, 2003; Olien, Tichenor, & Donohue, 1989) and that the public depends on media reports to evaluate the gravity of issues (Culbertson & Stempel, 1985). Despite the numerous measures taken by the government and media to help prevent women falling prey to sex trafficking and to avoid revictimisation of prostituted women, people's understanding of the victims is not sympathetic; they are treated as prostitutes and are subject to moral condemnation.

In one part of my study I attempted to investigate the sex-trafficking victims' representation in media through detailed linguistic analysis. This kind of investigation is useful because the media's framing of sex trafficking can manipulate readers' perceptions and opinions about the issue and the victims. This research might therefore contribute to Malaysian journalism by creating awareness among news writers about providing unbiased portrayals of sex-trafficking victims to ensure victims are afforded rights within the legal system.

Another way in which the media could benefit from this research is by allocating voices to victims. Because most news reports about sex trafficking are written from the perspectives of the media and government, sex-trafficking victims are not given space to talk about their issues. Lack of victims' voices can deprive readers of a nuanced or complex understanding of sex-trafficking issues. Perhaps more importantly, the media's improper use of language, for example, derogatory name-calling and a victim blaming attitude, was prevalent throughout the analysis. If heeded, the present research could therefore incline journalists to be more sensitive about their language choices surrounding sex-trafficking victims so that victims' human rights are not infringed. Media practitioners should be trained about proper language use and encouraged to understand how certain ways of news reporting can affect marginalised populations. The media can protect victims' rights by adopting greater balance when reporting sensitive news without any exaggeration to prevent the victims from being revictimised (Tandon, 2007).

Additionally, the media should consider allowing the victims to read segments of their stories before printing to avoid misinformation being published. Furthermore, the media should not present sex trafficking solely as a female problem but rather as having evolved because of demands from men (Austin, 2003; Brooks-Gordon & Gelsthorpe, 2003; Marttila, 2003).

8.7.2 Policy formation

The positioning of sex trafficking as a cross-border issue rather than as a human rights issue has adverse consequences for sex-trafficking victims. The results of this research could provide suggestions for policy makers and legislators in the Malaysian judicial system. This is particularly so because Malaysia does not have policies that address all

problems related to sex-trafficking victims. Under the current Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (ATIPSOM) Act, all matters related to sex-trafficking victims are subsumed under a general human trafficking policy and therefore there may be a tendency for legislators to view the problems of sex-trafficking victims as being less serious than are other social issues.

Because sex-trafficking victims are often linked with prostitution, it is crucial that law enforcement authorities and policy makers adopt a clear position on the differences that exist between those groups. Another issue is that when sex-trafficking victims are found violating their immigration regulations, (refer to Excerpt 6.49), sex-trafficking victims can be mistakenly criminalised and charged for offences committed under the Malaysian Immigration Act 1969. Lack of a refined victim identification system can result in second-stage victimisation in that the victims are penalised for an offence that they had been forced to commit. A paradigm shift is required in the existing human trafficking and immigration policies to change the way that victims are viewed—from criminals to victims.

Although the Malaysian government has anti-trafficking legislation in place to address issues related to trafficked victims in general, the absence of policies that specifically tackle sex-trafficking cases can lead to victims' exploitation. In order to rectify this problem and to protect victims, perhaps a separate guiding principle that is more victim-centered could be established and passed on to policy makers so that the ATIPSOM Act would be less disadvantageous for trafficked victims. In addition, the Malaysian government could implement more effective victim-protection mechanisms to encourage victims to cooperate with enforcement officers. Victim-identification training among law enforcement officers should also be reinforced and carefully

designed to prevent misidentification of victims of sex trafficking. Although revising human trafficking policies in Malaysia is not likely to be a straightforward process, with effective collaboration among various government bureaucrats, the media, and nongovernment organisations at a national level, this could be realised to ensure the protection of victims' rights throughout the whole criminal justice system.

8.8   Recommendations for future research

This research sets the foundation for the exploration of sex-trafficking victims' representation in Malaysia and raises a number of recommendations for future research. The present research cannot be claimed to provide a complete view of the area under study. Although the findings are revealing, they should be regarded as only indicative considering this research was restricted to two English-language newspapers and a small number of interviewees. Much more qualitative investigation is needed to obtain a wider coverage and to reveal the problems related to sex-trafficking victims. Based on the research limitations presented in Section 8.6, future researchers could explore other areas of investigation involving sex-trafficking victims.

One possible area for future research would involve investigation of articles from Malay-language newspapers to explore how victims' representations are constructed linguistically there. Also, further research could be used to explore related domains, for example, victim and perpetrator testimonies, legislative texts, court proceeding affidavits, and visual media. Because literature about sex trafficking in Malaysia is inadequate, more investigation could be performed to compare the trafficking of local women with trafficking of women from foreign countries in order to acquire a deeper understanding of sex trafficking.

Another area that needs further investigation is studies among adolescents and children in sex work, an area that has been relatively neglected in Malaysia (Mohamad, 2006, p. 19). More thorough investigation is also required to understand the behaviours of traffickers and clients who are often not the targets of investigation. The information gained from perpetrators is significant for obtaining an enhanced understanding of the entire process involved in the trafficking of women for sexual purposes so that effective policies can be designed for the victims. Finally, examining the legislative and enforcement practices related to both victims and perpetrators would be valuable for the victims as well as remove at least some of the discrepancies that exist in the current legislation about human trafficking.

8.9 Conclusion

This chapter serves as a conclusion for the research reported in this thesis. An outline of the complete thesis was presented in Section 8.2. Following this, the research goals and design were recapitulated in Section 8.3. Summaries and discussions about the findings obtained from Chapters 6 and 7 were presented in Section 8.4. Next, in Section 8.5, I integrated the findings obtained from Chapters 6 and 7. In Section 8.6, I presented the limitations of the present research, and in Section 8.7, I provided the implications of the research in terms of two areas: media discourse and policy formation. In Section 8.8, I concluded the chapter, and thesis, with some recommendations for future research.

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