

# FREEDOM: THE SECOND PECULIAR INSTITUTION

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# ABBREVIATIONS

BLM	Black Lives Matter, an “international social movement, formed in the [US] in 2013, dedicated to fighting racism and anti-Black violence, especially in the form of police brutality” <sup>1</sup>
CEO	Chief executive officer
CG	Conclusive grounds decision in the NRM
ILEP	International Leaders in Education Program
LE	The cohort of law enforcement professionals who participated in this study
MSA	Modern Slavery Act 2015 (UK)
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NRM	The National Referral Mechanism; the UK government’s framework for identifying potential victims of modern slavery and referring them to government-funded support
Q	Short for Q methodology
RNA	Recovery Needs Assessment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TVPA	Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (US)
UK	United Kingdom
UK LE 1	An example of an anonymized participant identification code, where UK identifies the country in which the research session took place, LE identifies the participant’s cohort, and 1 is their numeric identifier

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<sup>1</sup> “Black Lives Matter.”

US	United States of America
VCC	The Adult Victims of Modern Slavery Care and Coordination Services Contract, or Victim Care Contract, through which service providers deliver NRM services
VMS	The cohort of modern slavery victims and survivors who participated in this study
VSP	The cohort of professional victim service providers who participated in this study

# Glossary

<b>Antislavery</b>	Against modern slavery; synonymous with “anti-trafficking,” except where otherwise specified.
<b>Antislavery communities</b>	Distinct groups of multi-sector stakeholders with a geographically defined remit of collaborative working; often identified as antislavery partnerships in the UK or anti-trafficking task forces in the US.
<b>Cohorts</b>	Different groups of participants, including Law Enforcement (LE), Victim Service Provider (VSP), and Victim/Survivor (VMS); “cohorts” and their acronyms are only used when referring to this study’s participant groups, rather than stakeholder groups or sectors at large.
<b>Concourse</b>	The first stage of a Q study, in which the researcher becomes familiar with the variety of ideas that exist about a topic by consulting a wide variety of sources.
<b>Factor</b>	A conception of freedom shared by three or more participants.
<b>Freedom</b>	Short for “freedom from modern slavery,” except where otherwise specified.
<b>Modern slavery</b>	The umbrella term for “situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, and/or abuse of power.” <sup>2</sup>
<b>Q sample</b>	The set of ideas about freedom that participants engaged with during research sessions; sometimes called the Q deck because the ideas are printed on cards.

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<sup>2</sup> Walk Free, “What Is Modern Slavery?”

<b>Q sort</b>	The most important activity in a research session, in which participants sort the items in the Q sample onto a grid. This is the mechanism by which quantitative data is collected.
<b>Sector</b>	A subdivision of society; for example, the “charity sector.”
<b>Site</b>	A specific antislavery community and fieldwork location.
<b>Slavery</b>	Understood as “modern slavery” throughout this thesis, except where otherwise specified.
<b>Statement</b>	Any one of the specific ideas about freedom that participants were asked to rank during this study; throughout this thesis, statements are italicized when printed.
<b>Survivor</b>	An individual who has been the victim of a modern slavery crime but is no longer in slavery; “victim” is sometimes used in quotations or in reference to policy or legal language.



# ABSTRACT

This thesis answers the question, “What is freedom from slavery?” Rather than pursuing this question from a philosophical or political position, this research takes the original approach of putting the question directly to key antislavery stakeholder groups: law enforcement professionals, victim service providers, and survivors. The result is the first collection of shared conceptions of freedom from across the antislavery field and the advancement of a composite definition of freedom.

This study utilizes Q methodology, which is novel but robust. The choice to use Q acknowledged and harnessed the power of subjectivity in shaping conceptions of freedom. Fieldwork took place from fall 2018 through summer 2019 at six locations in the UK and US. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected in research sessions with 73 participants.

This data supports four claims about freedom. First, free will is a dominant quality of freedom. Second, freedom is subjective, but not without parameters. Third, participants from different cohorts are often in agreement. And fourth, conceptions of freedom are sometimes correlated to local support service focuses. The definition of freedom advanced in this thesis is: *freedom is having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so; usually experienced together with choice or resilience.*

Detailed, practical recommendations are made for academics, the policy and practice communities—including law enforcement professionals—and multi-agency collaborations. The antislavery field at large is urged to move forward collaboratively on the basis of shared meaning around freedom.



# INTRODUCTION

Freedom is the assumed or intended outcome of nearly every action taken by those within the antislavery movement. It is easy to find visual tropes of freedom and freedom rhetoric in even a cursory search of antislavery material. But what is freedom? When people say the word, what do they mean by it? What concepts underpin it, and can it be broken down into parts? This research project began with the hypothesis that there are conceptions of freedom operating on the world from within the antislavery field. These definitions are held by individuals and organizations—sometimes crafted intentionally but often rooted at the level of unspoken assumptions. As one participant told me, “you ... do your job and don’t think about these things” in the course of daily antislavery work.<sup>3</sup>

The antislavery field in both the UK and the US is diverse. Stakeholders fill a wide spectrum, including the interested public, antislavery advocates or lobbyists, direct service providers, law enforcement professionals with occasional or ongoing antislavery responsibilities, legislators at the highest level of the central or federal government, and many parties in between. My own roles as an antislavery actor have been varied. I was both a community educator and direct victim support provider in the US, and I have been a program development lead in the UK in addition to my primary role as a researcher. Stakeholders will have varying degrees of lived experience

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<sup>3</sup> UK LE 4, field notes.

and proximity to slavery or survivor support delivery, and their understanding of the definition and scope of slavery can vary just as widely. However, they will all be familiar with at least two common concepts in the movement's rhetoric: slavery and freedom.

There has been robust research and debate around the definition of slavery for many years. Hotly debated as that definition may be, the details are immaterial to many stakeholders because the underlying impetus of their various roles or interests remains the same: free the slaves. Yet there is general silence around the definition of freedom.

Together, stakeholders weave a web of interdependent, inter-informed conceptions of freedom. These affect them as individuals because such conceptions set parameters (again, sometimes unspoken) around targets, benchmarks, and points of departure in their shared work. Such definitions affect stakeholders collectively because they inform policy and practice norms from the local agency level to the inter-agency partnership level, to the national level, and beyond. It is critical to the accountability, efficacy, and monitoring and evaluation of antislavery work today that we define freedom from slavery with at least as much care and precision as we use in our approach to defining slavery.

This is where the title, "Freedom: The Second Peculiar Institution," is apt. The title is a variation on the theme of "the peculiar institution," used for nearly 200 years to refer to slavery in the American South. As described above, this study takes as its starting point the fact that freedom has become *institutionalized* in the antislavery field. Agreement on freedom as a priority is taken for granted, but there is no common definition around which stakeholders can organize. Yet antislavery advocacy and fundraising campaigns, awareness-raising events, organizations, reports, slogans, sources of funding—even antislavery

merchandise—are brazenly branded with the word, “freedom.” Freedom from slavery today is *peculiar* in two senses.

First, it is peculiar that such a vast and motivated movement of people, which has its roots in scholarly research and includes a growing number of academics from across disciplines, could rally around a common, yet undefined value for two decades.

Second, it is peculiar in the sense that it is a specific kind of freedom. Freedom from slavery is substantial in itself, as this thesis will show. It is different from common ideas about freedom at large or about liberty and various freedoms as human rights, and it is not neatly aligned with the many political conceptions of freedom in the long history of political thought. This thesis does not attempt to disprove any relationship between these wider conceptions and freedom from slavery, but it does present the latter as a particular kind of freedom in and of itself. This is important to lending substance to the rhetoric of the antislavery movement and to operationalizing a definition of freedom in the daily work of stakeholders—beginning with policymakers and survivor support practitioners.

The modern antislavery movement is at a critical moment; it has global interest, political support, and remarkable levels of resourcing. But we must define freedom to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past. When the UK and US passed their historic emancipation acts and ended the legal enslavement of 5 million people, many of those slavery survivors were ushered into exploitative systems of apprenticeships, sharecropping, and systemic racism that still afflict their descendants today. What went wrong? In part, no one defined freedom. And certainly, no one asked the people who had been affected by slavery to join a collective conversation about freedom. We must have this conversation if we are serious about

doing justly by survivors and learning from abolition history.

It is commonly understood that, on some level, freedom contrasts to slavery and vice versa. But I am convinced that something ought not be defined chiefly in reference to counter concepts. Like the double helix structure of DNA, which was discovered when scientists observed DNA's shadow captured by X-ray images, looking at what freedom is *not* (e.g., slavery) offers a basic outline for what freedom *is*. This may have been sufficient at the beginning of the antislavery movement, when few individuals were being liberated, the prevalence of slavery was largely unmeasured, and the term "modern slavery" had not yet landed on the public consciousness. But the double helix can now be observed much more clearly with the aid of the more sophisticated imaging technology that has become available to us over the course of several decades. The antislavery movement has now, similarly, had enough time to examine slavery and liberation from it to begin discussing freedom in more certain, descriptive, and positive terms. We need to train our focus on understanding the substance—not just the shadow—of the thing itself.

The central research question of this project is, then, "What is freedom from slavery?" Two sub-questions, articulated below, guided the focus of data analysis and the selection of findings that are included in this thesis:

1. What perceptions of freedom are dominant among those affected by slavery?
2. How do perceptions of freedom differ among those affected by slavery?

These sub-questions brought focus but also helped to keep the scope of this work appropriate to that of doctoral research. They drew parameters that excluded from this thesis the myriad, more specific possible sub-

questions. (Two such sub-questions, which receive nods but are not fully explored in this thesis, are: Do victim support practitioners define freedom differently from survivors? Are there similarities between definitions held by law enforcement professionals and survivors, despite anecdotal suggestions that the former are calloused toward the most basic concerns of the latter?)

In *Ending Slavery*, Kevin Bales makes the case that liberation cannot be viewed as a single moment in time—a single event during which a slave is freed or leaves a perpetrator. He says it would be inadequate to liberate a village of enslaved quarry workers or to leave individuals entirely to their own devices once they “got away” because,

without access to jobs, health care, community support, or credit, independence [is] impossible to sustain. If they needed medicine or food, if they needed clothes, or even if they needed to bury someone, they would be drawn into illegal debts and bondage. Any family crisis could tip them back into slavery.<sup>4</sup>

Bales goes on to describe the “brass tacks” of what it takes “to survive in freedom.”<sup>5</sup> The list is ambitious but necessary, including things like access to education—an appreciably tall order in some parts of the world—that address underlying vulnerabilities to slavery. The examples Bales gives throughout his book are of individuals, families, and villages or communities. If liberation itself—the end of a period of enslavement—is inadequate for sustainable freedom (to borrow a phrase from Bales) for even a small number of people, how then can we as a global community push to end slavery without a robust understanding of freedom? It is some combination of dangerous, irresponsible, and short-sighted to work for the liberation of the 40.3 million people living in slavery today<sup>6</sup> without

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<sup>4</sup> Bales, *Ending Slavery: How We Free Today's Slaves*, 63–64.

<sup>5</sup> Bales, 89–92.

<sup>6</sup> Walk Free Foundation, “Global Slavery Index 2018, Executive Summary.”

purposefully defining freedom and operationalizing that definition.

This thesis is situated among antislavery literature that considers freedom in varying degrees. It engages with antislavery literature as old as the slave narratives of the American South and as recent as Laura Murphy's 2019 book, *The New Slave Narrative*. These examples deal explicitly with conceptions of slavery and freedom while other thinkers, such as Laura Brace and Julia O'Connell Davidson, would see themselves as outside the antislavery field as it is understood here and take a broader approach, drawing connections between slavery (and implied freedom from it) and capitalism or other broad societal forces.

Research and discourse related to freedom—often implicitly so—have continued throughout the course of this project and beyond. For example, in 2020 Katarina Schwarz and Jean Allain published a report and launched an online legislation database disproving the claim, "Slavery is illegal in every country in the world"—a claim often appealed to by academic and non-academic stakeholders alike, including myself. If "almost half of all States in the world have yet to make it a crime to enslave another human being,"<sup>7</sup> then individuals in the same countries are not legally entitled to freedom from slavery—whatever freedom may be.

In another example, UK advocates successfully campaigned for reforms to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM)—the policy mechanism by which survivors in the UK access government-funded support. The combined years-long efforts of legal experts, researchers, survivors, and the voluntary sector have resulted in multiple changes to the NRM, including the makeup of its decision-making body and the

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<sup>7</sup> Schwarz and Allain, "Antislavery in Domestic Legislation: An Empirical Analysis of National Prohibition Globally," 15.



duration of survivor support provision.<sup>8</sup> But this has been accomplished in the absence of a definition of freedom. As such, these successes, important as they are for improving the experiences and outcomes for survivors, cannot be relied upon to secure freedom.

Other topics of freedom-related discourse were occasioned by major current events during this research project and were often politically charged. The UK prime minister and then-US president's attitudes and policies toward immigration continue to be at the root of strife and discord in the mainstream media, across social media platforms, within and between antislavery organizations, and among individuals. Immigration issues are, in many stakeholders' minds, inseparable from antislavery concerns. In the US (where there is no centralized referral mechanism), more than 20% of victims and survivors identified to the National Human Trafficking Hotline were foreign nationals in the 2019 calendar year; the nationalities of an additional 73% were unknown.<sup>9</sup> In the UK, 65% of potential victims referred into the NRM were foreign nationals or of unknown nationality in the July-September 2020 quarter.<sup>10</sup> As far as many UK antislavery stakeholders are concerned, Brexit has only stirred anti-immigrant sentiments and multiplied the number of people at the mercy of immigration law since Britain's 2016 vote to leave the European Union. The indignation that many in the field feel toward the government's stance on immigration issues was stirred

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<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Home Office, "Recovery Needs Assessment (RNA), Version 3.0," a direct result of pan-sector advocacy that culminated in NN, R (On the Application Of) v Secretary of State for the Home Department [2019] EWHC 1003 (Admin).

<sup>9</sup> Polaris, "2019 Data Report: The U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline," 2.

<sup>10</sup> Home Office, "Modern Slavery: National Referral Mechanism and Duty to Notify Statistics UK, Quarter 3 2020 – July to September" and The Salvation Army, "Supporting Victims of Modern Slavery: Year Nine Report on The Salvation Army's Victim Care and Co-Ordination Contract, July 2019 to June 2020."

again in January 2021 when the Home Office minister for safeguarding reportedly said that the government could not support the Modern Slavery (Victim Support) Bill that would amend the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and give slavery victims 12 months' leave to remain in the UK.<sup>11</sup>

Race is another example of a politically charged topic related to slavery and freedom that was amplified during the course of this research. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, begun in 2013, gained renewed momentum and global support following the May 2020 death of George Floyd during arrest by police in Minnesota. His death—one in a series of highly public, highly scrutinized deaths of Black Americans involving police—sparked a wave of protests and riots around the world.<sup>12</sup> It also brought racial tensions to a boiling point, especially in the US, where the president had been accused of white supremacy since the early days of his first campaign and where his tenure in the White House awakened confidence, a sense of license, and outspokenness among pockets of Americans with far-right ideological leanings. In the UK and in the US, BLM protesters took to tearing down or defacing statues of American Confederate figureheads and others perceived to be proponents of the transatlantic slave trade. Fieldwork for this thesis was completed before Floyd's death. It may well be that, should the study be repeated or extended to additional communities, issues of racial equality might emerge in conceptions of freedom that are captured after this moment in our contemporary history.

In early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic took root around the world. The UK and US were no exception, and antislavery actors were faced with

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<sup>11</sup> Taylor, "Home Office Minister Rejects Plans for Extra Support for Trafficking Victims" and Lord McColl of Dulwich, Modern Slavery (Victim Support) Bill.

<sup>12</sup> Smith, Wu, and Murphy, "Map: George Floyd Protests around the World."

how the public health crisis and its accompanying threats to the economy would impact survivors, victims, and the funding that so many antislavery organizations rely upon. Because it has required continuous response and adaptation for those who serve or otherwise support highly vulnerable populations, COVID-19 has held a monopoly on the time and other resources of many policymakers and practitioners who would otherwise be progressing more explicitly antislavery agendas. For example, one UK antislavery organization has indefinitely delayed the rollout of a full one-third of a new client support service that meets a significant need in the field—including the need for survivors to be protected against the negative mental health effects of the pandemic. The delay is because they lack the manpower and time to continuously adapt new program components according to the ever-changing government advice around the pandemic.

In the midst of these wide-ranging discussions and events, the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was well and truly underway. One of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2016 is “decent work and economic growth.”<sup>13</sup> Target 7 of this goal reads, “Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.”<sup>14</sup> The goal of ending slavery by 2030 is ambitious but has provided a policy justification for new (or in some cases, renewed) antislavery emphasis and resourcing. And it has provided an occasion for more synchronized working and more knowledge sharing among global antislavery

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<sup>13</sup> United Nations, “8: Decent Work and Economic Growth.”

<sup>14</sup> United Nations.

stakeholders. Alliance 8.7 and its Delta 8.7 knowledge platform are examples of this.

Whether taking cues on race and social justice from BLM or delving into economic inequalities that drive exploitation, antislavery stakeholders—including researchers—continue to engage in this ongoing discourse, often with a high degree of harmony. And in the other direction, these current movements sometimes draw from antislavery language and history in advancing their work.

So, what of large-scale conversations around freedom? In existing antislavery literature and on the ground, as it were, explicit conversations about freedom are lacking. Freedom remains an implicit and negatively defined idea. But a *de facto* understanding of freedom as *simply the opposite of slavery* is dangerously inadequate for a movement envisioning the total eradication of slavery. This thesis aims to rectify that.

Fieldwork for this research took place from November 2018 through August 2019 in six antislavery communities: three in the UK and three in the US. These two countries were chosen, in part, because of their similar domestic antislavery laws, overlap in key antislavery literature and influencers from the nineteenth century to the present, and because of their (largely self-declared) positions as global leaders in antislavery efforts. In order to be included in the study, the six chosen communities had to include direct victim service providers, law enforcement professionals, and survivors. The UK communities were located in Central Scotland, Humberside (England), and Southeast Wales. The US communities were located in Central Florida, the Greater Seattle area (Washington State), and Southern California.

The reason communities were chosen, rather than an assortment of unrelated individuals, is twofold. First, it was desirable that participants

had preexisting notions about freedom, and these antislavery communities work intentionally toward freedom for local victims and survivors. So, it was reasonable to expect that the topic of freedom would not be new to members of these communities, even if their notions of it were largely internal or previously unexamined. Second, Q methodology is designed to reveal patterns in thinking. As demonstrated by many Q studies previously, patterns can emerge even if participants do not belong to the same group or do not identify with one another. But I wanted the findings from this research not only to inform the antislavery field at large, but to produce something useful and insightful for specific participant groups. Working with communities enabled me to “give back,” so to speak, not only the country-level findings featured in Chapters 4 and 5 that carry implications for the field, but also the additional findings featured in Appendix A that enable each site to better understand its own conceptions of freedom and to consider local implications. From an impact perspective, an additional benefit to working with communities is that local antislavery actors have a vested interest in these findings, and they may be more willing or able—given their relative agility—to implement recommendations than larger actors at the state or national level.

As a Rights Lab thesis written within the School of Politics and International Relations, this document should be read as antislavery literature. As a contribution to that field, this thesis has three core strengths.

First, it engages seriously with theoretical and historical ideas but it is also concerned with how we, as antislavery actors, conduct research. The choice of Q methodology (further explained in Chapter 2) and the choice to concentrate on antislavery communities are two examples of

how this research demonstrates the field's stated values of comprehensible, relevant research; acknowledging survivors' voices as equal to those of others in the field; and breaking down barriers or preconceptions among stakeholder groups.<sup>15</sup> It further demonstrates the fundamental empirical research values of replicability and methodological robustness.

The second strength of this thesis is related: it ties together the conceptual aspects of freedom with the participatory, communicative aspects inherent to antislavery work. The antislavery field is largely a field of practice or action, whether by means of advocacy, law enforcement operations, policymaking, or support service delivery. Concepts (for example, clear definitions of slavery and freedom) are critical to the success of the various activities of the field, but they will gain no traction with most antislavery stakeholders if they are not demonstrably rooted in the lived experience and other expertise of those in the field.

Third, this thesis facilitates communication not only between the world of research and the antislavery field (too often and unnecessarily separated), but also between two sides of the academic world of politics: theory and methods. This thesis engages theoretical conversations and methodological conversations. It demonstrates the power of both to help us make sense of our world and to enable us to engage critical issues, like what it means to be free from slavery, in ways that improve the world for—and with—those who are most affected by those issues.

The first chapter outlines four basic assumptions out of which the research and analysis operated. It also identifies four ways in which freedom is commonly framed by historical and contemporary antislavery

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<sup>15</sup> For two of the many examples evidencing these values, see Foot, *Collaborating against Human Trafficking: Cross-Sector Challenges and Practices* and Semione, "Preparing for Impact."

literature. These four framings are freedom as a moment in time, freedom as a transition or process, freedom as a social reality, and freedom as belonging.

The second chapter introduces Q methodology, justifies the choice to approach the research question at hand by using Q, and describes in detail each component of the methodology and each procedure followed in the study.

Chapter 3 describes how the concourse was constructed. Constructing the concourse is the first step in a Q study. It informs everything that follows, from participants' experience of the study, to the range of possible findings, to the language used in policy and practice recommendations. This chapter not only serves the purpose of transparency for readers but addresses a common issue among Q scholars: despite the concourse's foundational position in a study, there is limited literature around the operations of concourse construction, and Q studies that publish an account of the decisions made during this step are rare.

Chapters 4 and 5 present the 11 conceptions of freedom that emerged from analysis of the UK and US datasets, respectively. These chapters demonstrate the dual qualitative and quantitative aspects of Q and build thorough pictures of what freedom means to the direct victim service providers, law enforcement professionals, and survivors who participated.

The findings are discussed in Chapter 6. I make four claims about freedom:

- Free will is a dominant quality of freedom
- Freedom is subjective but not without parameters
- Participants from different cohorts are often in agreement on

aspects of freedom

- Definitions of freedom are sometimes correlated to local service provision

Chapter 6 also advances a composite definition of freedom, informed by the 11 UK and US conceptions of freedom.

This thesis concludes with a discussion of the empirical, methodological, and theoretical contributions this research makes, its value to the antislavery field, and “what comes next” for the field. This includes a series of practical recommendations for all a variety of antislavery stakeholders and a proposed a trajectory for future research. Recommendations urge policymakers and policy influencers to frame policy in terms of specific aspects of freedom (e.g., resilience) rather than continuing in the present pattern of framing policy in terms of slavery or trafficking. Antislavery practitioners (including but not limited to NGOs) are called upon to assess their programming—whether in client offers or in community education—according to those same aspects of freedom. They are further encouraged to monitor and evaluate the efficacy of their programs according to how well those programs facilitate freedom. Researchers are prompted to continue investigating freedom in new contexts and dimensions. A list of targeted questions for future research is provided. All stakeholders are called upon to operationalize freedom, work collaboratively with one another, and proactively engage survivors at all stages of their work.

In offering an answer to the question, “What is freedom from slavery?” this thesis calls upon antislavery stakeholders not only to act upon the study’s findings but to continue engaging the question itself. Discovering and operationalizing definitions of freedom are good and necessary aims. But with more substantial rhetoric and action, enhanced



by a freedom-centered approach, should come a fundamental shift in the identity of the antislavery movement; with “freedom” defined, the movement can, in turn, be defined by what it stands for rather than by what it stands against.



# CHAPTER 1

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Freedom is the central value across sectors in today's antislavery movement. It is shared by the individuals who provide victim support services or aftercare services, by many law enforcement actors—units and individuals alike—and by survivors themselves. It is present in the branding and marketing of events and NGOs, political campaigns or initiatives, and books on modern slavery. “Freedom” permeates antislavery discourse, often stoking the emotional fervor of those in the movement and those being drawn into it. However, there is no shared definition of freedom from slavery among stakeholders.

Many have contributed to the ongoing conversation around freedom *at large*. There are many examples in the field of political philosophy, for instance, since “freedom is normatively basic” in liberal thought today.<sup>16</sup> Discerning different categories of freedom with their myriad definitions has preoccupied liberal thinkers for centuries and shows no sign of falling out of style. And with always-evolving feminist theories and other gender-based political thought emerging, the conversation is evergreen. But though there is not always consensus around definitions of political freedom, that conversation boasts a quality that the discourse around *freedom from slavery* does not; the definitions

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<sup>16</sup> Gaus, Courtland, and Schmidtz, “Liberalism.”

are tight and the parties to it are precise in their own meanings.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, that this conversation is happening with intentionality sets it apart from the conversation we are about to enter.

Contributions from political philosophy can provide useful frameworks for how we go about conceiving of freedom at large, but they cannot do much to illuminate freedom from slavery because they are typically concentrated on far-reaching notions meant to apply to society as a whole. And, importantly, one of two things is typically characteristic of those frameworks: either the people concerned in thought projects around freedom have never been enslaved or the people are seen as collectively coerced (as if enslaved) by the prevailing structures of the government and economy. In the case of liberalism, for instance, conversations are predicated on the assumption that people are free and equal already; debates center around what kind of society ought to be built in light of this and what it means to be a free citizen within that society. But freedom from slavery—from enslavement to another human being—is a particular kind of freedom. Its scope is narrower, and innovative dialogue on the topic can be more streamlined into practice than dialogue on society-wide structures.

I do not engage with established philosophical or political definitions of freedom in this literature review or in the wider thesis because my aim is to determine what antislavery stakeholders mean

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<sup>17</sup> To give just one example, John Locke devotes considerable space in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* to questions concerning the origins of freedom, nature of freedom, limits of freedom, and what kinds of actions might be said to be free actions before asserting that freedom is a person's ability to act—or not to act—depending on which option is preferable to the other. Each of these concepts (abilities, acting, not acting, and preferring) are further elucidated over hundreds of pages and multiple iterations of Locke's work. For an overview of these concepts, and for an example of just how precise political theory can be concerning freedom, see Rickless, "Locke On Freedom."

when they appeal to “freedom from slavery”—and philosophical or political literature does not address this. While John Locke and the many other Western thinkers like him spoke about freedom (and sometimes even slavery), they did not speak about freedom vis-à-vis slavery as it is defined here. They were not writing about freedom from slavery in particular and they did not ask individuals affected by slavery what freedom meant to them. Furthermore, these philosophers and political theorists did not interact directly with slavery survivors or victims who could inform their views on freedom. Instead, they were concerned with freedom more broadly, as discussed above. In short, these thinkers were not talking about the kind of freedom I am investigating, and so their conceptions of freedom are not further discussed in this thesis.

By contrast, I did not want to theorize freedom, nor presume to choose an existing theory of freedom from the realms of philosophy or politics and impose it upon the antislavery field. There is no robust theory of freedom from slavery to test; that is the occasion of this thesis. Rather, I wanted to know how freedom from slavery is conceived within the antislavery field. What do stakeholders mean when they say, “freedom”? And so I asked them.

This is important to the people who stand to benefit most from a definition of this particular freedom: survivors and victims. For many of us, freedom from slavery is a thought project, however invested we may be in the subject. But for survivors and victims of slavery it is of the utmost practical relevance, and a robust definition is urgently needed. And for law enforcement professionals and victim service providers, a definition of freedom has significant implications in both operations and practice. After I asked, “What is freedom from slavery?” during one research session, a survivor participant wrote her response on a blank

notecard I had provided. She wrote, “AM I FREE.”<sup>18</sup> This note speaks to the pressing reason to pursue a definition of freedom; without understanding what freedom is, how can any of us support survivors in demarcating freedom in their own lives?

In this chapter I observe four themes that emerge from literature concerning the transatlantic slave trade and modern slavery. The main reason I have included discourse from the period of the transatlantic slave trade is that the contemporary antislavery movement draws explicit links between the abolitionist cause then and now. It is also during the former era that the voices of those who were formerly enslaved found platforms, and it seems to me that we cannot discuss freedom from slavery without taking their voices into account. The voices of abolitionists and freed slaves from the transatlantic era not only ground the voices of their modern-day counterparts in a long history but, as we shall see, the latter voices sometimes echo the former. This lends continuity to the discussion. Finally, some instances of modern slavery in the UK and US may be the result of socioeconomic vulnerabilities rooted in transatlantic-era slavery for some communities.<sup>19</sup>

In what follows, I will briefly outline four basic assumptions that underlie my thinking, but which are not afforded special attention in the main body of this literature review. I will then describe four themes I have

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<sup>18</sup> US VMS 9.

<sup>19</sup> That socioeconomic inequalities linked explicitly to race and slavery exist is well-documented, with an ever-increasing ratio of evidence to speculation. See, for example, Coates, “The Case for Reparations.” To suggest that these inequalities may increase some communities’ vulnerability to modern slavery does not require a very large leap in logic. Socioeconomic factors have consistently appeared on lists of vulnerability factors or social determinants of modern slavery from Bales’s seminal *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy* to the Global Slavery Index to Gardner, Northall, and Brewster’s, “Building Slavery-Free Communities: A Resilience Framework.” A deeper exploration into the links of the transatlantic slave trade and modern slavery in the American South (for example) would be a project with great merit.

identified in literature which touches on the topic of freedom from slavery. Those four themes are as follows:

- Freedom as a moment in time
- Freedom as a transition
- Freedom as a social reality
- Freedom as belonging

The literature touches on freedom in varying degrees of directness. Some selections speak explicitly to the issue of freedom, others only make passing mention of freedom, while still others use the word freedom without offering substance to its meaning. I interact with a variety of sources not to pass judgment on those who are less precise in their meanings of freedom, but to demonstrate that literature—especially literature focused on issues of modern slavery—makes frequent use of the concept of freedom without defining it consistently, if at all. After reviewing literature in the framework of these themes, I will provide an overview of legislation from the UK and the US. These two countries have positioned—or have attempted to position—themselves as frontrunners in antislavery law and victim support. As we shall see, though, freedom does not factor into relevant legislation.

## ASSUMPTIONS

### The definition of slavery

The first assumption I make in this chapter is that we have a definition of slavery in the antislavery field. Walk Free helpfully summarizes this definition:

Modern slavery covers a set of specific legal concepts including forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriage, slavery and slavery-like practices, and human trafficking. Although modern slavery is not defined in law, it is used as an umbrella term that focuses attention on commonalities across these legal concepts.

Essentially, it refers to *situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, and/or abuse of power.*<sup>20</sup>

Ways of explaining or describing modern slavery vary across sectors and among antislavery stakeholders at the organizational and individual levels. But the key here is that there are common threads that run throughout; the basic concept of modern slavery is agreed upon. Our shared conception of slavery is based on the definition established in the 1926 Slavery Convention—a document that still has bearing on international and domestic legislation today. The Slavery Convention defines slavery as “the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised.”<sup>21</sup>

There are live debates around the definition of slavery and other related concepts, especially in the legal context; this should not be ignored. For example, Andrea Nicholson, Minh Dang, and Zoe Trodd not only offer examples of various interpretations of the Slavery Convention from courts around the world—arising in part from “the absence of consensus over the benchmarks of ‘ownership’”—but highlight and begin to remedy the absence of survivors’ perspectives in the legal understanding of slavery.<sup>22</sup> As another example, the specific forms of harm or exploitation that are considered slavery can be disputed. For instance, in 2017 the International Labor Organization recognized forced marriage as a form of slavery after several years of campaigning by government and NGO stakeholders, but some modern slavery scholars feel that the concept of forced marriage as slavery has still not been

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<sup>20</sup> Walk Free, “What Is Modern Slavery?” (emphasis added).

<sup>21</sup> League of Nations, Slavery Convention.

<sup>22</sup> Nicholson, Dang, and Trodd, “A Full Freedom.”



sufficiently parsed.<sup>23</sup> These debates, and others like them, are important. But they are not central to this thesis. For its purposes, an understanding of slavery that encompasses the following concepts is sufficient—not least because it reflects slavery as it is understood by the key UK and US stakeholder groups in this study: ownership and control of one person by another, by means of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of exploitation.

### Basic rights and liberties

When discussing survivors of slavery throughout this chapter, I will be making some assumptions about their inherent rights and liberties. The first assumption is just that: that they are entitled to rights and liberties based upon their being human. These rights and liberties include those freedoms named in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, those referred to in the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines on the Legal Parameters of Slavery, and those delineated in the European Convention on Human Rights. This is not to say that any rights originate in these documents, but the documents are convenient shorthand for them.

Freedom is widely considered a human right in the UK, the US, and beyond. But the freedom of the First Amendment to the US Constitution, for example, concerns specific sets of positive liberties, such as the freedom to assemble peaceably.<sup>24</sup> It does not concern the specific issue of freedom from slavery and does little to help us understand what such freedom might be. This thesis assumes that, whatever freedom at large may be, survivors of slavery are entitled to it in the same degree that all other people are. As previously established, I do not engage with the

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<sup>23</sup> For an overview of this argument, see *Dr. Katarina Schwarz + Dr. Helen McCabe - Law Mapping, Forced Marriage and Slavery*.

<sup>24</sup> US Constitution, amend. 1.

many definitions of broader freedom here because those definitions are rooted in very separate academic conversations—almost entirely without concern for *freedom from slavery* for individuals who have experienced slavery as defined above.

### Slavery is unacceptable

In the context of a thesis about freedom from slavery, it seems to go almost without saying that I believe slavery is morally wrong. But I am not talking about my own morality here. My assumptions include that every country sees some political, moral, social, economic, or legal advantages to denouncing slavery. Although the antislavery movement's long-held belief that slavery is illegal in every country has been debunked as myth, it is true that international treaties, standards, and declarations require both the removal of laws permitting slavery and the establishment of laws to prohibit and punish it.<sup>25</sup> Take, for example,

the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, and the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. .... States are required to do more than ensure they do not have laws on the books allowing for slavery; they must actively put in place laws to prevent people from enslaving others, and provide sanctions in the instance of violations.<sup>26</sup>

This thesis does not assume anything beyond this shared belief that slavery is inadmissible, as documented at least on paper among the international community. I do not assume that all countries have adequate antislavery laws or enforce them—as evidence shows the contrary—nor that compliance is based on motives of equal quality. My

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<sup>25</sup> Schwarz and Allain, "Antislavery in Domestic Legislation: An Empirical Analysis of National Prohibition Globally."

<sup>26</sup> Schwarz and Allain, 5.

thesis focuses on the “What now?” aspect of this assumption, not on the moral or normative questions underlying the present situation. If slavery is not to be tolerated, what now? What is freedom for those who have experienced slavery?

### The strength of positive liberties

Finally, I assume that a robust and meaningful definition of freedom should be framed primarily in terms of positive liberties. A negative liberty finds its meaning in the “absence of obstacles, barriers or constraints.”<sup>27</sup> In other words, a person is considered free if there is nothing and nobody stopping them from doing what they wish to do. Positive liberty lands its emphasis on self-determination. It is “the possibility of acting—or the fact of acting—in such a way as to take control of one's life and realize one's fundamental purposes.”<sup>28</sup> Negative and positive liberties are often seen as at odds, with each being politicized in today's liberal societies. But they need not be. These philosophical categories provide us with language to help understand the nuances of the discussion about freedom from slavery. Those contributing to the conversation may not always use these categories plainly, but their contributions can almost always be framed by them. This can help us in our project of defining freedom by providing structure and clarity.

A definition of freedom will necessarily include negative liberties (for example, the freedom to not be enslaved) but, in order to be useful and obtainable, freedom must be framed primarily in terms of positive liberties. Though negative liberties have their place, positive liberties tell us what something is robustly rather than showing us what it is not. As we shall see in this thesis, *freedom is simply the opposite of slavery* is not a

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<sup>27</sup> Carter, “Positive and Negative Liberty.”

<sup>28</sup> Carter.

meaningful definition of freedom for those who are affected by slavery. Negative liberties show us what barriers to remove, but they are less useful in telling us what specific targets for positive liberties to put in place.

## HOW IS FREEDOM DISCUSSED IN THE UK AND US?

With very little exception, everyone who speaks into the antislavery field speaks about freedom. That is, they use the word freedom, usually frequently and with great emphasis. Though there is no shared definition and very few documented individual definitions, there seems to be an underlying presumption in the field that freedom is the holy grail for survivors, victims, and other antislavery stakeholders, and that we all have a conception of what freedom is. This creates a confusing landscape surrounding the concept. Even those who speak at length *about* freedom do not often speak *to* freedom. That is, they do not speak to what it is or to markers for how we might know whether someone has attained it.

The problem is the near-universal assumption that freedom is understood, that its definition can be taken for granted, and that we can move on to discuss other things. But unlike the concepts of being trauma-informed or victim-centered, or any of the other operationalized paradigms in our field, there are no definitions, standards, or best practices around freedom. However, there are themes that emerge in terms of how people talk about freedom—or, more precisely, around how they use the word “freedom.” This literature review examines four categories of usage: freedom as a moment in time, a transition or process, a social reality, and belonging.

The first category considers freedom as a moment in time. Freedom is often spoken about as something that can be placed

chronologically—the moment when an enslaved person is removed from enslavement. This removal is literal—it is physical removal from a situation of slavery and any perpetrators. The second category views freedom as a transition or a process. The main idea underlying this category is that freedom has psychological, social, and emotional components that cannot be fully realized by a person's physical removal from enslavement. The third category explores freedom as a social reality—something that is either secured or suppressed by a society's political and economic construction. Proponents of this conception do not necessarily agree that the problem at hand is modern slavery, per se, but the slavery-like oppression of a large number of people that is imposed by society's structures. The final category, freedom as belonging, takes the view that freedom is having a stable and dignified place in society. Though it may sound counter-intuitive at first, this conceptualization of freedom suggests that freedom from slavery is not a state of not-belonging (as in, not belonging to a trafficker), but of belonging properly to society.

The contributions of many antislavery writers, including survivors, are not confined to any one of these categories. Instead, as we shall see, many authors cross between categories as they speak; Frederick Douglass is an example of a writer whose manner of speaking about freedom fits into more than one category. It is important to point out before we go any further that many of the authors discussed in this chapter did not intend to define freedom. Most of the time, they were actually writing about slavery and assume that freedom is, at the most basic level, slavery's opposite. This idea is not altogether wrong, but it is insubstantial. Let me be clear that I am not attributing definitions of freedom to authors who did not intend to write them, and then arguing against those definitions. Rather, my reason for featuring these authors is to show that the word

“freedom” has been used in a wide variety of ways throughout history; it peppers antislavery literature even though it is rarely the explicit subject of that literature.

#### Freedom as a moment in time

Authors who treat freedom as a moment in time tend to treat it as the discrete moment when an enslaved person becomes formerly enslaved, when a slave attains physical liberation from enslavement—a literal separation from their trafficker. Law enforcement agencies and NGOs alike design whole operations and programs around this moment of freedom. Julia O’Connell Davidson, an open critic of today’s abolitionists, picks up on this conception of freedom and challenges it. She says that framing freedom as “release from physical bondage” is too narrow a perspective.<sup>29</sup> O’Connell Davidson admits that her attribution of this as the movement’s “vision” is based on implicit language.<sup>30</sup> And, as this literature review shows, it is overly simplistic to ascribe a single “vision” of freedom to today’s antislavery movement.

Douglass describes freedom as a moment in time on several occasions in *My Bondage and My Freedom*, although it must be said that his overall account of freedom throughout the book fits handily into more than one of the categories described in this chapter. “I have often been asked,” Douglass says, “how I felt when first I found myself beyond the limits of slavery. ... It was a moment of joyous excitement, which no words can describe. ... in a moment like that, sensations are too intense and too rapid for words.”<sup>31</sup> It could be said that Douglass experienced two distinct moments of freedom: the first being his escape to a free state, described

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<sup>29</sup> O’Connell Davidson, *Modern Slavery: The Margins of Freedom*, 188.

<sup>30</sup> O’Connell Davidson, 188.

<sup>31</sup> Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, 248.

in the quote above, and the second being the moment his freedom was purchased by his friends in the UK during his extended visit there. This “commercial transaction” was recorded on paper, signed, and sealed on December 5, 1846. A key purpose served by this moment, as described by Douglass, was to exempt him from being recaptured under the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.<sup>32</sup> The purchase of Douglass’s freedom and his subsequent receipt of these papers comprised a distinct moment in which he became legally free and when his security in the freedom he had obtained for himself by escaping was formalized. We might say it was at this moment that Douglass’s freedom became sustainable.

Douglass’s conception of freedom as something that can be obtained at a specific moment in time is echoed in many slave narratives contemporary to his own (one of which is described below) and in some narratives by survivors of modern slavery. But as we will see, for Douglass and for others who hold this conception, freedom is not only a moment in time; as a freestanding definition of freedom, this conception falls short. But whatever else freedom may be, it certainly requires this inflection point of liberation.

The notion of freedom as a moment in time is linked to discussions of freedom as the opposite of slavery; once someone is removed from slavery, they are free. This idea is observable primarily in the ways the words “free” and “freedom” are used in presumed contrast to slavery. American documents and literature from the era of the transatlantic slave trade and Civil War, for example, are rife with language of “free states” and “slave states.” This framing of freedom and slavery as opposites informed the language (and the escape objectives) of slaves and former slaves at the time. For example, Lewis Clarke speaks of “those who fought

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<sup>32</sup> Douglass, 276–77.

for freedom,” referring to Union forces in the American Civil War who fought for the campaign to end the state-condoned practice of slavery.<sup>33</sup> And, describing his journey to a free state from a slave state with his brother, he says they were “on the road to freedom’s boundary.”<sup>34</sup>

Some writers, including Laura Murphy in her recent book, *The New Slave Narrative*, describe this as a “slavery-freedom binary.”<sup>35</sup> Murphy observes this as a pattern of speaking about freedom but does not endorse it. Instead, she says that as a standalone conception, this binary “immediately dissolves when the terms are defined within the context of political determinants of freedom, for the lack of physical bondage or legal status as slave does not necessarily guarantee that someone is free. ... Because their postemancipation freedoms are still restricted psychologically, socially, and politically.”<sup>36</sup> I suggest that these “postemancipation freedoms” Murphy refers to are not separate freedoms, in a category apart from freedom from slavery, but are individual components of freedom from slavery. This will be extensively explored in the findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis. It is because of findings from this study that I would say the slavery-freedom binary actually dissolves as soon as the question, “What is freedom from slavery?” is asked. The immediate answer, for all but two participants in this study, was never *Freedom is simply the opposite of slavery*.

#### Freedom as a transition or process

Slavery itself is a kind of process—a person may become physically enslaved in a single instance (although the behavior of so-called Romeo

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<sup>33</sup> Clarke and Lovejoy, “Narrative of Lewis Clarke,” 624.

<sup>34</sup> Clarke and Lovejoy, 629.

<sup>35</sup> Murphy, *The New Slave Narrative*, 81.

<sup>36</sup> Murphy, 81.



pimps and slaveholders like them permits that enslavement may itself be a process), but the psychological and emotional enslavement of a person is known to occur over time. So, it is not surprising that freedom has been described as the process of becoming unenslaved.

Douglass describes coming to terms with being freed from slavery as a transition. Describing his experience in New York shortly after escaping his slaveholder, Douglass says,

“Why do you tremble,” [the free man] says to the slave—  
“you are in a free state ;” but the difficulty is, in realizing that he is in a free state, the slave might reply. A freeman cannot understand why the slavemaster’s shadow is bigger, to the slave, than the might and majesty of a free state; but when he reflects that the slave knows more about the slavery of his master than he does of the might and majesty of the free state, he has his explanation. The slave has been all his life learning the power of his master ... and only a few hours learning the power of the state. ... It takes stout nerves to stand up, in such circumstances. A man, homeless, shelterless, breadless, friendless, and moneyless, is not in a condition to assume a very proud or joyous tone ; and in just this condition was I, while wandering about the streets of New York city [*sic*] and lodging, at least one night, among the barrels on one of its wharves. I was not only free from slavery, but I was free from home, as well. The reader will easily see that I had something more than the simple fact of being free to think of, in this extremity.<sup>37</sup>

Clarke also speaks of freedom as a transition, though he speaks about it at the point of attaining physical freedom from slavery. In his narrative, Clarke describes his escape from his slave master in Kentucky, to the free state of Ohio and then on to the free country of Canada. When he arrived in Ohio, he says, “What my feelings were when I reached the free shore, can be better imagined than described. ... I was on what was

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<sup>37</sup> Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, 249–50.

called a *free soil*, among a people who had no slaves.”<sup>38</sup> Yet it was not until reaching Canada, after a matter of about two to three weeks, that Clarke “said sure enough, I AM FREE. Good heaven! what a sensation, when it first visits the bosom of a full-grown man.”<sup>39</sup> For Clarke, the journey from a slave state to a free state was, itself, not a clear-cut case of opposites. Ohio was a free state, but he did not feel his freedom was wholly secure or sustainable there. Clarke’s narrative describes a transition into free and then freer territory, during which his confidence of his freedom grew as time and distance were put between him and Kentucky. Clarke’s acquisition of freedom did not happen in a single moment of time.

Kevin Bales also shares an understanding that freedom involves a process. He says,

once [a slave] has been freed, what then? How to treat his injured body may be clear, but how do you reach into his injured mind? In the US or Europe, a child who has been kidnapped and held in captivity for five years would automatically be given therapy and counseling. It would be assumed that the child would need help for years to come. The trauma of slavery is just as bad, and recovery takes time. Freedom is not the end; it is only the beginning.<sup>40</sup>

*To Plead Our Own Cause* recounts the stories of modern slavery survivors in their own words. Jill was a minor when she was taken captive by someone who sexually exploited her in the US. She was freed when police arrested her trafficker, but, in many ways, this was only the starting point of her freedom. Her story echoes some elements of Douglass’s. Jill says, “My once thick, long hair had fallen out in clumps and was now thin, fragile, and lifeless. Emotionally, I was still stunned, lost in my own world,

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<sup>38</sup> Lewis Clarke and J.C. Lovejoy, “Narrative of Lewis Clarke,” in *I Was Born a Slave*, First, vol. 1: 1772-1849 (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1999), 261 (emphasis original).

<sup>39</sup> Clarke and Lovejoy, 622.

<sup>40</sup> Bales, *Ending Slavery: How We Free Today’s Slaves*, 23.

trying to readjust to a life that suddenly left me free but with no place to go and no one to turn to.”<sup>41</sup> She goes on to describe the mental and psychological trauma she experienced regularly, as well as an eating disorder brought on by her experiences while enslaved. “In essence,” she says, “I still didn’t exist as anything more than a slave, except I was an escaped slave.”<sup>42</sup>

Many antislavery practitioners today speak of freedom as a process or imply that there is a transition necessary after the moment of a slave’s liberation. Often this comes couched in language of “reintegration,” a concept different from freedom and for which several measures and definitions exist. In the International Organization for Migration report, “The Causes and Consequences of Re-trafficking,” Alison Jobe defines reintegration as the point at which a “trafficked person [is] ... economically and socially capable and independent. ... [and] no longer vulnerable to re-trafficking.”<sup>43</sup> Neither economic and social independence, nor the removal of vulnerabilities to slavery, can be accomplished by anything other than a process. The NGO Free the Slaves describes “slaves who are effectively reintegrated” as those “who have achieved self-sustained independence based on an assessment of whether their status on the following five criteria are similar to their peers/neighbors: employment, education, savings, housing, and health (including mental health).”<sup>44</sup> These are not criteria that can be met in a single moment. Objectives of this kind must be achieved through process or transition and can only be achieved over time.

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<sup>41</sup> Bales and Trodd, *To Plead Our Own Cause: Personal Stories by Today’s Slaves*, 179.

<sup>42</sup> Bales and Trodd, 170.

<sup>43</sup> Jobe, “The Causes and Consequences of Re-Trafficking: Evidence from the IOM Human Trafficking Database,” 53.

<sup>44</sup> Free the Slaves, “Community Based Model for Fighting Slavery.”

Murphy identifies a pattern in contemporary slave narratives which she calls “the not-yet-freedom narrative.”<sup>45</sup> This conception of freedom begins with physical emancipation: escape or rescue from a trafficker. Murphy observes that, for many survivors of modern slavery and of the transatlantic slave trade, this emancipation event has not been followed by an experience of full freedom—or an understanding of what freedom actually means. Douglass speaks to this in the quote printed above. It is important to realize that, while living the experience he describes in New York City, Douglass did not have any guarantee that his life would ever improve. He did not, at that point, have any way of truly knowing whether he would even remain emancipated. This is one of the points Murphy makes about freedom after emancipation; though a slave becomes physically free, what happens next in the transition out of slavery is uncertain. There is no guarantee that freed slaves today will experience any of the freedoms considered so basic to others in society, nor that they will experience any of the higher aspirations that they might attach to freedom.<sup>46</sup>

The transition back to enslavement is even a possibility for some. Not-yet-freedom might be renamed still-not-freedom. But a transition has begun.

After emancipation, new slave narrators are often left uncertain of even the existence of freedom because their ability to exercise their free will falls so radically short of [the expectations they had] while enslaved. ... freedom is but a utopian vision that they can hardly conceive much less fully achieve. Some struggle to find work and are vulnerable to reexploitation in the labor market. Many others find that their political freedoms are restricted by their ambiguous status as formerly enslaved people, and their ability to navigate and participate in society is severely limited and even undermined by

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<sup>45</sup> Murphy, *The New Slave Narrative*, chap. 2.

<sup>46</sup> Murphy, chap. 2.

state actors who are invisible and inscrutable. ... Beyond inherent free will, the new slave narrators describe a desire for freedom that guarantees not only freedom from servitude to others but also psychological independence, racial equality, self-expression, security, and mobility (both social and geographic).<sup>47</sup>

The very fact that Murphy labels this “not-yet” type of freedom does suggest that progress is being made—that survivors are moving toward freedom. I have placed this under the category of “Freedom as a transition or process” not because Murphy explicitly makes this connection (she does not) but because I believe a not-yet-freedom narrative is indeed one of transition. Tenuous transition, but transition nonetheless.

#### Freedom as a social reality

A political or economic focus could conceive of freedom from slavery in wide-angle perspective, looking at it as a social reality rather than as a quality that can be lost or gained over the course of an individual’s life. Political philosophers have been musing over what freedom means for centuries and building theoretical worlds that have shaped society—especially Western society—as we know it. A social structure, as O’Connell Davidson sets out to show, can effectively enslave people by exerting an inexorable force upon their lives. Perhaps, then, it is social structures that also make a person free. Perhaps freedom is systemically enabled.

According to O’Connell Davidson, modern abolitionists’ presentations of slavery and freedom

do not attend to the social structures that limit the options open to people, thereby generating unenviable choices and cramping the space for self-expression. All the ambiguities of dependency, debt, and belonging, and of forms of market action that are simultaneously sites of potential abuse and spaces for self-

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<sup>47</sup> Murphy, 81.

assertion, are written out. The moral complexity of the different actors is similarly expunged.<sup>48</sup>

O'Connell Davidson claims that modern abolitionists see "hazardous and miserable conditions, ... inequality, poverty or caste/tribal discrimination" as separate from slavery.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, they see freedom from slavery as part of the antidote to these problems and believe slavery will vanish "when economic development and modernization is combined with proper anti-slavery law and law enforcement."<sup>50</sup> And she disagrees.

O'Connell Davidson would call for an expanded definition of slavery itself and a complementary social-reality definition of freedom. She characterizes new abolitionists as near-sighted champions of contracts, concerned only with workers' formal consent. She rejects this and the follow-on concept that participation in capitalist-style consensual contracts equates to freedom.<sup>51</sup> Today's abolitionists, she says, equate freedom with direct access to capitalism's free market.<sup>52</sup> Supposing for a moment that this portrayal of modern abolitionists' conception of freedom is accurate, that equation would be problematic because of the inherent lack of freedom for wage laborers that O'Connell Davidson considers systemic within capitalism.

It is curious that O'Connell Davidson builds such an enthusiastic case against the contemporary antislavery movement's definition of freedom since no shared definition exists. She takes a narrow and (in my view) aggressively uncharitable interpretation of today's abolitionist discourse in treating this as the definition of freedom she will go on to

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<sup>48</sup> O'Connell Davidson, *Modern Slavery: The Margins of Freedom*, 205.

<sup>49</sup> O'Connell Davidson, 57.

<sup>50</sup> O'Connell Davidson, 57.

<sup>51</sup> O'Connell Davidson, 58.

<sup>52</sup> O'Connell Davidson, 76.

refute. In doing so she builds her case not only against this definition but against the capitalism at the center of it, seeming to share Marx's view on political liberalism and capitalism as a "system of domination."<sup>53</sup> The system, O'Connell Davidson says, exerts force on people, coercing them into decisions that only appear to be theirs. "More fundamental questions" about why people would make these decisions to begin with are, she believes, set aside by modern abolitionists' conception of freedom.<sup>54</sup>

Instead, O'Connell Davidson's ideal would be that social structures as we know them begin to take an entirely new shape and that the focus of those inquiring after freedom shifts from the work people are doing—or under what conditions they are doing it—to workers' agency as "inalienable."<sup>55</sup> We do not have an alternative definition of freedom from O'Connell Davidson. She does, however, offer the following philosophy of freedom:

To practice freedom, we have to somehow keep hold of the hope inspired by liberalism's statement of human liberty and equality, but attenuate it with both a recognition that liberalism itself is no guarantee of either equality or freedom, and that the ideal, independent liberal [individual] is a fiction. There are no persons who are not also things, and no human things who are not also persons. Therein lies the horror of transatlantic slavery, but also the potential for a better world, providing we can accept, and even celebrate, the fact of our inescapable (if fluctuating, variable and always ambivalent) dependence on Others, proximate and remote, kin and stranger.<sup>56</sup>

O'Connell Davidson would say it is not just modern-day slaves who need freedom from a form of slavery but all people. Freedom, she suggests, is

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<sup>53</sup> O'Connell Davidson, 62.

<sup>54</sup> O'Connell Davidson, 76.

<sup>55</sup> O'Connell Davidson, 80.

<sup>56</sup> O'Connell Davidson, 208.

contextual and fluid and “that the line between what is understood as ‘freedom’ and what is taken as its opposite is, itself, a site of political struggle. That boundary does not stand still but shifts over time and according to the balance of forces pressing for different models of ‘freedom.’”<sup>57</sup>

Another of O’Connell Davidson’s critiques of modern abolitionists is that they mistake “freedom for a ‘thing’ that can be stolen or gifted or possessed, rather than a world-building process, a collective and social endeavor.”<sup>58</sup> Modern abolitionists do this, she says, by abstracting slavery from its “social and political moorings and [propelling it] into the ether of morality.”<sup>59</sup> Setting aside the moral relativity that this comment divulges, her major critique here is that a discussion of morality sidesteps the critical, political qualities of both freedom and slavery; they are both structural, social realities in her view.

While counterexamples abound of modern abolitionists engaging politically and engaging for social change, I do not see how it is entirely unhelpful if the modern antislavery movement has generally depoliticized the concepts of slavery and freedom. Indeed, this tendency that O’Connell Davidson challenges may be an inherent strength of the movement. Inbuilt oppression ought to be corrected across societies, but that is a very slow ship to turn. Why make enslaved people wait until this happens (which very well may be beyond their lifetimes) to experience freedom? While governments—or as O’Connell Davidson would have it, reformed social systems—“in time, may indeed be the most powerful forces against slavery, today they are not.”<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> O’Connell Davidson, 77.

<sup>58</sup> O’Connell Davidson, 208.

<sup>59</sup> O’Connell Davidson, 208.

<sup>60</sup> Bales, *Ending Slavery: How We Free Today’s Slaves*, 82.



Bales argues that it is communities that must commit to “freeing slaves and keeping them free.”<sup>61</sup> He claims that, presently, “the most efficient engine for freeing slaves and keeping them free is when a *community* makes a conscious collective decision to do just that.”<sup>62</sup> Perhaps O’Connell Davidson’s vision of freedom as “a world-building process, a collective and social endeavor” actually has similarities to Bales’s vision of communities rallying against slavery and for freedom. Both could be motivated by the same vision: socially driven freedom with inherent permanence. But where O’Connell Davidson is concerned with shifting the seemingly immovable global objects of liberalism and capitalism to achieve this, Bales is concerned with one community at a time being transformed, from the inside out, by a hunger for freedom and an intolerance for its suppression. O’Connell Davidson’s ideal is, arguably, too narrow in scope and too grand in scale to be useful in understanding freedom from slavery. This is, in part, because she believes the most modern form of “slavery” proper was the transatlantic slave trade and so, unlike Bales, she is not trying to solve the problem of modern slavery—and can hardly be said to believe it exists as defined here.<sup>63</sup> But the idea of freedom as something organically, structurally social in nature is useful and dovetails with ideas already being discussed in today’s antislavery movement.

### Freedom as belonging

Freedom as belonging is the idea of belonging *with* rather than belonging *to*—a common human experience actively denied to slaves both historically and today. Belonging as freedom may sound counter-

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<sup>61</sup> Bales, 82.

<sup>62</sup> Bales, 82 (emphasis added).

<sup>63</sup> O’Connell Davidson, *Modern Slavery: The Margins of Freedom*, 208.

intuitive at first, but it is not meant here in the sense of being owned as property. Instead, it is meant as being “woven into a protective social fabric.”<sup>64</sup> In contrast to the form of belonging that a slaveholder assumes over a slave, this is the idea of “social inclusion or belonging, associated with rights as well as obligations.”<sup>65</sup>

Not belonging is an “appalling” state of “being socially disowned, belonging nowhere, cast adrift, divested of any claim to protection or care.”<sup>66</sup> Laura Brace says that belonging (not freedom) is slavery’s opposite.<sup>67</sup> I would like to build upon her line of thought and suggest belonging as the fourth freedom category in this chapter. A strong statement that belonging is a valid way of talking about freedom is justified because of the way in which freed slaves themselves talk about belonging and freedom. We will consider examples in this section.

In *The Politics of Property*, Brace writes about both the slave as property and the slave’s property—or lack thereof. In short, slaves’ historical exclusion from owning land property is tightly intertwined with slaves’ exclusion from belonging to society. We need to “recognise the connections between freedom and belonging rather than setting them up against each other,” Brace says.<sup>68</sup> She examines property and its history across several political theories, following with a discussion of property and slavery. She explores what has been property’s actual—not strictly theoretical—role in the history of slavery:

Private property has been understood as a distribution of freedom and unfreedom. It is, as C.B. Macpherson pointed out, not to do with the ownership of things but with relations between people. ...

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<sup>64</sup> O’Connell Davidson, 188.

<sup>65</sup> O’Connell Davidson, 188.

<sup>66</sup> O’Connell Davidson, 188.

<sup>67</sup> Brace, *The Politics of Property: Labour, Freedom and Belonging*, 162.

<sup>68</sup> Brace, 182.

Envisioning property as a relation between people and as a bundle of rights involves emphasising in particular the rights to use and enjoy, to exclude others and to alienate. ...

... Modern freedom, caught up with private property, is then about not being a slave, being secure from interference and being in a position to expect the quiet enjoyment of a private life.<sup>69</sup>

Viewed through this lens, “the injustice of slavery is not the lack of self-ownership by the slave but the way in which [the slave’s] interests in material well-being, autonomy and dignity are not recognised as significant, and are only ‘marginally and insecurely protected.’”<sup>70</sup>

Furthermore, it is not the idea that a slave belongs to his or her master, in and of itself, that is problematic, but “the *comprehensive* extent of the property rights claimed by the slave owner.”<sup>71</sup> After all, everyone exercises some ownership over others, and others exercise some ownership over all of us; Brace gives the examples of “employers, spouses and football clubs all [exercising] some of the powers attaching to the right of ownership over their employees, spouses and players.”<sup>72</sup> She homes in on the fact that, historically, slaves have either been unable to own property or unable to own it with security. In societies where property ownership endowed a person with agency, it is clear that slaves had, at best, limited agency and that their “legitimate interests in material well being, autonomy and dignity,” were tenuous at best.<sup>73</sup> Brace concludes that “slavery is not simply about the legal system or hard labour. It also has to be about individuals’ relations to each other, their imagined communities and their sense of personhood.”<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Brace, 1.

<sup>70</sup> Brace, 162.

<sup>71</sup> Brace, 164 (emphasis original).

<sup>72</sup> Brace, 164.

<sup>73</sup> Brace, 164.

<sup>74</sup> Brace, 164–65.

Some survivors of slavery support the argument that belonging is slavery's positive opposite. These examples come from history, as well as from contemporary survivor narratives. Clarke describes freedom as having ownership over one's own physical body and as—ideally—having the opportunity to live out one's days among one's chosen community. He says, that, upon arriving in Canada where he finally felt free, he relished

the feeling that *one* of the limbs of my body was my own. The slaves often say, when cut in the hand or foot, 'Plague on the old foot' or 'the old hand; it is master's—let him take care of it.' ... My hands, my feet, were now my own. But what to do with them, was the next question. ...

And could I make that country ever seem like *home*? Some people are very much afraid that all the slaves will run up north, if they are ever free. But I can assure them that they will run *back* again, if they do. If I could have been assured of my freedom in Kentucky, then, I would have given anything in the world for the prospect of spending my life among my old acquaintances.<sup>75</sup>

Douglass speaks of freedom as belonging among one's fellow men.

Douglass's experience after escaping his last master was rife with reminders of his former status as a slave. He dismissed the idea that a freed slave could ever be truly free in a slave state and described life in even the friendliest free state as only a "near approach to freedom."<sup>76</sup> What was this near approach? In Massachusetts, the free state to which Douglass refers here, a Black man could hold "any office in the state," and Black children "went to school *side by side* with white children."<sup>77</sup> These are examples of belonging to a community. Furthermore, in a letter Douglass wrote during his time overseas, he contrasts his experience in America (Massachusetts notwithstanding) to his experience in the UK. There, he was "*seated beside* white people ... *shown into the same* parlor,"

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<sup>75</sup> Clarke and Lovejoy, "Narrative of Lewis Clarke," 622–23 (emphasis original).

<sup>76</sup> Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, 255.

<sup>77</sup> Douglass, 255 (emphasis added).

he dined "*at the same table--and no one [was] offended,*" and he was admitted "into any place of worship, instruction, or amusement *on equal terms*" with Whites.<sup>78</sup>

In *To Plead Our Own Cause*, modern slavery survivors share similar sentiments. Kavita's story tells how she and her sister were trafficked into domestic servitude when they were both children. Kavita says their traffickers

made every single effort to break my bond with my sister. I was tied and thrown into a room like a piece of furniture. I had clear instructions ... to have no contact with her—almost like I didn't exist. ... In front of me, my sister was beaten up, tortured, made to work every day. I couldn't console her. It was crazy. This was my sister, someone I shared every single moment of my life with. There was no bond. ... I can't think beyond the fact that there's a possibility I will never meet her again. The pain is so deep. I'm alone.<sup>79</sup>

Jean-Robert speaks of exclusion—of not belonging—as "one of the worst forms of abuse" facing the estimated hundreds of thousands of children enslaved as domestic servants in Haiti.<sup>80</sup> He says these children

set tables for meals in which they cannot partake, fetch water that they cannot use for their own needs ... are forbidden to speak until spoken to, and stay outside when adults are inside. While these children are forced to be invisible, they must remain within the reach of their master's voice. ... [They are] invisible children, observers instead of participants in their own society.<sup>81</sup>

He describes a deeply rooted exclusion experienced by Haitian slave children, who are barred from school, church, major holiday celebrations, and family occasions: exclusion from their own society and culture.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Douglass, 273 (emphasis added).

<sup>79</sup> Bales and Trodd, *To Plead Our Own Cause: Personal Stories by Today's Slaves*, 138.

<sup>80</sup> Bales and Trodd, 201–2.

<sup>81</sup> Bales and Trodd, 202.

<sup>82</sup> Bales and Trodd, 203.

Jean-Robert was, himself, a child slave in Haiti who experienced this exclusion. He was brought to the US by the family who enslaved him. There, he was eventually expelled from the family's home. But he describes this moment in his story not in terms of freedom from slavery (or in terms of the complexity of being newly independent, which we have previously had cause to consider in Douglass's and Jill's stories), but in terms of inclusion. He says, "the fact that I was attending school, participating in extracurricular activities, and eating in the cafeteria with my fellow students made me an integral part of American society."<sup>83</sup>

Dwain was trafficked among his own relatives in Niger, France, Italy, and the UK. But though he was serving his own family, "he was not treated as a member of the family, and was made to feel dirty, illegitimate, lesser, and in his own words 'discarded.'"<sup>84</sup> Although freed from his traffickers, Dwain revealed in an interview featured in Nicholson, Dang, and Trodd's paper that he does not yet experience freedom. Dwain told the researchers,

In a simplistic way then [freedom is] just to be able to travel you know ... if you go to that travel agency and say can I get a flight to Tenerife please and the following week I'm there. That would be freedom to me. ... [The ability to travel and have a passport is] so symbolic that I would probably keel over and cry in front of anybody because what that's shown me is finally what I've strived for forever, *which is acceptance*.<sup>85</sup>

Viewing belonging as antithetical to slavery provokes consideration of slavery not as a positively qualified thing—possession of one person by another—but as a set of exclusions or absences: absence from one's own family, absence from society, exclusion from theoretically universal

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<sup>83</sup> Bales and Trodd, 203.

<sup>84</sup> Nicholson, Dang, and Trodd, "A Full Freedom," 14.

<sup>85</sup> Nicholson, Dang, and Trodd, 17 (emphasis added).

human rights. In this view, slavery is the absence of those things rather than the presence of ownership. It is a void. Because one person cannot belong to another as inhuman property does in the first place, slavery is not perverted belonging but a vacuum of belonging by exclusion. This category requires us to step outside of our view that belonging to someone has been the slave's problem all along. Slavery, in theory and in practice, "makes clear that freedom is inextricable from belonging."<sup>86</sup>

Brace's approach is grounded in the philosophy of property. It is a useful application of political theory and a promising way of considering not only the problems of slavery and freedom, but possible solutions to them. In a world of real people suffering slavery in the present moment, one of my criticisms of O'Connell Davidson is that she is advocating systemic change—all or nothing. It must be granted that this is what Brace asks us to move toward as well. But Brace's way of thinking can be engineered into single-community—or even individual—applications in the short term and resonates with the words of survivors who have told their stories. Long-term, systemic change is unhurried and holds little to no promise for those whose lived experience is presently characterized by suffering.

### Closing thoughts

In this section, I have established that there are four themes under which discussions around freedom from slavery can be organized. Those four themes are freedom as a moment in time, freedom as a transition, freedom as a social reality, and freedom as belonging. One thing that seems clear from this exercise is that the categories of thinking about freedom from slavery can be independently considered but also overlap

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<sup>86</sup> Brace, *The Politics of Property: Labour, Freedom and Belonging*, 11.

and sometimes complement each other. I believe this is a useful, necessary foundation for my larger project of deriving a definition of freedom from the understandings of individuals affected by slavery.

The first stage of a Q methodology study is to build a concourse. I will discuss the concourse at length in Chapter 3, where I will also describe the means by which participants engaged the four themes around freedom during this study. For now, what is relevant is that building a concourse required me to survey the range of existing thought and dialogue (both formal and informal) around the topic of freedom from slavery. In addition to the sources discussed in this literature review, I explored sources such as newspaper articles, NGO reports, and conversations recorded through various means. Some of the ideas about freedom I collected from those sources correlated with the categories discussed above, although it must be said that the four categories were insufficient to contain the majority of the ideas I discovered.

For the remainder of this chapter, I will shift focus from themes around freedom to key pieces of legislation and policy. The items reviewed in the section below do not constitute a comprehensive list of antislavery legislation and policy but they do, in many ways, set the focus of the antislavery movement and inform the experiences of survivors who receive support after slavery.

## LEGISLATION AND FREEDOM

Given the impact of antislavery legislation on survivors' lives, it is important that we consider how freedom is treated in this specific type of literature as well. What follows is an introduction to an international, legal conception of slavery and an overview of the domestic antislavery legislation in both the UK and the US. It is important to note that, in each



country, any individual may benefit from a variety of additional legislation—for example, legal provisions or processes concerning asylum seekers, refugees, or victims of domestic violence.

### The international context

The 2000 Palermo Protocol prohibits and criminalizes trafficking in persons. This protocol, and others that followed it, inform parties' legal definitions of human trafficking, specifically. Antislavery communities commonly frame human trafficking as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons” by means of “force,” “fraud,” or “coercion” with the aim of exploitation. When they do, they are using language that comes from the Palermo Protocol's definition of trafficking.<sup>87</sup> The Protocol also requires that “each State Party shall consider implementing measures to provide for the physical, psychological and social recovery of victims,” and though it lists specific provisions such as housing, it does not make any reference to freedom.<sup>88</sup> States party to the Palermo Protocol include the UK and the US.

The Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines on the Legal Parameters of Slavery updated the international, legal norm for understanding slavery. The authors of the Guidelines began with the 1926 definition of slavery advanced by the League of Nations. That is, “the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of

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<sup>87</sup> United Nations, Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Art. 3. NB: The Palermo Protocol focuses on trafficking as transnational organized crime, but most countries party to the Protocol take a wider view of trafficking as informed by additional international obligations, “to encompass domestic trafficking by any perpetrator,” per Schwarz and Allain, “Antislavery in Domestic Legislation: An Empirical Analysis of National Prohibition Globally,” 22.

<sup>88</sup> United Nations, Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Art. 6.

ownership are exercised.”<sup>89</sup> The resulting Guidelines offer

definitional breakthrough as to what is meant by the term ‘slavery’ in the contemporary context, where abolition has taken place and legal slavery no longer exists.

The Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines develop an understanding of the 1926 definition of slavery – the definition accepted by the international community of States – by laying fundamental emphasis on control. In so doing, the Guidelines are both faithful to the property paradigm in which definition was cast; and they capture the lived experience of those who find themselves forced into modern slavery. The Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines on the Legal Parameters of Slavery point the way by allowing a determination as to whether slavery exists by asking the question: was control tantamount to possession exercised?<sup>90</sup>

The Guidelines define that control as possession, which “supposes control over a person by another such as a person might control a thing.”<sup>91</sup> The Guidelines delineate indicators that such control is being exercised. These include, but are not limited to, buying, selling, transferring, or using a person.<sup>92</sup>

Like the country-specific legislation that will be discussed below, neither the 1926 Slavery Convention, the Palermo Protocol, nor the Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines are primarily interested in freedom from slavery. We could reverse the statements concerning slavery in the Guidelines to derive a theory of freedom from them. This would yield, for example, the principle that a person is free if the powers attaching to the right of ownership are not exercised over her. A series of these principles could be produced by moving systematically through the Guidelines in

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<sup>89</sup> League of Nations, Slavery Convention.

<sup>90</sup> Queen’s University Belfast, “Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines on the Legal Parameters of Slavery.”

<sup>91</sup> Research Network on the Legal Parameters of Slavery, “Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines on the Legal Parameters of Slavery,” 2.

<sup>92</sup> Research Network on the Legal Parameters of Slavery, 3.

this way. But that exercise would produce what is essentially a list of negative liberties enjoyed by a person who is not enslaved—such a person would be free from being bought, or sold, or transferred, for example. This would not help us to understand what freedom from slavery is—only what slavery is not. We cannot discount the importance of this legal definition of slavery, or the fact that its opposite can outline some important realities experienced by free people, but we must acknowledge that such a definition of freedom would be insubstantial.

### The United Kingdom

There are three relevant policies in the UK: the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), the Modern Slavery Strategy, and the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (MSA).

The NRM has been in place since 2009 and is revised periodically. The NRM is “the process by which people who may have been trafficked are identified, referred, assessed and supported by the Government.”<sup>93</sup> Survivor support in the NRM is delivered by NGOs under Home Office contracts, and specific support provisions are prescribed based on Article 12 of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.<sup>94</sup> Potential victims of slavery enter the NRM by means of a referral from a designated “first responder” who has reason to believe that an act of slavery has taken place. After a referral is made, a potential victim can begin to receive support funded by the government through the Adult Victims of Modern Slavery Care and Coordination Services Contract (VCC). They will only enter the NRM formally upon receiving a

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<sup>93</sup> Home Office, “Review of the National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Human Trafficking,” 11.

<sup>94</sup> Council of Europe, Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

positive “reasonable grounds” decision, meaning that the authority who reviewed their referral agrees that there is the potential that the referred person is a victim of slavery. Upon entering the NRM, an individual is entitled to accommodation in a safe house (if necessary) and support in a “reflection and recovery” period, during which the potential victim’s case is further investigated and a “conclusive grounds” decision is made. This decision confirms whether the Home Office recognizes the individual as a confirmed victim of slavery.<sup>95</sup> A positive conclusive grounds decision entitles a victim to support, the duration of which is based on their individualized needs assessment.<sup>96</sup>

The Modern Slavery Strategy describes the “comprehensive cross-Government approach to tackling modern slavery” in the UK.<sup>97</sup> It lays out how NGOs, the police, the National Crime Agency, the Home Office, and other statutory or government organizations are expected to work together to combat slavery in the UK. The expected actions and outcomes for everyone involved are categorized under the headings Pursue, Prevent, Protect, and Prepare. Despite the claim in the Strategy’s forward that, “we must do all we can to protect, support and help victims, and ensure that they can be returned to freedom,” the strategy offers no clear conception of what freedom is.<sup>98</sup> Any points in the strategy that might contribute to a victim’s experience of freedom are contained under the Prepare heading’s promise of “improved protection and support for

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<sup>95</sup> National Crime Agency, “National Referral Mechanism.” This process describes the NRM under the Adult Victims of Modern Slavery Care and Co-ordination Services contract. The NRM also exists in Northern Ireland and Scotland, though the VCC is held by different NGOs. There is also a process for children to receive support through the NRM.

<sup>96</sup> Home Office, “Recovery Needs Assessment (RNA), Version 3.0.”

<sup>97</sup> HM Government, “Modern Slavery Strategy,” 9.

<sup>98</sup> HM Government, 6.

victims.”<sup>99</sup> This is not to criticize the Strategy as a whole, or to void its well-intentioned, theoretically straightforward solutions to slavery. However, it seems curious to create a strategy with a goal of restoring victims’ freedom without a clear definition of freedom.

In 2015 the UK passed the MSA—more similar to the US Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (TVPA) than the previous two policies described. The MSA accomplishes several important things in UK efforts against slavery. First, it establishes the role of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, who is tasked “to encourage good practice in the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of slavery and human trafficking offences, as well as in the identification of victims.”<sup>100</sup> The Act also requires businesses earning £36 million or more annually, who do business in the UK, to produce a slavery and human trafficking statement delineating the commitments they will keep to ensure their supply chains are slavery-free.<sup>101</sup> Additionally, it aims to enable the arrest and prosecution of perpetrators and establishes stringent punishments for slavery crimes. It also provides some assistance to victims of slavery through reparations, by means of assets seized from traffickers, special advocates for child victims, and legal protection for victims who were compelled to commit a criminal offence during their enslavement, to name a few of its provisions. The MSA does not make specific mention of freedom. As with the Harvard-Bellagio Guidelines and the TVPA, discussed below, a theory of freedom would have to be pieced together from the various elements of the Modern Slavery Strategy or the MSA.

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<sup>99</sup> HM Government, 5.

<sup>100</sup> The Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, “The Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner.”

<sup>101</sup> Modern Slavery Act 2015.

## The United States

The TVPA “is the cornerstone of US efforts to combat human trafficking.”<sup>102</sup> It addresses the country’s commitments to trafficking victims abroad as well as within the US. Since this thesis is focused on the antislavery movement within the UK and US, though, I will not be discussing the parts of the TVPA governing commitments abroad.

The TVPA was passed in 2000 and has been reauthorized five times, expanding with each iteration. The latest reauthorization was spread across four bills.<sup>103</sup> Each of the TVPA’s provisions can be categorized under the three main focuses of the Act: protection, prosecution, and prevention, often referred to as the three P’s. Among its key impacts upon the lives of trafficking victims are the classification of human trafficking and related activities as federal crimes; a provision for victims to receive restitution; the T visa, giving victims and their families temporary US residency and a pathway to permanent residency; the ability for victims to file suits against perpetrators; and protections against deportation.<sup>104</sup>

But how does freedom factor in to the TVPA? The Act appeals to the Declaration of Independence’s recognition of “the inherent dignity and worth of all people” and calls the negative liberty of freedom from slavery an “unalienable” right.<sup>105</sup> The 2003 reauthorization mentions freedom only in passing and, in that instance, treats freedom as a moment in

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<sup>102</sup> Office for Victims of Crime and Bureau of Justice Assistance, “Human Trafficking Task Force E-Guide.”

<sup>103</sup> Kristen Wells, “The 2019 Trafficking Victims Protection Act: A Topical Summary and Analysis of Four Bills” (Polaris Project, 2019), 3, <https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Polaris-TVPRA-2019-Analysis.pdf> and Polaris Project, “Policy & Legislation.”

<sup>104</sup> Polaris Project, “Policy & Legislation.”

<sup>105</sup> Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, sec. 102.b.22.

time.<sup>106</sup> Other than these occurrences, freedom is not mentioned in the TVPA or its reauthorizations. None of the four bills comprising the 2019 reauthorization make mention of freedom.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have introduced the need for a definition of freedom from slavery. I have also named the assumptions I made as I entered into the discourse around freedom. Furthermore, I have identified four ways of speaking about freedom that have emerged as patterns in relevant literature. Finally, I have offered an overview of relevant UK and US modern slavery legislation and policy.

This thesis addresses a central issue with the literature: the lack of a shared, substantial understanding of freedom that articulates positive liberties and helps map out practical pathways for attaining them. Murphy says that, “With few exceptions, scholars of slavery rarely engage the intricacies of freedom, and scholars of freedom rarely engage the realities of slavery, further exacerbating the difficulty of defining freedom.”<sup>107</sup> This thesis steps into that gap.

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<sup>106</sup> 108th Congress of the United States of America, The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003.

<sup>107</sup> Murphy, *The New Slave Narrative*, 71.





## CHAPTER 2

# METHODOLOGY

*A wonderful fact to reflect upon, that every human creature is constituted to be that profound secret and mystery to every other. A solemn consideration, when I enter a great city by night, that every one of those darkly clustered houses encloses its own secret; that every room in every one of them encloses its own secret; that every beating heart in the hundreds of thousands of breasts there, is, in some of its imaginings, a secret to the heart nearest it!*

*-Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities*

*How then can one observe the inner-self of someone else scientifically? Stephenson's answer was Q methodology.*

*-Susan Ramlo and Isadore Newman*

I could have answered the question, "What is freedom from slavery?" by examining political theories and testing them within antislavery communities. But in the process of preparing the literature review and considering the research design for this study, I realized that I was not actually interested in whether any existing theory—political or otherwise—could overlay neatly on the landscape of today's antislavery movement. Rather, I was after an understanding of what ideas operate on the ground to shape that landscape—what freedom *is*, in its substance, to the actors closest to it. Those ideas may or may not align with formal, academic political theories. Whether they do is an interesting question but

is immaterial to my objective and, I would argue, to the field's development.

The conceptions of freedom held by individuals within the antislavery field operate both actively and passively on policy and practice, depending on the role each individual plays. Though these conceptions are not often stated explicitly, they inform practitioners' approaches to challenges faced by clients, advocacy priorities, restitution sought through prosecutions, and monitoring and evaluation targets. In short, what stakeholders believe operates on how they behave. In this way, beliefs shape and change the world. I wanted to discover the beliefs about freedom that are shaping the antislavery field. Q methodology is uniquely capable of accomplishing this. This study utilizes Q to capture, understand, and represent the conceptions of freedom held by individuals affected by slavery.

This chapter is part operational (sometimes focusing on very specific, pragmatic details) and part theoretical (at other times exploring the foundational ideas behind Q methodology). First, I will define key terms that are particular to Q and this study. Next, I will describe the five stages of a Q study and the structure of a typical research session. I will then discuss why I chose to invite participants from the three stakeholder groups included in this study and how they were recruited. The focus of this chapter will then turn to the theoretical. I will explain why Q is the methodology best suited to the research question. This will lead to a discussion about whether Q is a mixed method or its own methodology and what role subjectivity plays in Q.

## Q TERMINOLOGY

A basic overview of a typical research session in this study will set

the context for the Q terminology introduced in this section. In one-to-one research sessions, participants were given a stack of cards displaying phrases or sentences that others have used to describe freedom from slavery. They were asked to divide and sort the cards in different ways. An interview followed the card-sorting activities. This was the full extent of my engagement with each participant. These activities were my means of collecting data and allowed me to record each participant's unique answer to the question, "What is freedom from slavery?" I will go into greater detail about the research design and research sessions later in this chapter. Everything that follows here and in the following chapters assumes a basic understanding of the research activities and the terminology defined below.

The first important term is *concourse*. The *concourse* in Q has been described as the "universe of statements that could be said around any topic of interest."<sup>108</sup> It can be established by means of exploring everyday conversation about the topic, gray literature, news articles, pop culture references, scholarly articles, and more. *Concourse* material does not have to be restricted to words and could, for example, include images or tangible items.<sup>109</sup> In this study, the *concourse* included text-based material as well as audio, image-based, and video material. All of the ideas from these materials were converted to text because the Q sample (defined below) was text-based in this study.

Q sample is the second important term. The Q sample is developed from the *concourse*. It is meant to be as representative of the *concourse* as possible but of a more manageable volume for participants. The Q sample in this study was a deck of 49 printed, laminated cards, each with

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<sup>108</sup> *Q Methodology (a Taster)*.

<sup>109</sup> van Exel and de Graaf, "Q Methodology: A Sneak Preview."

The act of sorting the Q sample onto the Q mat and the final result of the sorting are called a Q sort. I often say that a participant completed a Q sort or gave a Q sort. Image 1 shows a completed Q sort. (The green and red placards with an alphanumeric code represent the participant's anonymized identification code, and they are not a part of the Q sort.)



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## THE STAGES OF A Q STUDY

Q studies progress through five basic stages, as follows:

1. Developing the concourse
2. Refining the Q sample
3. Deciding the P sample
4. Collecting the data
5. Analyzing the data

These stages are described below. The first two, developing the concourse and refining the Q sample, will be discussed at length in Chapter 3.

In the first stage, developing the concourse, a Q researcher familiarizes herself with the concourse on the topic at hand; in this case, the topic is freedom. When the concourse reaches saturation (that is, no new ideas can be found), the researcher must organize the concourse, consider combining or eliminating duplicate ideas, and transition into the second stage. Developing the concourse was one of the two most time-intensive stages; the other was data collection (Stage 4).

The second stage is refining the Q sample, or deciding which statements participants will be given to sort. The end result of this in a text-based Q study is a set of cards, each displaying a phrase or sentence that represents an aspect of the concourse. The Q sample is representative of the whole concourse. It is important that the Q deck contains statements that are as true as possible to the parts of the concourse they represent. Sometimes, these statements can be taken directly from the concourse without alteration, while other statements are the consolidation of similar or lengthy ideas.

When this stage was nearly complete, I conducted four pilot research sessions with colleagues at the University of Nottingham. I was still refining the Q sample at this time and used the pilot sessions not only

to practice leading participants through a Q sort, but to make a final decision about which statements would remain in the Q deck and which would be edited or eliminated. For example, there was one statement in the pilot Q sample that was sorted by every participant into the extreme Disagree side of the mat. I eliminated that statement because it seemed that it would take up a predictable position in Q sorts at the expense of capturing nuance for other cards that participants may otherwise place there. I eliminated another statement for a similar reason. These statements both represented unique parts of the concourse, but I had previously considered eliminating them from the Q sample; the pilot sessions validated my intuition on this point.

Printed research materials could only be ordered when this second stage of the study was complete; the decisions made while refining the Q sample impacted not only which cards would be printed for the Q deck, but how many boxes the grid on the Q mat would contain.

The third stage is deciding the P sample, the set of people who are going to participate in the study. I knew from the beginning of this study which cohorts (groups of participants) I would invite to participate. However, it was not until the third stage that I decided which antislavery communities to reach out to and began extending invitations. This study ultimately included 73 participants—30 from the UK and 43 from the US.

The fourth stage is data collection—in this case, site visits and fieldwork. Between November 2018 and August 2019, I spent approximately one month on-site with each antislavery community. It was important to be specific and careful in the instructions I gave participants during research sessions. The pilot Q sorts had helped me to refine the possible ways to deliver and explain these instructions. Prior to a Q sort, participants were instructed to think specifically about freedom from

modern slavery (or “human trafficking” in Scotland and the US). They were not supposed to think about the broad concept of freedom at large, freedom as a political value, or the like. I give detail about the eight stages or activities involved in a research session in the “Research session procedures” section below.

The fifth and final stage is analyzing the data. This involved two steps. The first step was factor analysis. Factors are blocks of shared meaning or shared perspectives—“subjectivities [or] those perspectives that cluster people together who think similarly.”<sup>110</sup> These make up the main components of findings in a Q study. In this study, each factor represents one shared conception of freedom. These findings are presented in Chapters 4 and 5. Ken-Q and KADE are two of the software options for Q factor analysis. Ken-Q is web-based, and KADE is its desktop version. I used both.

Many researchers rotate their factors during analysis by centering a factor around a key participant. This is called judgmental or by-hand rotation and can be very useful for acknowledging certain real-world dynamics. For example, if a Q study were to explore the question, “How should British Airways adjust its business model to maximize financial recovery from the global travel disruption caused by COVID-19?” and the P sample included flight crews, schedule planning team employees, and the airline’s executive leadership team, the researcher might center one factor around the CEO’s Q sort. The CEO’s perspective would be highly pertinent to the research question because of his position in the company, and it would be useful to know how many participants—and which ones—held perspectives similar to his. These participants would be included in the same factor as the CEO; participants with different perspectives would be

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<sup>110</sup> *Q Methodology (a Taster)*.

included in other factors. I did not rotate factors, choosing instead an option called varimax rotation. I made this decision on the grounds that I was working with a larger dataset (by some Q standards) and “the majority viewpoints *of the group*” were my “main concern.”<sup>111</sup> My decision requires some justification by means of explanation.

During varimax rotation, the software produces the factors that will explain the greatest amount of shared meaning across as many factors as necessary, “revealing a subject matter from viewpoints that almost everybody might recognize and consider to be of importance.”<sup>112</sup> This was precisely my goal during the analysis stage; I was attempting to understand freedom *as it is viewed across the antislavery field* and had chosen Q partly because of its inbuilt mechanisms for eliminating researcher bias. (I will elaborate on the latter point later in this chapter.) Steven Brown, though he has said that varimax has its place under certain circumstances, has also made known his preference for judgmental rotation in no uncertain terms—often appealing to William Stephenson’s original vision for Q.<sup>113</sup> On the particular point of choosing between judgmental and varimax rotation, Brown and Richard Robyn say,

That scientists carry prejudices and paradigm fixations of one sort or another into their labs ... cannot be denied, but it is also the case that, like cooks in their kitchens, carpenters in their workshops, and all other humans in their natural habitats, scientists enter a data domain armed with considerable knowledge about their subject matter based on readings, past experiments, prolonged and intermittent ponderings, discussions with colleagues, and other experiences. Given this wealth of knowledge, much of it tacit and perhaps incapable of articulation, it seems unprofitable on the face of it to set this advantage aside in favor of the kind of coin toss that varimax and other predetermined solutions provide. Such

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<sup>111</sup> Watts and Stenner, *Doing Q Methodological Research*, 125 (emphasis original).

<sup>112</sup> Watts and Stenner, 126 (emphasis original).

<sup>113</sup> As quoted in Watts and Stenner, 122. William Stephenson created Q methodology.



conventional solutions, of course, guarantee that prejudices play no role at the analytic stage, but they also assure that the scientist's prior knowledge does not apply either; moreover, such prefabricated solutions are subject to erratic vicissitudes and can lead to quite erroneous conclusions. Given the choice between guarding against bias and leaving out knowledge and experience, conventional practitioners of nonjudgmental factor analysis have exercised poor judgment.<sup>114</sup>

Brown has also called on Q researchers to adopt judgmental rotation as the more “sophisticated” approach and suggested that researchers cannot be serious Q methodologists if they are not using judgmental rotation.<sup>115</sup>

There are many counterarguments that could be made to these (rather provocative) pronouncements. The crux of my response for the purposes of this chapter is that I did not choose varimax because I lacked the confidence to use judgmental rotation or because varimax was easier to explain in a doctoral thesis (as Brown recently suggested is the motive for some<sup>116</sup>). Rather, I chose it precisely because it was better suited to my aim of capturing the previously unobserved conceptions of freedom from across the antislavery field. Brown and Robyn consider a researcher's prior “readings, past experiments, prolonged and intermittent ponderings, discussions with colleagues, and other experiences” an “advantage” that should be brought to bear during factor analysis.<sup>117</sup> But with no extant, movement-wide engagement over the topic of freedom, it was important to me that I use Q to obtain a snapshot of the underlying or implicit conversation around freedom as-is and to understand which participant voices were in concert with one another already—not to order the data

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<sup>114</sup> Brown and Robyn, “Reserving a Key Place for Reality: Philosophical Foundations of Theoretical Rotation,” 120–21.

<sup>115</sup> “In Conversation with Professor Steven Brown.”

<sup>116</sup> “In Conversation with Professor Steven Brown.”

<sup>117</sup> Brown and Robyn, “Reserving a Key Place for Reality: Philosophical Foundations of Theoretical Rotation,” 121.

and findings according to my own logic or even my own expertise. Given the very occasion for this study, what useful ideas about freedom could I possibly bring to the factor analysis stage? And what justification could there be for me to choose whose voice to privilege or platform above others?

Brown and Robyn underestimate the researcher's ability to exercise her knowledge of the field in guarding against false conclusions and detecting any "erratic vicissitudes" produced during varimax rotation.<sup>118</sup> A researcher exercising critical thinking would be able to make such assessments when synthesizing interviews with the factor analysis. If varimax produced factors that seemed random, wildly unfamiliar to the researcher, or wildly unlikely given her prior experience and interviews with participants, she would have the opportunity to switch to judgmental rotation or to keep the factors as they were and comment on just that. Beyond this function, though, I argue it was more appropriate in the discussion phase of this research project—outside the stages particular to a Q study—that I introduce or appeal to my own knowledge of the antislavery field in earnest.

The second step in the analysis stage was interview transcription and analysis. Not all Q studies include interviews, but many do; it is considered best practice. I used Transcribe by Wreally, a web-based service, to automatically transcribe interviews. I then reviewed and cleaned the transcripts. Unlike in a study where interviewing is the primary method of data collection, interviews in a Q study help to explain or interpret the factors produced during factor analysis. Among many other questions, I had asked participants why they sorted the Q deck in the way they did, if they thought any ideas were missing from the deck,

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<sup>118</sup> Brown and Robyn, 121.

and what they might say to someone who placed a specific statement on the opposite side of the grid than they did. Participants' answers were instrumental in understanding the context, depth, and reasons behind the conceptions of freedom represented in the factors. The factors themselves—whether the output of judgmental or varimax rotation—are not complete as findings. They must be illuminated by qualitative data collected in interviews.

## RESEARCH SESSION PROCEDURES

Research sessions in this study progressed through the following activities:

1. Greetings
2. Paperwork
3. Pre-write
4. Pre-read
5. Pre-sort
6. Q sort
7. Interview
8. Recording data

The ideal length of a research session was 90 minutes, although many participants scheduled only an hour to meet with me, and so I became adept at running a 60-minute session. A small number of sessions took less than 60 minutes. This was not ideal, but the key data—the Q sort—was collected without compromise in every session, regardless of duration. In improvising and trimming sessions, I always made decisions that would protect the Q sort activity.

Research sessions always opened with greetings, which were brief and friendly but also purposeful. This was a chance for me to thank

participants for their time and interest. Depending on how much each participant knew about the study before our research session, it was also an opportunity for me to describe the project. I would describe how our research session would be structured and might also try to reassure participants that there was no correct or incorrect way of completing the upcoming activities; I simply and sincerely wanted to learn their unique, subjective perspective on freedom. I usually told participants that I was intentionally waiting to learn more about their roles in the local antislavery community until after the Q sort was complete because I did not want to begin interpreting their sort through any assumptions I might form on that basis.

Next, it was necessary to spend some time on paperwork. Participants had the opportunity to review the participant information sheet (which many had received in advance) and ask any questions. The information sheets for the law enforcement (LE), survivor (VMS), and victim service provider (VSP) cohorts were identical, except for the way they referred to the participant in the section entitled, "Why have you been invited?" and the fact that the VMS sheet offered participants the opportunity to have a trusted individual present during the research session. One VMS participant made use of this provision. Participants were then asked to review and sign the consent form. I always offered a copy of this for participants' records. I typically then described events three through six as the four "main activities" of the session.

During the pre-write activity, I gave participants blank notecards and asked the question, "What is freedom from modern slavery?" or, often, "What does freedom from modern slavery mean to you?" I told them there was no correct format (participants answered in phrases, sentences, single words, or whole paragraphs) and no limit to how many

answers they could write. I read participants' responses on the consent form and completed the electronic Q Sort intake form on my laptop or on my phone while they completed this activity. It was not until the 13th research session that I began placing this activity after the paperwork; during the first 12 sessions, the pre-write took place following the interview. But I determined it was useful for setting the stage—mentally—for participants to steep in their own subjectivity on the topic of freedom before exposing them to the Q sample.

Except in rare instances where time was very limited, I asked participants to read through the Q deck in advance of the two sorting activities. I called this the pre-read. This was an opportunity for participants to familiarize themselves with the statements printed on the cards they would be sorting and discussing for the remainder of the research session, and to ask for clarification if they had any questions regarding the meaning of the statements. Most participants read through the cards carefully during this activity, and only rarely did they ask questions about the meaning of any statements. They did not yet know the mechanics of the pre-sort or the Q sort activities. During the pre-read, I would familiarize myself with any cards that a participant wrote during the pre-write.

The next activity was the pre-sort. During this activity I placed laminated, colored placards labelled Agree, Neutral, and Disagree on the table and asked participants to sort the statements into three piles—one on each placard—based on how each statement resonated with their own understanding of freedom. I usually instructed them to take their time during the pre-sort and would explain that this activity would form the basis of the next activity—which I called the “main event” of the research session.

I was intentional about keeping the Q mat out of sight until it was time for the next activity: the Q sort. This was to avoid influencing participants' treatment of the statements during the pre-read and pre-sort. Image 2 shows the grid that was printed on the Q mat. The Q sort required a high level of direction from me and a high level of mental engagement from participants. They were asked to fill in the grid one column at a time, alternating between the left-hand side (Agree) and right-hand side (Disagree), until finally filling in the center column. I began by asking participants to choose the two cards from their Agree pre-sort pile that they most strongly agreed with. Those two cards were placed in the boxes of the left-most column on the grid. I then asked participants to choose the two cards from their Disagree pre-sort pile that they most strongly disagreed with. Those two cards were placed in the boxes of the right-most column on the grid. Some participants had chosen not to put any cards in their pre-sort Disagree pile. In those instances, I asked participants to choose from the pre-sort Neutral pile the two cards they were least inclined toward. We continued filling alternating columns on the grid until every box was filled.

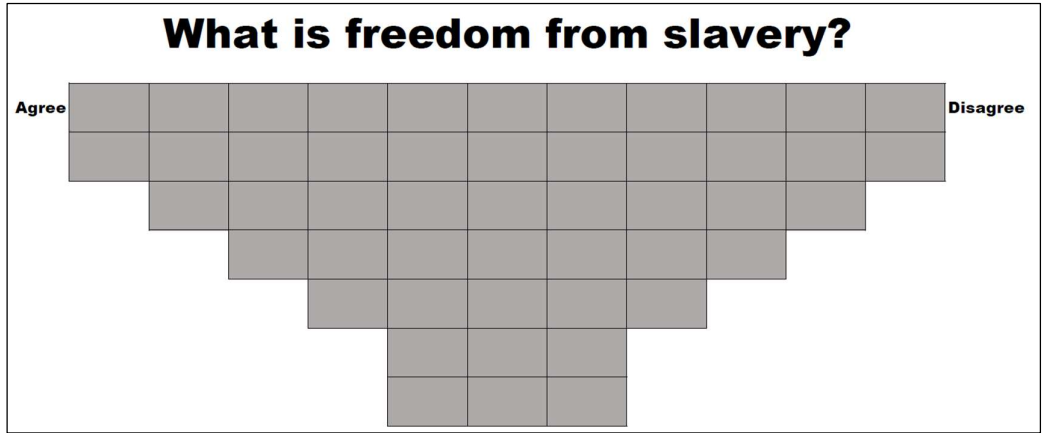


Image 2: The grid as printed on the Q mat

Participants were not asked to designate an order for the cards within a single column. This is because, within a column, all the cards are given equal weight in factor analysis. From a participant's perspective, this meant that I was asking them to rank sets of cards (with each column representing one set) rather than to rank all 49 statements individually. Each column would receive a score, as seen in Image 3. In Q methodology, scores are assigned to columns on the grid rather than to the individual boxes on the grid. I chose not to print the scores on the Q mat because I did not want to distract, confuse, or influence participants with the numbers. This was my personal preference and was generally agreed upon by colleagues who participated in the pilot research sessions. The scores for each column of statements are input during factor analysis.

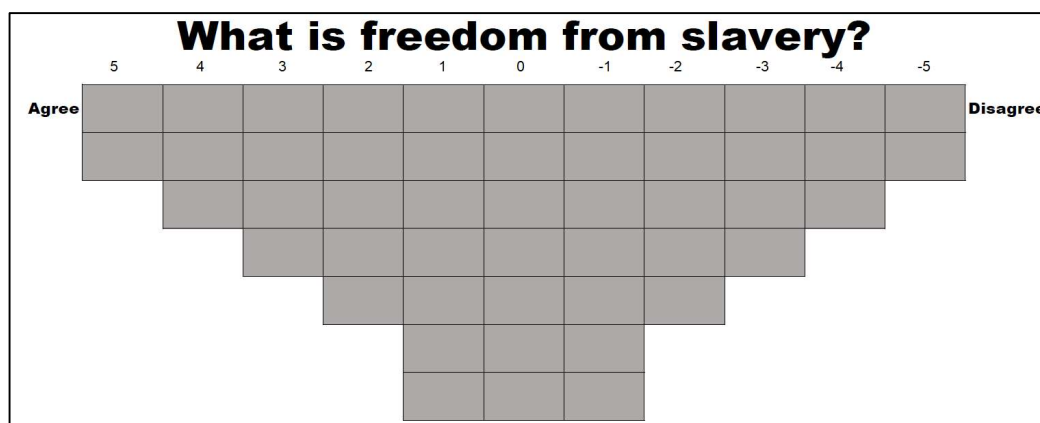


Image 3: The grid showing scores for each column

As participants filled in the columns on the grid, I used dry erase markers to color code each card, indicating which pre-sort pile it had been taken from. This is not formally necessary to secure sound data in Q studies. I chose to record this so that I could understand, during the analysis stage, how participants felt about each statement and whether their feelings toward it corresponded to the words Agree and Disagree as printed on the grid. This was a useful exercise because, as Images 4

through 6 show, the color coding revealed important nuances in participants' reactions to the cards.

A handwritten Q-sort grid with 11 columns and 6 rows. The numbers are color-coded: green for positive, red for negative, and yellow for neutral. The numbers are arranged in a roughly triangular shape, with the highest values (42, 41, 11) in the top left and the lowest values (1, 27, 16) in the middle right. The bottom right corner contains the text 'US 15'.

42	41	11	40	26	32	4	18	24	6	49
14	31	36	13	43	29	19	8	7	30	12
	22	39	37	21	5	25	28	10	38	
		44	2	45	46	1	27	16		
			35	23	20	33	47			
				15	9	48				
					17	34	3			

Image 4: Field notes showing pre-sort results that generally correlate to the positive, negative, and neutral (zero or near-zero) value column scores

A handwritten Q-sort grid with 11 columns and 6 rows. The numbers are color-coded: green for positive, red for negative, and yellow for neutral. The numbers are arranged in a roughly triangular shape, with the highest values (45, 4, 36) in the top left and the lowest values (1, 13) in the middle right. The bottom right corner contains the text 'US 2'.

(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)	(-1)	(-2)	(-3)	(-4)	(-5)
45	4	36	46	43	28	31	5	48	17	32
14	39	15	35	20	33	44	12	49	47	26
	2	21	23	19	40	25	16	38	27	
		41	29	11	9	6	10	3	37	
			22	8	7	1	13			
				30	42	18				
					24	37	34			

Image 5: Field notes showing pre-sort results, where the participant disagreed with most statements

Image 4 is an example of a Q sort that looks roughly as one might expect. Cards on the left-hand (Agree) side of the grid are green, indicating that the participant agreed with the statements (represented by numbers here) in the pre-sort. Cards on the right-hand (Disagree) side of the grid are red, indicating that the participant disagreed with them



during the pre-sort. And cards in the middle are yellow, indicating that the participant put them in the Neutral pile during the pre-sort.

Image 5, however, is an example of Q sort by a participant who disagreed with the majority of statements during the pre-sort. Even though Q requires participants to place one card in each box and requires the researcher to assign a score to each column, it cannot be assumed that a participant's placement of a statement into a box on the Agree side of the board means they actually agree with it. Image 6 shows a Q sort that demonstrates the opposite phenomenon. The participant represented in this image agreed with every statement during the pre-sort.

(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)	(-1)	(-2)	(-3)	(-4)	(-5)
28	29	40	30	11	21	31	13	8	35	1
37	24	48	23	49	47	46	19	10	2	17
9	26	34	14	41	44	3	12	18		
	20	36	43	25	4	27	38			
		33	6	5	39	15				
			42	16	45					
			22	7	32					

Image 6: Field notes showing pre-sort results, where the participant agreed with every statement

The intellectual work the participant engages in during the Q sort is to make decisions about sets of statements against other sets of statements. Stephen Gourlay explains that, in Q, we “take views from the real world of discourse about a topic rather than make up a simplified discourse; we ask people to consider one viewpoint in the light of another (typical of real world situations); and so on.”<sup>119</sup> That is what is happening

<sup>119</sup> Gourlay, “Commentary on Ramlo and Newman, ‘Q Methodology and Its Position in the Mixed Methods Continuum,’” 210.

during a Q sort. In this study, when participants placed their first two cards in the far-left column, they were communicating that they agree with those two cards more than with any of the other cards. But this means something different to the participant represented in Image 6, whose starting point is agreeing with every statement, than to the participant represented in Image 5, whose starting point is to disagree with the majority of the statements. When these two participants filled in the second column in a Q sort (the far-right column on the Disagree side of the grid), one indicated which of the 49 statements they disagreed with the most, while the other communicated which of the 49 statements they agreed with the least. Marking the cards during the Q sort allowed me to capture these nuances and added substance during the analysis stage.

An interview followed each Q sort, though I developed a habit of turning on the voice recorder during some Q sorts, rather than waiting for the interview to begin. I did this when a participant was processing verbally during their Q sort or commenting on the Q deck. This gave me valuable insight into participants' rationale and guiding principles. It was useful in the analysis stage but, more immediately, it was useful as I prepared for the interview itself.

Interviews were semi-structured and varied greatly in length. I frequently asked follow-up questions about specific statements, such as *Having legal proof that you are not a slave*, when I noticed a pattern of multiple participants remarking on those statements or routinely experiencing difficulty when choosing a place for them on the grid. I would also usually ask participants to explain the cards they wrote during the pre-write and to tell me whether they thought their pre-write ideas were represented in the Q sample or were missing from it. I recorded each interview (except in two cases when participants asked me not to)

and took only a few handwritten notes. This worked well because it allowed me to listen intently to participants and to freely observe the Q sort they had completed. It was important to use the Q sort as a tangible conversation piece and reference point throughout the interviews.

After each interview I recorded the Q sort data twice: first by photographing the Q sort and second by hand-writing the placement of each statement in a notebook. (My handwritten documentation is what is seen in Images 4-6.) The reverse side of each statement was printed with a statement number, which is what I would photograph and write. Along with corresponding column scores, these numbers were input during the analysis stage.

## PARTICIPANTS

Who are the participants?

Since my project was to define freedom from slavery, it was not possible to say before the study whether any participants had truly experienced it. So rather than doing the impossible and inviting participants who were expert in an as-of-yet undefined phenomenon, I invited participants whose experience of modern slavery indicated that they would have thoughts about freedom from it and whose manner of being affected by slavery meant that any definition of freedom that emerged from the study would be relevant to them. In these ways, the participants were the best qualified people with whom to co-observe and name this phenomenon. The three cohorts of participants invited to the study are listed below.

- LE: Law enforcement professionals who have dealt, in their professional capacity, with incidences of modern slavery offences or whose law enforcement roles involve regular engagements in

antislavery efforts

- VMS: Victims or survivors of modern slavery who self-identified or were identified by victim service providers<sup>120</sup>
- VSP: Professional victim service providers who engage regularly with survivors of slavery

The LE and VSP cohorts are two key stakeholder groups in most community-based efforts to end modern slavery and to assist those who have been victimized. Even in instances where LE and VSP organizations do not play this role deliberately, they are de facto critical players because their organizations are often best positioned to serve survivors. This is due to their expertise, resources, and sometimes statutory roles.

The perspectives on freedom from modern slavery held by LE and VSP individuals can have a direct impact on survivors. LE and VSP perspectives operate—that is, they have reality-shaping power—on the lives of individual survivors and on the field at large. To neglect their voices in this study would be to fail at the project before even beginning.

Some might say that including the LE cohort as I have in this study, giving them equal platform alongside VMS and VSP participants, is contrived. After all, are not law enforcement professionals the epitome of “anti-,” given their standard preoccupations of combatting gang violence, countering terrorism, tackling fraud, neutralizing threats, and generally fighting crime? But law enforcement is usually an influential party in antislavery communities (very often leading them). They are key players in *a community deciding to work together to end human trafficking* and are often present the *moment [a survivor is] physically removed from [their]*

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<sup>120</sup> This cohort name includes both “victims” and “survivors” in acknowledgement of the fact that some individuals will see themselves as victims and some will see themselves as survivors at different stages of their post-slavery journeys.

*trafficker*. And crucially, law enforcement professionals are often in survivor-facing roles. They may remain in that survivor-facing space for months or years as they carry out lengthy investigations and help to build a criminal case for prosecution. Additionally, many law enforcement professionals in antislavery communities specifically hold antislavery roles and so will engage with service providers and survivors in contexts beyond criminal justice work. For example, they may engage with survivors in community education settings, focus groups, or policy advocacy.

Many LE participants understood that they are often viewed as the “bad guys” by both survivor support workers and survivors. But, crucially, many of them also understood the responsibility attendant to their roles in antislavery communities. One of them said, “It starts with the victim-centered approach, and the victim-centered approach starts with us. ... We believe it, we put it into action, and we go teach it. I tell my guys [in] the unit following the victim-centered approach and the trauma-informed type interview, ‘I can’t tell if you really believe it in your heart. But I can tell if you put it into action.’”<sup>121</sup>

Including the VMS cohort may seem like basic competency to those familiar with the antislavery field. But there are three comments that need to be made about this. First, including survivors is in line with an important and oft-stated value of the field: to include survivors’ voices in all antislavery concerns. But I am not only going through the motions, as it were, of allowing survivors a chance to speak; I am including them because they deserve to be heard. It would be unnatural to research freedom without seeking the perspectives of those who might experience it first-hand. The antislavery movement is, broadly speaking, centered on

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<sup>121</sup> US LE 4, interview.

victims. But ironically is not always survivor-centered. That is, much of what individuals in the field work toward involves identifying victims, supporting survivors through victim-centered aftercare services,<sup>122</sup> and advocating for policy that will improve the circumstances and opportunities of survivors. But survivors themselves are not consistently given opportunities to inform or help evaluate how this work is done.

Second, including the VMS cohort was important to me because, outside this study, I have witnessed first-hand the tendency of some victim service providers to speak confidently on behalf of survivors. In most of the cases I have witnessed, these individuals are well-meaning, genuinely have the trust of survivors in their communities, and do not intend to de-platform those survivors. But I also know this is not always the case. And even the best-intended message, when shared second-hand, can be misrepresented. The only way to know what survivors themselves truly think about freedom is to ask them directly.

Third, I included survivors because they hold an epistemological piece of the puzzle that, when missing, precludes a complete conception of freedom from slavery. Law enforcement and service provider perspectives are valid because they shape the field and because those individuals are professionals with training and personal experience, as well as the ability to think critically and defend their own ideas. They have often seen multiple survivors through the journey from rescue or escape

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<sup>122</sup> The “victim-centered approach” is, “the systematic focus on the needs and concerns of a victim to ensure the compassionate and sensitive delivery of services in a nonjudgmental manner. [It] seeks to minimize retraumatization associated with the criminal justice process by providing the support of victim advocates and service providers, empowering survivors as engaged participants in the process, and providing survivors an opportunity to play a role in seeing their traffickers brought to justice.” For more, see Office for Victims of Crime and Bureau of Justice Assistance, “Human Trafficking Task Force E-Guide.”

to sustained independent living, and so have a unique and valuable perspective that deserves consideration in this study. But survivors have come by their conceptions of freedom differently than most of these professionals; namely, survivors have experienced slavery.<sup>123</sup>

In short, any definition of freedom must be informed by those who are affected by slavery in the first degree: survivors.

### Participant recruitment

My approach to recruiting participants at all six research sites was to contact the leader or leaders in each antislavery community. Sometimes this was an individual with a title distinguishing them as a partnership or task force leader. Other times, this was an individual or group of individuals who led distinct aspects of a community's antislavery work. For instance, one individual might lead law enforcement efforts while another leads NGO survivor support efforts in the same community. I introduced my research project to these leaders and asked if they would welcome me visiting their communities. All of them said yes. I asked each leader to connect me with members of their community from each cohort. In some cases, the leaders invited participants on my behalf and set up research appointments for me. In other cases, they shared potential participants' contact information with me.

Everybody who was invited to participate was, in the language I have been using, "affected by modern slavery." This means that each participant had been affected personally (as a victim) or professionally (having routine antislavery responsibilities in their professional roles and working directly with survivors). In some instances, participants were

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<sup>123</sup> I am grateful to Minh Dang for the conversations we have had about freedom and well-being for survivors. This particular idea is from her forthcoming thesis.

affected by slavery in both capacities, though in these cases I asked participants to choose which cohort they wanted to be classified in. The diversity of perspectives in this study is based on antislavery cohort and not on other demographics, such as age, gender, race, or ethnicity. While participants did represent a broad spectrum of backgrounds and demographics, I did not invite participants on these bases or record this information.

My means of identifying participants had to be adapted as field research got underway, beginning with the very first site visit. Although the challenges varied by site, participant recruitment was in flux at each one—often until the very last day of my visits. It was very rarely the case that arrangements made in advance went entirely to plan.

For example, I had exchanged several emails with the leader at Site 1 in the lead-up to my visit and we had a phone call shortly before I was expected to arrive; everything necessary for the planned research sessions seemed to be in place. But many of the anticipated participants did not ultimately agree to research sessions. Instead, many Site 1 participants were recruited after I arrived—some by word of mouth and some with the support of the community leader. A similar scenario played out at Site 5, except that word-of-mouth recruitment was largely unsuccessful in mitigating it there.

At Site 2, I had difficulty from the beginning securing commitments from local leaders of NGOs and from law enforcement personnel. When it was time to make a final decision about whether to purchase airfare to Site 2, I nearly eliminated it from the study altogether because only two research sessions had been secured, both with VSP participants. Site 4 presented a nearly identical challenge. Despite enthusiastic support from the community's leader, many potential participants declined and some



never received (or never responded to) invitations. Some service providers were too busy to engage in the research and too busy to share the invitation with potential survivor participants. I ultimately chose to keep Sites 2 and 4 in the study, though it would not be until I made two additional trips to Site 2 and one additional trip to Site 4 that I had established the participant base to justify keeping the Q sorts in the dataset. The majority of Site 2 participants were referred to the study by word of mouth or through individuals with local influence who vouched for me. This was the case, for example, with VMS Q sorts that took place in an NGO's drop-in setting. Some participants signed up by means of a physical signup sheet a day or two before I arrived. Others volunteered spontaneously at the prompting of other VMS participants at the drop-in. A total of eight VMS participants were from Site 2—more than at any other single site.

Site 3 was the only site at which participant recruitment went according to the original plan. The leader of this community and I had agreed ahead of time that they would secure participants for me. They went as far as arranging many of the Q sorts personally and even assisted in one with a VMS participant (at the participant's request). All invitations resulted in a confirmed research session, though I ultimately canceled one VSP Q sort on account of sickness, and one VMS participant did not keep our meeting. The original recruitment plan at Site 6 was also largely successful, though some invitations were declined at this site.

When I set out on fieldwork, I anticipated holding research sessions with an equal number of participants at each site, with LE, VMS, and VSP participants equally represented. Early during my time at Site 1, it became apparent to me that participants would not be equally represented. There was an overabundance of VSP participants, very few LE participants and—

for most of my time at that site—almost no VMS participants. I quickly adopted a policy to never say no to a Q sort, even if my originally conceived quota had been filled for a particular cohort at any one site, and adjusted my expectations from cohorts being equally represented within each site to attempting to balance the cohorts' representation in the fieldwork at large. I continued to accept VSP participants at all three sites, despite their over-representation in many cases, because I was unsure whether I would face similar challenges securing LE and VMS participants as I progressed through the sites.

## WHY CHOOSE Q?

Having now described the mechanics of Q, key operational considerations for this study, and the participants, I will now turn to more theoretical matters. In this section, I will devote space to the rationale of Q and the justification for using it to answer the research question at hand.

Q is a good fit for exploring the question, "What is freedom from slavery?" for two reasons. First, it is predicated on a view of subjectivity as operant. Second, Q methodology embraces subjectivity, and, as many participants indicated, freedom is a largely subjective matter. These reasons are linked to my hypothesis and my approach to the research question. I hypothesized that some implicit consensus around the meaning of freedom exists among individuals who are meaningfully engaged in the antislavery field. Further, I decided not to search for a political theory within which to frame freedom from slavery but to seek out what freedom is in the minds of key antislavery stakeholders. Why try to superimpose or test an external conception of freedom when many already exist internally to the field (as indeed demonstrated by the concourse)? It seemed better to understand the ideas already shaping the

field—and then to maximize their capacity for good.

With Q I could capture those ideas—observe the individual ideological forces at work in the world. Brown explains that an “operational definition’ of a person’s attitude is not in the [the Q sample items], but in terms of what he does with them.”<sup>124</sup> Of course participants do things in the world with their ideas. Just as my idea that water can quench my thirst cannot help but cause me to reach for water when I am thirsty, a direct victim service provider who believes freedom is, for example, *To live without fear*, will not be able to help behaving and speaking in a manner that is influenced by that idea when engaging with her clients. But in a Q study, participants will also physically do something with those ideas, physically manifested in the Q deck, by arranging them in a Q sort.

Q methodology combines qualitative and quantitative approaches and is designed to study subjectivity. When it is executed correctly, Q researchers can scientifically study the world not from their perspective but from “the *internal*/standpoint of the individual” participant.<sup>125</sup> Q can fill a very specific gap between social science as it is and social science as it could be. As Brown puts it, that gap exists between social science’s strength in asking important questions and its lacking ability to listen to the answers without transforming them into something other than their original meaning.<sup>126</sup> Q can fill this gap by allowing the researcher to receive and analyze participants’ responses without interpreting them or adapting them to the requirements of any code or existing measurements.

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<sup>124</sup> Brown, *Political Subjectivity: Applications of Q Methodology in Political Science*, 191.

<sup>125</sup> Brown, 1.

<sup>126</sup> Brown, *Political Subjectivity: Applications of Q Methodology in Political Science*.

I chose Q not only because I believed it was a good fit for the research question and would be accessible (and enjoyable) to participants, but because I felt it was important to choose a methodology that offers few possible points of entry to the researcher's own ideas at the data collection stage. One way Q accomplishes this is by requiring that the concourse is compiled from a vast array of sources and ideas. If the researcher can reach far and wide enough and can be honest about her rationale for considering (or not considering) certain sources, then she can limit the impression of her own subjectivity on the concourse, thereby maximizing the integrity of the concourse. This same diligence and honesty need to be exercised in refining the Q sample. If the researcher allows representative source material to speak for itself in both of these steps, then participants can engage a reasonably unadulterated Q sample, and their subjectivity will be what is most represented in the raw data.

I desire for this research to begin a conversation among those in the antislavery movement—an intentional conversation about freedom. Q is a highly appropriate methodology to employ toward this goal. It provides a platform (the concourse and Q sample) to bring together the diverse ways of talking about freedom. Every stage of a Q study builds upon the concourse, which is, in itself, a microcosm of the existing “universe” of ideas. The Q deck is both a physical and conceptual representation of what the “universe” looks like from a bird's-eye view, and it literally places that conversation into participants' hands.

## KEY THEORY UNDERPINNING Q METHODOLOGY

Given its detachment from existing political theory, I have seen this as a fact-finding (or fact-establishing) project from the beginning. The occasion for this thesis is that there is no standing theory, framework, or

even exploratory guidelines for the concept of freedom from modern slavery, so the idea of choosing one to guide the study seemed disingenuous. Any choice would either be arbitrary (assigning a theory to the research question for the sake of assigning a theory) or self-serving (choosing a theory I would find interesting for the duration of the project). The salient theory here is not any political model of freedom but the theory underpinning Q methodology. Stephenson treats Q as a methodology unto itself—not merely a method. Q is more than a tool to discover answers to the research question. It is, instead, a way of exploring the topic alongside those affected by slavery and validating their perspectives not merely as ideas to study but as frames against which to test and validate a wide range of relevant concepts.

Let me begin by saying how we should *not* think about Q: Q is not a mixed method. At least, not in the conventional sense, where a researcher applies “two or more sources of data or research methods to the investigation of a research question or to different but highly linked research questions.”<sup>127</sup> At the 2019 Q Conference, veteran Q researchers bemoaned the fact that those of us who use Q must usually devote valuable space in articles or time in conference presentations to explaining Q before we can present substantive content from our studies. On the one hand, this does not bother me; the fact that Q is relatively little-known among researchers is part of its appeal and preserves—to some degree—the integrity of the method and allows a uniquely capable community of friendly but nonetheless robust accountability. But on the other hand, that struggle is real. At conferences and during various speaking engagements, I have found myself describing Q as a mixed method. It is convenient, and, though it does not describe Q with the

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<sup>127</sup> Lewis-Beck, Bryman, and Futing Liao, “Multimethod Research,” 677.

highest degree of accuracy, using “mixed method” as shorthand is a quick way of signaling to an audience that Q is not exclusively qualitative nor quantitative in nature. It quickly became my way of ushering audiences into intellectual territory that allows room for Q and of staving off certain predictable, tedious questions. But this does not do justice to audiences or to Q. So now let us explore what Q is and where, exactly, Q is located in the landscape of research approaches.

As a method that deals with subjective responses to qualitative stimuli but analyzes the resulting data by quantitative means, Q defies the binary qualitative/quantitative divide. Q was designed before discussions of mixed methods began in earnest.<sup>128</sup> One could argue, as I am inclined to, that this means Q cannot be a mixed method or mixed methodology. Susan Ramlo and Isadore Newman, however, take a different approach. They classify Q as a mixed method under an updated mixed methods framework. They consider it a mixed method ahead of its time when framed in recent methodological discussions. They say,

the discussion of mixed-method research has increasingly been stretched to include the collection of qualitative as well as quantitative data. In other words, increasingly mixed-method research includes the combination of quantitative research and qualitative research. In this way, the discussion of mixed-method research and, indeed, of triangulation is employed not just in relation to measurement issues but also to different approaches to collecting data.<sup>129</sup>

A helpful way to think about this updated framework may be to view the conventional conversation as one of mixed *methods* and the more recent conversation as one of mixed *methodologies*.

Ramlo and Newman draw on two earlier continua of qualitative and

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<sup>128</sup> Ramlo and Newman, “Q Methodology and Its Position in the Mixed-Methods Continuum,” 172–73.

<sup>129</sup> Lewis-Beck, Bryman, and Futing Liao, “Multimethod Research,” 678.

quantitative research: one by Carolyn Ridenour and Newman and one from Abbas Tashakkori and Charles Teddlie.<sup>130</sup> Ramlo and Newman put these in conversation with one another to demonstrate how Q cannot be confined to either the qualitative or quantitative research category but must be understood as occupying considerable breadth on the continuum between them. With their framework, “Ridenour and Newman attempt to remove the conceptualization that quantitative and qualitative research methods represent a distinct dichotomy. Instead, they describe a continuum between these two methods such that mixed methods represent a more holistic way of approaching research in social sciences.”<sup>131</sup> Tashakkori and Teddlie crafted their framework to show various qualities of research, each of which is anchored on one end by a “quantitative extreme” and by a “qualitative extreme” on the other.<sup>132</sup>

Ramlo and Newman test Q against these frameworks and create their own continuum (adapted from Tashakkori and Teddlie’s) focusing “on the key methodological aspects of Q.”<sup>133</sup> This is reproduced in Image 7.<sup>134</sup> Ramlo and Newman conclude that “Q methodology possesses more than *aspects* that are qualitative or *aspects* that are quantitative. Instead, Q is a *unique hybrid* of qualitative and quantitative research methods.”<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Ramlo and Newman, “Q Methodology and Its Position in the Mixed-Methods Continuum,” 183.

<sup>131</sup> Ramlo and Newman, 180.

<sup>132</sup> Ramlo and Newman, 181.

<sup>133</sup> Ramlo and Newman, 180–81.

<sup>134</sup> Ramlo and Newman, 183.

<sup>135</sup> Ramlo and Newman, 186 (emphasis added).

<b>Quantitative Extreme (Post-positivist)</b>	<b>Mixed/Other</b>	<b>Qualitative Extreme (Constructivist)</b>
Objective purpose	Q	Subjective purpose
Explanatory	Q	Exploratory
Numeric data	Q	Narrative data
Structured/close-ended	Q	Open-ended
Statistical analysis	Q	Thematic analysis
Probability sample	Q (sample is items)	Purposive sample
Deductive inference	Q (uses abductive reasoning)	Inductive inference
Value neutral	Q	Value rich

Image 7: Ramlo and Newman's table, "Multidimensional Continuum of Research Projects (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2009) with Q methodology Positions Entered"

The concepts of objectivity and subjectivity play a part in Ramlo and Newman's conviction that Q belongs on a methodological continuum. They begin their argument by observing that "the concept of combining subjectivity and objectivity exists within Q methodology as well as in mixed methods."<sup>136</sup> Ramlo and Newman cite studying subjectivity objectively as Q's *raison d'être*—one they consider "inherently a mixture of methods, qualitative and quantitative."<sup>137</sup> They are not wrong about Q's purpose. What is up for discussion, though, is whether Q is, in fact, a mixture of methodologies or if it is a single innovative methodology.

Drawing heavily on Stephenson's foundational *The Study of Behavior: Q-technique and its methodology*, Ramlo and Newman pay special attention to the process of Q sorting from the perspective of participants and the function of Q sorts for the purposes of the researcher in order to defend their position. They argue,

During the sorting, each sorter constructs his/her own reality with the arrangement of the statements. ... Yet Stephenson (1953)

<sup>136</sup> Ramlo and Newman, 176.

<sup>137</sup> Ramlo and Newman, 186.



describes the purpose of the Q sort ... as the way to provide quantitative data for subsequent analysis. In other words, the Q sorting allows modes of behavior to be defined and therefore undergo scientific study (Stephenson, 1953). This explanation is similar to our position that the use of quantitative techniques to aid in the interpretation of qualitative data is consistent with an objective/post-positivist philosophical stand (Newman & Ramlo 2010).<sup>138</sup>

While Ramlo and Newman's argument that Q is a mixed method is compelling, I suggest there are two flaws in their explanation. First, I disagree with the blanket characterization of qualitative research in Image 7 as having a "subjective purpose." Second, the qualitative data gathered during the interviews that typically follow Q sorts help to interpret the quantitative data produced during the analysis stage; not the other way around.

Gourlay responds to Ramlo and Newman with two follow-on streams of thought. First, he agrees that Q is a mixed method "in terms of the qualitative-quantitative mode of talk about research methods"<sup>139</sup> but says that this is not novel. He argues that the use of other methods, traditionally considered quantitative, should be considered mixed for the same reasons that Ramlo and Newman consider Q a mixed method.<sup>140</sup> I think Gourlay makes the same mistake that Ramlo and Newman make in presuming that quantitative data interprets qualitative data in Q; rather, it is the qualitative data that interprets the quantitative data. Second, he asserts that Q should have been placed on the "'objective purpose' end" of the continuum in Image 7.<sup>141</sup> I agree with Gourlay on this point, as this

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<sup>138</sup> Ramlo and Newman, 178–79, (emphasis added).

<sup>139</sup> Gourlay, "Commentary on Ramlo and Newman, 'Q Methodology and Its Position in the Mixed Methods Continuum,'" 210.

<sup>140</sup> Gourlay, 209–10.

<sup>141</sup> Gourlay, 211.

seems more in line with Stephenson's thinking when he recorded his design and use of Q. Stephenson assumes that some degree of inseparability exists between the objective and the subjective.<sup>142</sup> But objective and subjective do not modify the purpose of a study, as Ramlo and Newman would have it in Image 7. Rather, they modify the object of study: behavior.

Stephenson rejects the notion of "'inner' or 'outer'" behavior as subjective-unobservable and objective-observable, respectively. He says,

There is not one realm of a ghostlike mind and another of body. All that a psychologist can concern himself with is *behavior* (63). This is not to say, however, that man's *subjective* behavior does not exist. Certainly he thinks, feels, imagines, muses, dreams, and all else. All such is behavior, every bit as certainly as is his purposeful walking from one place to another or his toying with a ball. In so far as this subjective behavior can be made amenable to reliable operations, scientific method [that is, objective study] is at issue and, in that sense, objective procedures. This is precisely our position in Q-methodology. Along Q-lines all subjective behavior, hitherto regarded as *in esse* arbitrary and unscientific, is capable of study with full scientific sanction, satisfying every rule and procedure of scientific method.<sup>143</sup>

Generally speaking, though, Gourlay is less in disagreement with Ramlo and Newman than he is pessimistic about the prospect of Q being accepted as a mixed method. His pessimism is rooted in

the tenacity of socially embedded practices of social scientists, such as the continued misuse of significance tests (Ziliak & McCloskey, 2008), the tendency to treat methods as a toolbox (Valsiner 2000), and a propensity to regard the qualitative-quantitative distinction as the only way to categorize tools (methods) and methodologies (see, e.g. Wilson, 2002, for an alternative to qualitative/quantitative; and Valsiner, 2000, for a more radical approach to thinking about

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<sup>142</sup> Stephenson, *The Study of Behavior: Q-Technique and Its Methodology*, 22–25.

<sup>143</sup> Stephenson, 25 (emphasis original).

methods and methodologies).<sup>144</sup>

While these challenges are surely not insurmountable, Q researchers could be resorting to “mixed method” as shorthand for an explanation of Q methodology for a long time to come (regardless of whether they are fully persuaded by Ramlo and Newman!) for the sake of moving a conversation on to the topic of findings.

## CONCLUSION

The first part of this chapter focused on operational matters pertaining to Q method and to this study in particular. I opened the chapter with an introduction to key terms in the vocabulary of Q method. This was followed by detailed descriptions of the five stages of a Q study and the eight activities involved in each research session. I then described the participant cohorts—including why each cohort was included—and explained how participants were recruited.

The second part of the chapter engaged theoretical concerns. I established why Q was chosen to answer the research question and, further, how it complemented a main goal of this project: to spark a conversation around the definition of freedom that will be discussed in later chapters. Finally, I demonstrated where Q methodology is positioned in wider methodological debates around mixed methods and took the position that Q is not a mixed method. This included a discussion of subjectivity—as it is understood within the Q research community—and its role in the methodology. The next chapter will focus exclusively on the first and second stages of this study: developing the concourse and refining the Q sample.

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<sup>144</sup> Gourlay, “Commentary on Ramlo and Newman, ‘Q Methodology and Its Position in the Mixed Methods Continuum,’” 211.



# CHAPTER 3

## CONCOURSE AND Q SAMPLE

This chapter discusses the concept of a concourse in Q methodology. Developing the concourse is the first of five stages in a Q methodology study, all of which were introduced in Chapter 2. Foundational as it is to everything that follows it, the concourse deserves special attention. It can be difficult to distinguish where the first stage ends and the second (refining the Q sample) begins, as was the case in this study. It is for this reason that this chapter discusses the second stage, as well.

This is an important discussion not only because it borrows from the importance of the concourse, but because many participants asked me where the statements I had asked them to sort came from. They are not the only ones who have inquired about the origin of the Q sample; many academic colleagues have posed the same question. This chapter provides an in-depth response.

Considering the fact that every Q study is born out of a concourse, it is surprising how little literature is available to document concourse development from beginning to end.<sup>145</sup> There is a significant body of literature available to Q researchers describing the importance of the concourse and the few guiding principles governing how to build one. This literature will only be strengthened by the forthcoming special edition of

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<sup>145</sup> Yvonne Fontein-Kuipers "Development of a Q-Set for a Q-Method Study about Midwives' Perspectives of Woman-Centered Care" provides a robust counterexample.

*Operant Subjectivity* that will focus exclusively on the concourse. I hope that this chapter can serve as an important and practical addition to Q literature for other researchers—especially those undertaking a Q study for the first time. In what follows, I introduce the standard idea of a concourse for Q studies, with particular focus on the questions of why and how to build a concourse. I then explain the process I followed in building the concourse for this study on freedom, including several decisions and judgments I made when organizing the concourse. Next, I describe the process of creating the Q sample. I then briefly discuss how the themes from Chapter 1 were represented in the Q sample, what ideas participants suggested were missing from the Q sample, and the impact of the concourse on the study overall. I will close with reflections on the process and the concourse itself.

## DEVELOPING THE CONCONOURSE

The concourse is foundational not only because it is the first stage in a Q study but because the stages that follow are dependent upon it and heavily informed by it. The Q sample, for example, is developed directly out of the concourse and forms the basis for Q's objective: capturing subjective viewpoints. Furthermore, the Q sample provides the basis for a researcher's collected data, so is of utmost importance to a Q study.

One could say that a Q study is only as strong as its concourse. Simon Watts and Paul Stenner admonish that, "in the end, all Q [samples] will be judged in relation to the comprehensiveness and balance of their coverage."<sup>146</sup> In this section I will explain the notion of a concourse, the significance of the concourse, and how one goes about constructing a

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<sup>146</sup> Watts and Stenner, *Doing Q Methodological Research*, 60.

concourse.

What is a concourse?

A concourse is the “universe of statements” that could be said about any topic.<sup>147</sup> The concept of a concourse is rooted in William Stephenson’s thinking about the broader concept of communicability. Q methodologists’ point of departure is that “all subjective statements are grounded in large numbers of other such statements, all of common communicability.”<sup>148</sup> In other words, no subjective statement exists in a vacuum; all subjective statements belong to a “universe” of other subjective statements about the same topic. There are no isolated subjective conceptions. Watts and Stenner further expound upon this idea, saying,

it is possible to extract an identifiable ‘universe of statements for [and about] any situation or context’ (Stephenson, 1986a: 44). Each identifiable universe is called a *concourse*. There exists a concourse ‘for every concept, every declarative statement, every wish, [and] every object in nature, when viewed subjectively’ (Stephenson, 1986a: 44).<sup>149</sup>

When a researcher builds a concourse for a specific topic, she is setting out to discover what statements are contained in this “universe.”

Job van Exel and Gjalt de Graaf further clarify the connection between communicability and the statements collected while building a concourse. They say,

Concourse refers to “the flow of communicability surrounding any topic” in “the ordinary conversation, commentary, and discourse of every day life” Brown (1993). ... The concourse is thus supposed to contain all the relevant aspects of all the discourses. It is up to the researcher to draw a representative sample from the concourse at

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<sup>147</sup> William Stephenson, quoted in Watts and Stenner, 33.

<sup>148</sup> Steven Brown in Brown and Good, “Advanced Workshop.” This is known as the Law of Concourse.

<sup>149</sup> Watts and Stenner, *Doing Q Methodological Research*, 33 (emphasis original).

hand. ... The gathered material represents existing opinions and arguments, things lay people, politicians, representative organisations, professionals, scientists have to say about the topic; this is the raw material.<sup>150</sup>

An analogy from Watts and Stenner is helpful in illustrating van Exel and de Graaf's point about a representative sample. Watts and Stenner say, "Concourse is to Q [sample] what population is to person sample (or P [sample])."<sup>151</sup> In other words, the universe of statements that can be made about a topic is analogous to the entire relevant population from which a researcher might select participants.

A specific concourse cannot be known "until it has been circumscribed by a particular research question in the context of a particular study."<sup>152</sup> This was certainly true in my experience, and I learned that once the process of building the concourse is underway, there is very little opportunity to amend the research question. Early in this process, I was still debating two iterations of the research question: What is freedom from *slavery*? And what is freedom from *modern slavery*? The difference is important for philosophical and practical reasons in the antislavery field. For the concourse, the difference was important because the first iteration of the question required that my concourse include statements from a wider variety of sources than the second iteration; slavery is a broader subject than modern slavery, spanning further into history and into a deeper mine of literature. I ultimately committed to the question, "What is freedom from slavery?" This produced the concourse and Q sample that formed the basis of this study and informed every interaction with participants. As Watts and Stenner put it, "what the

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<sup>150</sup> van Exel and de Graaf, "Q Methodology: A Sneak Preview," 4.

<sup>151</sup> Watts and Stenner, *Doing Q Methodological Research*, 34, original emphasized.

<sup>152</sup> Watts and Stenner, 34.



concourse is or what it becomes is always going to be defined by the nature of the research question to be answered.”<sup>153</sup>

As an “identifiable universe” of statements,<sup>154</sup> the concourse could be said to exist prior to a Q study. So while I speak of building or developing a concourse, one could also think of this aspect of Q as discovering a concourse or exploring a concourse. It is interesting to consider that the concourse—the full universe of statements—will change over time. In fact, any Q study may, itself, contribute to that universe of statements. If the findings of a Q study reveal new statements (for example, through interviews with participants) about a topic, those new statements would merit possible inclusion in the concourse of a subsequent Q study. Though it is of utmost importance that a researcher does not amend her concourse or Q sample once a study is underway (I will give reasons for this below), understanding the potential for continual evolution in the universe of statements helps to provide context for a Q study as a snapshot in time and space—to extend the universe metaphor.

It should be evident that a concourse is different from a literature review by nature, despite the fact that building a concourse may very well entail reviewing literature. There are three points that need to be made explicit regarding the role of the concourse versus the role of the literature review in this study.

First, the literature review positions this study in the context of existing literature and authoritative voices. The concourse, by contrast, does not speak to the position of the study; rather, the concourse is representative of discourse around freedom from slavery and includes—but is not limited to—existing literature and authoritative voices in the

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<sup>153</sup> Watts and Stenner, 34.

<sup>154</sup> Watts and Stenner, 33.

field. Furthermore, the concourse does not privilege ideas from any one source, whereas the literature review may well do so; literature cited in a review could be said to be implicitly privileged above literature that is not mentioned, and the focus is usually on academic work.

Second, the concourse provides statements that will be tested against the subjective views of participants, whereas the literature review for this thesis was written to provide context and justification for the study; the literature review was not written so that the sources in it could be directly tested by participants.

Third, a main purpose of literature reviews is to demonstrate the necessity of a study, usually by demonstrating a gap that new knowledge would fill. In this study, the literature review does this by establishing that there are patterns in the way that freedom is described in existing discourse but that there is no unified conception of freedom across the field. A concourse is not about identifying gaps or justifying a study in any way.

Why build a concourse?

Much of the rationale for building a concourse is implicit in the explanation of the concourse given in the section above. Primarily, the Q sample is generated from the concourse, and the concourse guarantees that the Q sample being tested is relevant and real—in other words, that it is worth testing and that the findings from the study will be meaningfully useful.

The Q sample becomes the mechanism by which participants express their answers to the research question. Stephenson says the objective of Q methodology is to test statements, not to test people.<sup>155</sup> If

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<sup>155</sup> Stephenson, *The Study of Behavior: Q-Technique and Its Methodology*, 51.

the Q sample is truly representative of the concourse, and if the P sample (participant group) has been well selected, then nothing in the Q sample should seem surprising or random to participants. They should be able to test the statements against their own subjective views without feeling their response is arbitrary. This further allows the researcher to locate the study findings in existing discourse and to explain where and how those findings are relevant to the field.

I experienced one additional benefit from the process of building a concourse; it allowed me to explore the topic of freedom both more deeply and more broadly than the literature review was able to facilitate. This proved beneficial and important for two reasons. First, most participants in this study do not swim regularly in the waters of academic literature. As a result, it was likely that participants would have ideas that are not represented in that literature. The opposite was also likely; participants may not have some of the ideas that are represented in academic literature. The second reason is related to this. A concourse acknowledges that there is discourse outside of academia and—with research questions like this one—requires the researcher's engagement with a wide variety of sources, including voices on the ground. This quality of the concourse is one reason Q was appealing to me in the first place. Because I wanted to conduct a study with and for those who are affected by slavery, I wanted the study itself to be grounded in today's antislavery movement. That movement includes academic literature but is certainly not limited to it. Building the concourse allowed me to explore diverse sources, giving me a comprehensive, up-to-date view of what relevant sources exist and what ideas about freedom are represented by those sources.

## How to build a concourse

As mentioned above, there is really no restriction on the kinds of statements that can be included in the concourse. Statement can be understood to mean *an idea about the topic at hand*. Ideas, of course, can be represented in paintings, poetry, physical items, songs, and so forth.

A guiding principle that Q researchers follow when building the concourse is that it should comprise statements of opinion rather than statements of fact. After all, when Stephenson created Q methodology, his aim was to facilitate the scientific study of subjectivity. Statements of fact are not really subject to subjectivity. If a person were asked to rank a statement of fact on a scale of Disagree to Agree, she would have no option but to agree with the statement. Facts, however a person might feel about them, cannot be meaningfully subjected to placement in a Q sort because they are definitively true. Participants would find the study very dull—and probably frustrating—if the grid did not leave enough “strongly agree” boxes for all the statements of fact, or if they felt forced to place statements of opinion that they strongly agreed with low on the grid because the statements of fact took up all the key spaces higher on the grid. Furthermore, the researcher would not gain meaningful knowledge about what participants really thought. Statements of opinion are far more appropriate to the concourse because they are far more appropriate for the Q sample. There is no objectively correct way for participants to sort statements of opinion, but there is an objectively correct way to sort statements of fact—that is, to agree with all of them.

The concourse is only the first stage in a Q study, but it can be tremendously time-consuming and labor-intensive. Just as there are few parameters in Q around where to source material for the concourse, there is only general guidance on when to cease building the concourse.

Generally speaking, the concourse is complete when the researcher stops discovering new statements or material for it. (This is, incidentally, also the case with literature reviews. So there is at least one strong similarity.) In their own study, Sally Eden, Andrew Donaldson, and Gordon Walker stopped building the concourse “when [a] ‘saturation point’ was reached (Glaser and Strauss 1967), when the statements or materials began repeating what had already been collected rather than adding new elements.”<sup>156</sup> This is the approach I took.

It is essential that, whenever the project of building a concourse is halted, the researcher resist opportunities to resume building the concourse after the Q sample has been refined and the study is underway. Making amendments or additions to the concourse would obligate the researcher to reassess and possibly amend the Q sample. And if the Q sample were amended, it would nullify the usefulness of any Q sorts already completed. This is because Q sorts completed using different Q samples are not comparable; they literally cannot be compared in a Q study. This is not to say that different Q studies could not be put in dialogue with one another, but that different Q samples would make Q sorts incompatible with one another during the analysis stage of a single Q study.

## BUILDING THE CONOURSE FOR THIS STUDY

This section will describe the process by which I built the concourse for this study and the decisions I made during that process. Much of this material comes from a log I began keeping at about the time I began work on the concourse.

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<sup>156</sup> Eden, Donaldson, and Walker, “Structuring Subjectivities? Using Q Methodology in Human Geography,” 416.

## Initial content collection

Knowing that no content is off limits for the concourse, I set about trying to search as wide a variety of sources as I could. The earliest contributions to the concourse were elicited from friends, antislavery stakeholders, and local community members in Nottingham. The first thing I did, mainly to whet my appetite for the varieties of thought I might find, was to post on Facebook a request that my Facebook friends complete this sentence: Freedom from slavery is \_\_\_\_\_. Later, I created a simple Google Form that asked respondents, "What is freedom from slavery? Please describe or define freedom from slavery, as you understand it." I sent this to individuals I had a professional relationship with who are academic or practitioner stakeholders in the antislavery field. I also spoke at an event about modern slavery as a part of a local community festival. I asked attendees there to write their notions of freedom from slavery on blank notecards and included those in the concourse.

Further contributions to the concourse came through email alerts I set for academic and news media sources. I set Google News and Google Scholar alerts for the phrase, "freedom from slavery." I also set an email alert with journal publisher Taylor & Francis Online for the same phrase. I received multiple alerts a week, and the vast majority did not point me toward useable material. Still, the alerts did result in some contributions to the concourse. The main appeal of these email alerts was that they aided my ongoing effort to stay informed about current ways freedom was being discussed as I designed this study.

Another source I scoured was CNN's Freedom Project, one element of which is the hashtag #MyFreedomDay. Anybody could contribute to the project by describing what makes them feel free and using the hashtag on

Twitter.<sup>157</sup> CNN also posted celebrity responses to the prompt using the hashtag.

A significant amount of material I accessed for the concourse was printed material. I surveyed academic and popular books, journal articles, and pieces of gray literature. For example, I looked exhaustively at 16 issues of the journal *Slavery & Abolition*, spanning six years. I also perused NGO reports and government reports from the UK and US and consulted slave narratives—both historical and contemporary. My reason for including material from historical slave narratives (that is, those from the era of transatlantic abolition) is that the modern antislavery movement has, in many ways, assumed a connection to the antislavery movement of two centuries ago. But in addition to this assumed connection, there have been explicit connections made. For example, the work of the Antislavery Usable Past project makes a distinct connection between the movement of today and the activities—and memories—of the movement of the past.<sup>158</sup> I revisited some narratives I had previously read and explored some that were new to me.

The sources I sought out were not confined to the written word, though. I watched a series of videos produced by Free the Slaves and other antislavery organizations. I also listened to a large number of the audio narratives collected by the Rights Lab.<sup>159</sup> Additionally, I spent several hours reviewing the antislavery murals documented by Hannah Jeffery.<sup>160</sup> Another non-text type of source I examined was music. My own involvement in the antislavery field was sparked by *Call + Response*, a music-based documentary, so I naturally searched for music that focused

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<sup>157</sup> CNN, "The CNN Freedom Project: Ending Modern-Day Slavery."

<sup>158</sup> "Antislavery Usable Past."

<sup>159</sup> Trodd et al., "VOICES: Narratives by Survivors of Modern Slavery."

<sup>160</sup> Jeffrey, "Walls of Slavery, Walls of Freedom."

on freedom. The main musical influences on the concourse were contemporary jazz pieces reflecting on historic slavery and abolition issues, such as Wynton Marsalis's album *From the Plantation to the Penitentiary*, and African-American spirituals from eighteenth- to nineteenth-century America.

It is acceptable for Q researchers to write their own contributions into the concourse—notions about the topic that they hold personally or statements they can imagine others making. I am generally wary about studies wherein the concourse contains a large number of statements authored by the researcher, unless a specific research question justifies it. While I did write some statements into the concourse, they were not original ideas; they were ideas I had assembled from various interactions with others in my capacity as an antislavery practitioner and researcher.

A list of sources I consulted while building the concourse can be found in Appendix B. This list is non-exhaustive and contains some incomplete records because I did not decide to track my concourse sources until after I had begun this stage of the study. (Recording concourse sources is not strictly necessary in Q studies.) All the ideas about freedom that I gathered from these sources were written on notecards so that I could easily organize and reorganize them. Having tangible items to work with also helped me ensure that ideas did not get lost in the shuffle, as it were, of digital recordkeeping. I later scanned the notecards to keep a backup of the concourse.

### Organizing the concourse

When the concourse had reached a saturation point, it was important to make some sense of it. I had spent about three months building the concourse, which contained approximately 700 statements. Next, I needed to understand, broadly, what they consisted of before I



could begin creating the Q sample. Organizing the concourse was the most challenging task in this study. I found the sheer volume of statements overwhelming at first and tried various means of organizing them before discovering the most effective one.

I began by spreading out all the notecards across the floor of my living room so that I could walk up and down rows of them and survey the concourse as a whole. This was highly effective and I decided early on to continue engaging with the handwritten statements rather than converting them to a digital format. Examining the whole concourse, my first observation was that some cards were nearly identical. In those instances I placed the cards in piles, eventually physically removing all but one card from each pile of duplicates. This went a little way in reducing the number of cards I was working with, but not by many. I searched for near-identical or duplicate statements multiple times through the process of organizing the concourse and, as a result, 76 non-unique cards were eliminated.

When the process of eliminating duplicate statements was complete, I began looking for themes that emerged from across the concourse, as one might do when coding interview transcripts or other text-based data. Thirty-three categories emerged from my first attempt at identifying themes. They are listed, in no particular order, in Table 1. I arranged the notecards into these 33 categories, as pictured in Image 8.

World-making, shaping, influencing	Community (belonging)	Protections	Natural/ born with it	Synonyms/ single words
Unnatural/ comes from man/you	No interference	Equality/ social aspects	Opposite of...	Place based
Power/ status over others	Community's effort/role (functionality)	Difficulty/ struggle/ ongoing	Political	Negative perceptions
Is a responsibility	Choices/ autonomy	Underlying reality	Identity	Ability to resist/avoid
Racial aspects	Contextual/ subjective	Employment /money	Depends on other people	Education
Discrimination (not racial)	Human/ public dignity	Comes from within	Religion	Remembering slavery
Transition/ process/not all-or-nothing	Justice – fight/ respond to slave-master	Self-realization, development, or improvement, advancement		

*Table 1: Early categories emerging from the concourse*

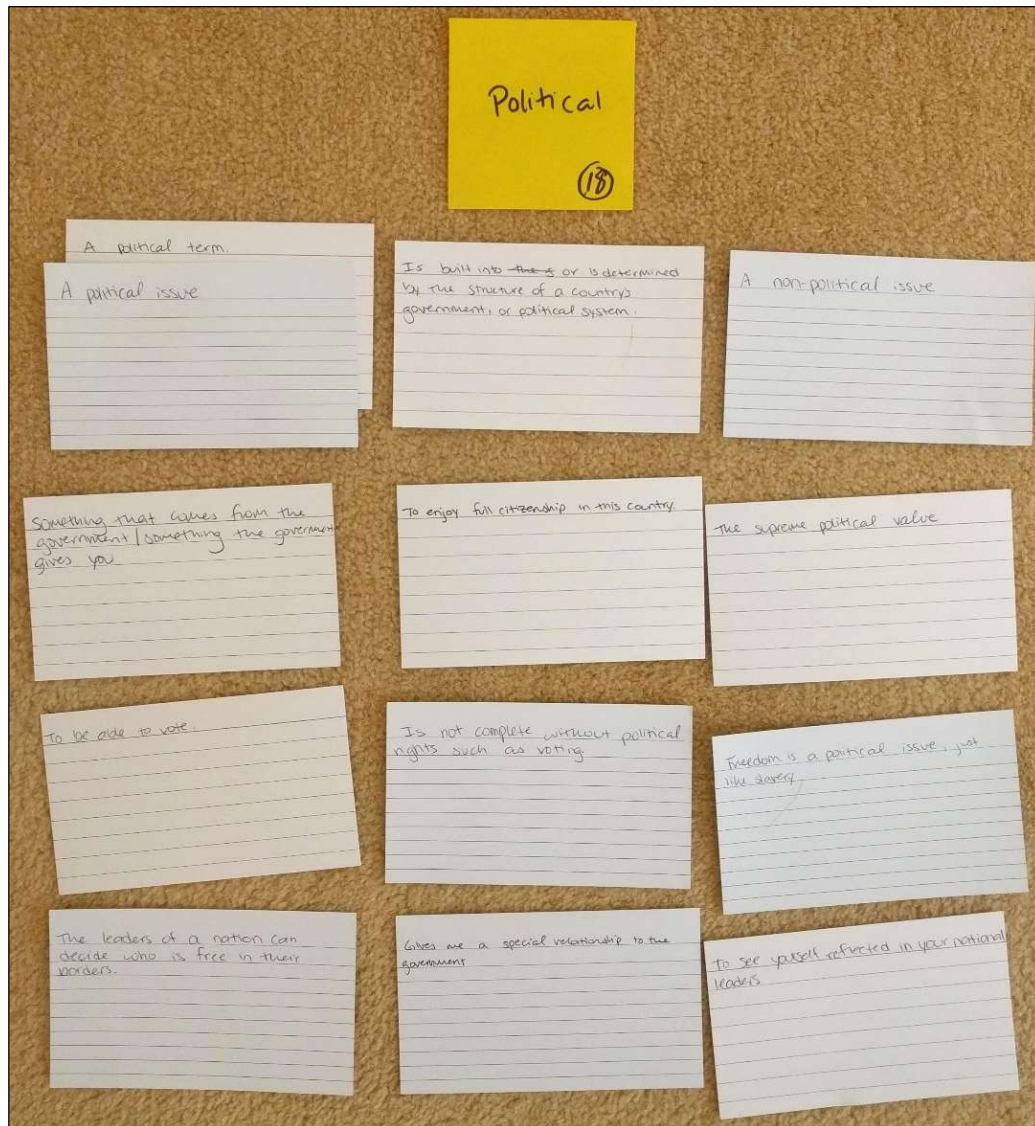


Image 8: Example of organizing concourse items by category

It was at this point that my focus shifted away from organizing the concourse so that I could comprehend it and toward preparing the concourse for the selection of the Q sample. I had become familiar with the statements in the concourse and needed to begin the transition to this second stage of the study.

At this shift in thinking, I adopted a methodical system of organizing the statements and began to make judgements about what kind of statements I wanted to include in the Q sample. For example, I decided to eliminate statements that talked about freedom's origins. Those included

statements such as *Freedom comes from God, You make your own freedom*, and similar ideas. I eliminated these statements and others on the grounds that they did not provide an answer to the question, “What is freedom from slavery?” Instead, they answered a slightly different question—in this case they answered the question, “Where does freedom come from?” While interesting, that question and possible answers to it were peripheral to the research question; if I were curious, I would have the opportunity to ask participants such questions in our post-Q sort interviews.<sup>161</sup> As Watts and Stenner put it, the Q sample “must be tailored to the requirements of the investigation and to the demands of the research question it is seeking to answer.”<sup>162</sup> In this spirit, I also eliminated cards that were less helpful than others in ascertaining a substantial definition of freedom and cards that could possibly be confusing, such as *Freedom can be different or look different at different points in your life*, or *Freedom is chains*, respectively. Applying these additional standards to organizing the concourse, I eliminated an additional 230 cards.

The process of reorganizing the concourse also necessitated a thoughtful evaluation of what constitutes a statement of fact. Despite this being a guiding principle in Q methodology, I found that a few statements of fact lingered well into this process of preparing the concourse for the Q sample. For example, *The Thirteenth Amendment applies to people today*

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<sup>161</sup> I did, in fact, ask many participants where they think freedom comes from, or what the origin of freedom is. The vast majority of those I asked said that it came from within an individual. This finding suggests several things, but one thing it suggests in the context of this chapter is that it was wise not to include the eliminated statements mentioned here in the Q sample. It suggests that, if an origins card had been included, it would have been frequently—predictably—placed in a similar position by the majority of participants, almost as a statement of fact. It would have done so without carrying the benefit of addressing the research question.

<sup>162</sup> Watts and Stenner, *Doing Q Methodological Research*, 57.

was a statement I found difficult to eliminate.<sup>163</sup> It was a statement of fact, but the spirit of the statement could have been meaningful for participants—especially those in the US. When I initially collected this statement, I could conceive of interpreting it not as a statement of fact but as a claim of protection, a declaration of legal assurance, or a reminder to others that old guarantees are guarantees nonetheless. The statement was eventually eliminated as a statement of fact (an additional justification being that it may have little or no meaning to participants in the UK).

At this stage of preparing the concurrence, I observed that most of the remaining cards could be said to either describe or define freedom. I could have pursued the project of converting the original 33 categories from Table 1 into items for the Q sample. However, the concurrence had been substantially filtered since those categories emerged, and this justified a fresh approach to organizing the statements. Furthermore, a cursory attempt at converting some of the categories into items for the Q sample showed me that many statements from the categories would not be captured or represented adequately. Abandoning those 33 categories, I reorganized all the cards into two broad categories—essence of freedom and effect of freedom—with subcategories reminiscent of those in an index. The subcategories that emerged are recorded in Table 2.

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<sup>163</sup> The Thirteenth Amendment to the US Constitution states that, “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.” U.S. Constitution, amend. 13, sec. 1, accessed October 30, 2020, <https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/>.

Essence of	Effect of
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Origins</li> <li>• Mechanism by which achieved</li> <li>• Type/category</li> <li>• Contingent upon</li> <li>• Permanence/extent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-development</li> <li>• World-building</li> <li>• Relation to others</li> <li>• Entitlements</li> <li>• Choices</li> </ul>

Table 2: "Essence of" and "effect of" concourse categories, with sub-categories

I arranged the remaining cards accordingly. An example of how this looked can be seen in Image 9.

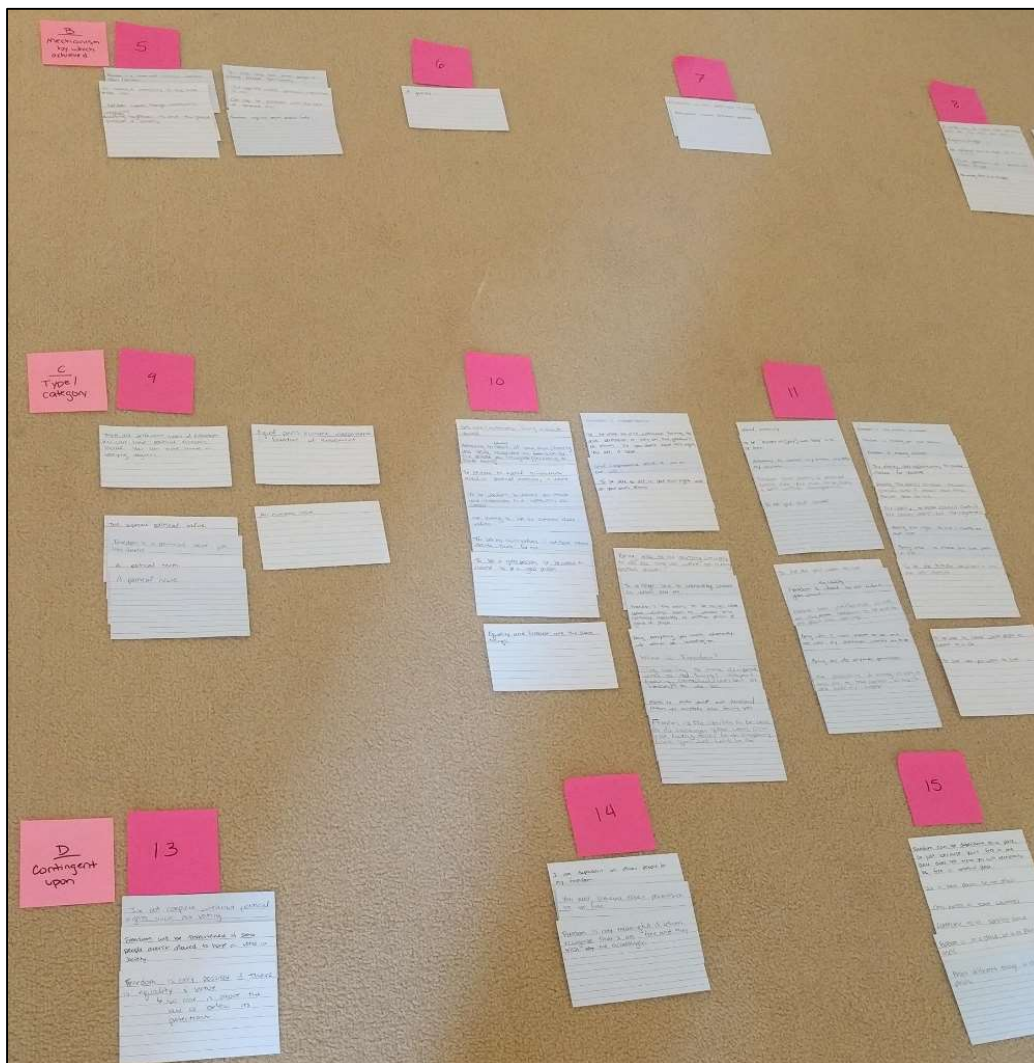


Image 9: Sample of concourse statements arranged in sub-categories (labeled with light pink notes) and into families of related statements within those sub-categories (labeled with dark pink notes)



As mentioned above, I repeated the practice of removing nearly identical cards throughout the process of refining the concourse. This final rearrangement of the statements was the final occasion on which I did so. There remained within the subcategories some similar but not identical cards, which I synthesized into single statements. For example, the family of cards numbered 5 in Image 2 had two distinct kinds of statements emerging, each represented by three cards placed into two columns within that family. So I synthesized two statements, one for each of those two columns.

This, repeated across the new categories and subcategories, resulted in 219 unique statements, which I recorded in a spreadsheet. All but 38 fit neatly into one of the subcategories from Table 2. It was from this set of 219 unique statements that I ultimately derived the Q sample.

## SELECTING THE Q SAMPLE FROM THE CONOURSE

I want to include Q sample selection in this chapter for two reasons. First, its inclusion offers a complete picture of how the statements used throughout this study came to be. Second, it is rare that the design of the Q sample from the concourse is described in methodology literature. Yet, especially with unstructured Q samples like this one, transparency can bring clarity for participants and readers.

van Exel and de Graaf say that

the selection of statements from the concourse for inclusion in the Q set is of crucial importance, but remains 'more an art than a science': the researcher uses a structure for selection of a representative miniature of the concourse. Such a structure may emerge from further examination of the statements in the concourse or may be imposed on the concourse based on some theory.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> van Exel and de Graaf, "Q Methodology: A Sneak Preview," 5.

I chose the former approach. Q samples that are selected in this manner are commonly—albeit confusingly—called unstructured Q samples.

“Whatever structure is used,” van Exel and de Graaf say, “it forces the investigator to select statements widely different from one another in order to make the Q [sample] broadly representative (Brown 1980).”<sup>165</sup>

In contrast to my decision, the researchers who designed a Q study concerning participants’ experience in the International Leaders in Education Program (ILEP) at Kent State University chose to impose a structure on their Q sample based on an existing framework. They used years of written feedback from participants to develop the concourse. In total, there were more than 700 statements included. To form the Q sample, a structure was borrowed from James Kouzes and Barry Posner’s *The Leadership Challenge*.<sup>166</sup> This book established five behaviors that effective leaders share. These are:

1. Model the way
2. Inspire a shared vision
3. Challenge the process
4. Enable others to act
5. Encourage the heart<sup>167</sup>

These behaviors were used as categories to pare down the statements in the concourse and structure the Q sample. The rationale for choosing this structure was that ILEP was an educational program and the researchers wanted an extant educational framework to guide them in this task.<sup>168</sup>

Presumably, the fact that ILEP is concerned with leadership in education played a role in *The Leadership Challenge* appearing more suited to that

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<sup>165</sup> van Exel and de Graaf, 5.

<sup>166</sup> Brown and Good, “Advanced Workshop.”

<sup>167</sup> The Leadership Challenge, “The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership® Model.”

<sup>168</sup> Brown and Good, “Advanced Workshop.”



particular project than other potential frameworks.

Despite there being some appeal in structuring a Q sample according to an existing theory or framework, I opted for an unstructured set of statements. My most basic rationale for this was the broader rationale for the thesis as a whole; there simply is no substantial framework for freedom from slavery. Rather than inventing a framework for the sake of the Q sample or appropriating an existing framework for something seemingly similar (e.g., a political theory of freedom from arbitrary rule), I took an inductive approach. I committed to this after the “essence of” and “effect of” categories emerged in the concourse. I had kept a meticulous record over the several weeks that I spent organizing the concourse, including notes on potential structures, but I ultimately decided that a Q sample resulting from a structured approach would produce a disingenuous representation of the concourse. Further, there was the matter of the 38 unique statements (mentioned in the previous section) which defied categorization even under an unstructured scheme. Keeping the Q sample unstructured still allowed me the option of including those statements in some form.

Using an unstructured approach, “the researcher selects statements when no preexisting theory exists related to the phenomenon of interest [in this case, freedom from slavery]. ... the selection of statements is based on themes that emerge from a review of the opinion statements.”<sup>169</sup> I undertook the task of further reducing the 219 unique statements into a Q sample of manageable proportions; a typical Q sample contains between 40 and 50 statements.<sup>170</sup> There were some

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<sup>169</sup> Paige and Morin, “Q-Sample Construction: A Critical Step for a Q-Methodological Study,” 101.

<sup>170</sup> van Exel and de Graaf, “Q Methodology: A Sneak Preview,” 5.

instances when I further combined statements that were somewhat alike or synthesized one longer statement to condense two complementary short statements. I also eliminated statements that were likely to be too vague or opaque to participants, or which were covered in concept by some combination of other statements. In reviewing the 219 statements at this stage I considered even more critically than I had previously whether the statements offered a genuine answer to the question, “What is freedom from slavery?” I found that some of them still answered slightly different questions, or were answers to the broader question, “What is freedom at large?” which risked crossing into political theory or philosophy in ways that would distract from the research question.

When I had pared down the candidate Q sample statements to 123, I printed them on strips of paper, asked myself, “What is freedom from slavery?” and tried to sort the cards into three piles (Agree, Neutral, and Disagree), simulating the pre-sort activity that participants would eventually complete. One of the things I was looking for throughout this exercise was statements that would necessarily need to go next to each other—in the hopes that I could eliminate one of a pair or rewrite the pair into one statement. Upon completing and reflecting on this activity, 64 statements remained.

Arguably I could have stopped there. However, I was intent on a smaller Q sample for participants’ sake. I asked colleagues to help me identify statements that were unclear or needed rephrasing, and I asked them to flag any problematic or redundant statements for me to consider eliminating. Some of the colleagues I asked were, themselves, the kinds of people I would invite to participate in the study. The result of these consultations was that the 64 statements were reduced to 54.

I then conducted pilot research sessions with additional colleagues, taking them through the pre-sort, Q sort, and interview stages of the study design. A final handful of statements was removed from the Q sample. This included one statement that was placed in the -5 column of the grid by every pilot participant. I eliminated that card on the grounds that it would probably take up a predictable position in actual Q sorts, at the expense of the study capturing nuance for other cards that participants may otherwise wish to place in that position. A second card was always in the -5 or -4 column; I eliminated it for the same reason. Although those statements I eliminated after the pilot sorts were not, strictly speaking, statements of fact, participants in the pilot seemed generally agreed that they were patently untrue, rather than being patently disagreeable. These two eliminated statements represented unique parts of the concourse, but I had previously questioned including either of them in the Q sample, even prior to the pilot Q sorts. The reactions of pilot participants to those cards settled the matter for me.

The final statement count in the Q sample was 49. These statements are listed at the end of this chapter. The statements in the Q sample are formatted as phrases rather than complete sentences and should each be read as a possible answer to the question, “What is freedom from slavery?” Two Q decks were printed—one in American English and one in British English spellings—to avoid the possibility that statements containing foreign spellings would be confusing or off-putting for participants in either country.

## LITERATURE REVIEW THEMES IN THE Q SAMPLE

I want to briefly comment on how the four themes identified in the literature review were included in the concourse and Q sample. Those

four themes are: freedom as a moment in time, freedom as a transition or process, freedom as a social reality, and freedom as belonging.

The concept of freedom as a moment in time is represented in the Q sample by the statement, *You achieve freedom the moment you are physically removed from your trafficker*. This was the consolidation of statements from the concourse such as:

- *Freedom is a moment in time. It is the moment that someone escapes the person who was enslaving them.*
- *Removal from [a] situation of slavery*
- *To be out of captivity*

This concept appeared again in one pre-write exercise, when a participant wrote that freedom is “immediate safety—[being] rescued.”<sup>171</sup>

The concept of freedom as a transition or process is represented in the Q sample by the statement, *The process of adjusting to not being trafficked and being less impacted by your former trafficking experience*. This statement was supported by items in the concourse such as, *A process that takes time, A journey (from slavery, lies, and exploitation), A transition, and An ongoing process marked by distinct events. One distinct event is the exit from slavery. This is usually a specific moment or day. But after that event, freedom is the process of adjusting to not being enslaved and to be less impacted by your former enslavement*. Finally, this conception of freedom was reflected during a research session pre-write exercise in which a participant wrote that freedom “is just a beginning.”<sup>172</sup>

The idea of freedom as a social reality was partly encapsulated by the Q sample statement, *Having political and economic systems that do not dominate you or limit your options to the point where your decisions*

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<sup>171</sup> US LE 3, pre-write.

<sup>172</sup> US VMS 4, pre-write.

*are not really your own.* It also appeared during a Q sort pre-write exercise, when a participant wrote that freedom means that “the social and economic barriers ... for basic means of survival are either removed or efforts to restore [equality are made] to prevent exploitation and its practices [from being] a norm for one group and not for another.”<sup>173</sup>

Finally, the idea of freedom as belonging was represented in the Q sample by the statement *Belonging to a community or belonging in society*. The Q sample statement *To know your heritage, culture, or origins and to be able to connect to other people who are like you* was related to it. Additionally, it was echoed in some participants’ pre-write responses. One participant wrote, “Identity—inclusion.”<sup>174</sup> Another wrote,

“To be allowed to participate in society

- To vote
- To socialise
- To be political.”<sup>175</sup>

And another participant wrote, “Acceptance.”<sup>176</sup>

## ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS COLLECTED DURING THE STUDY

At the end of research sessions, I frequently asked participants if they felt anything was missing from the Q sample. In some ways, this was reminiscent of the concourse-building stage for me. Of course, participants’ answers to this question were not added to the concourse and certainly did not change the Q sample. But the value in the exercise for me was twofold. First, it allowed me to see the question at hand from different perspectives and allowed me to consider what I might include in

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<sup>173</sup> US VSP 14, pre-sort.

<sup>174</sup> UK VMS 7, pre-write.

<sup>175</sup> UK VSP 6, pre-write.

<sup>176</sup> US LE 3, pre-write.

the concourse if I had it to build all over again. A benefit of this was the opportunity to see if participants' ideas were included in the concourse but not in the Q sample, as an exercise in reflection and in potentially rehearsing for myself my justifications for eliminating some elements of the concourse during the long process described in this chapter. Every time I asked a participant what they thought may be missing from the Q sample, it potentially tested the decisions I made while building the concourse and selecting the Q sample. Second, asking this question allowed participants to fill in any gaps in the Q sample (and therefore in my Q sort snapshot of their perspective) before our session concluded. It was important to me that they had the last word, and that I not be under the illusion that I had captured a participant's complete perspective.

Overwhelmingly, participants did not have statements they wished to add. Below are a sample of the responses participants gave to this question when they did feel the Q sample had not captured their entire perspective. These are printed in Table 3. In some instances, participants gave their answers verbally and, in other instances, they wrote their responses on blank notecards at the end of research sessions.

Multi-agency working (UK LE 2)	When you're no longer just surviving (US VSP 10)
Freedom would give international equal rights in the workplace – pay/H&S [health and safety]/pension (UK VSP 2)	As an identified PVOT [potential victim of trafficking] – being treated fairly & equitably in the decision-making regime [National Referral Mechanism] (UK LE 1)
Overcoming addiction and maintaining sobriety (US LE 1)	Healing from child sexual abuse experience that lead [ <i>sic</i> ] to trafficking (US LE 1)
I think it would be nice to see something about spiritual freedom, too. (US VSP 1)	You have the right to choose how many children you have, or to stop. It is your decision. (UK VMS 5)
Family. We educate the whole family and make sure all the family needs are met because those needs, unmet, often lead to a child being trafficked. (US VSP 5)	

*Table 3: Sample of ideas participants thought were missing from the Q sample*

Asking this question is not a formal or requisite step in a Q study, and part of the challenge for me in interacting with these statements is that they are inherently subjective. Having these statements, authored by participants, is a little like having the tables turned on me. Where participants will bring their own meanings to the Q sample during a research session, I will bring my own meanings to the statements that they wrote. For instance, if I had included the statement “Healing from child sexual abuse experience that lead to trafficking” from participant US LE 1<sup>177</sup> in the concourse, I would have eliminated it before developing the

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<sup>177</sup> US LE 1.

Q sample because it does not seem to directly answer the question, “What is freedom from slavery?” from my perspective. Another reason I might have eliminated it is that it is only relevant to the modern slavery experiences of people who are also victims of child sexual abuse. And while there are links between modern slavery and childhood abuse, the statement simply would not be broadly relevant to all survivors of modern slavery. I do not make these points to dismiss or invalidate this—or any—participant’s statement, and the statement does tell me more about that participant’s perspective, which was precisely my point in asking the question. Rather, I am responding to participant US LE 1’s statement here to demonstrate what my internal process concerning these collected participant statements was. What was really valuable to me was recording what participants considered important to them regarding freedom from slavery.

## IMPACT OF THE CONCOURSE ON A Q STUDY

A Q study is founded upon its concourse. I have demonstrated in this chapter how the Q sample is dependent upon the concourse. I would now like to briefly outline how the remaining stages of a Q study are similarly linked to it. By way of reminder, the stages of a Q study in their typical sequence are:

1. Developing the concourse
2. Refining the Q sample
3. Deciding the P sample
4. Collecting the data
5. Analyzing the data

Having discussed Stages 1 and 2 in detail, this section proceeds to explain their impact on Stages 3-5.



The P sample is the person sample, or the participants who take part in a study. In this study, the cohorts for the P sample were decided before I began building the concourse (though the research sites and individuals were not chosen until Stage 3). Those cohorts were law enforcement professionals, survivors of modern slavery, and victim service providers. I did not limit the concourse to statements that those groups of antislavery stakeholders were making but, as I organized the concourse and refined it, I did take into consideration whether statements were likely to make sense to individuals in those cohorts. This was especially important when I was constructing the Q sample, and it impacted how I phrased the statements.

The influence of the concourse on Stage 4, collecting the data, is fairly straightforward; the Q sample is the means by which data is collected, and the Q sample originates from the concourse. The very nature of the data itself is heavily informed by the concourse. The statements that participants sort, and which are then assigned scores and analyzed by the researcher, come directly from the it. In some studies the statements are taken verbatim from the concourse and in others, as was mostly the case in this study, they are paraphrased or are composite statements representing themes.

This has a direct influence on the presentation of data after it has been analyzed in the final stage. When a Q researcher talks about her findings, as I do throughout this thesis, she makes reference to the Q sample. In a very literal way, the concourse informs a Q study from start to finish.

## REFLECTIONS ON THE PROCESS

In this section I will reflect on the process of building the concourse

and selecting the Q sample. I will also give space to participants' reflections.

Concerning the concourse, there is not anything I would do substantially differently if I could develop this concourse again. There are, however, a few smaller decisions that I would look at differently a second time around.

For instance, my first step in organizing the concourse was to eliminate duplicates. In fact, there came a point in the collection of concourse statements when I stopped writing down duplicates all together. If I had allowed duplicates to remain in the concourse, then I would have had a clearer idea when I transitioned from organizing the concourse to developing the Q sample about which concepts were more prominent than others in the concourse. If something were a real outlier—or if something were overwhelmingly represented—it would have been easier to justify eliminating or retaining a statement when I was struggling to make the Q sample a manageable size without sacrificing representation. In short, it would have made my refining process simpler. If something was over-represented in the concourse, I would not have given it more space in the Q sample than any other idea. I had a firm rule of one statement per idea in the Q sample, so that every idea was equally weighted. However, during the Q sample development process, I did find myself wishing I had a way of being better guided toward what was more prominent in the concourse compared to other statements. I stand by my decision to weight everything equally in the Q sample, but perhaps I should not have weighted everything equally in the concourse.

After putting the Q sample through the test of pilot participants and the 73 actual participants in this study, I remain confident and secure in my work on both the concourse and the Q sample. This is partly

engendered by how few participants had anything to add to the blank cards I offered them at the end of research sessions, as I explained earlier in this chapter. It is further grounded in the comments participants made regarding the Q sample. One of the most meaningful of these reflections came from a survivor who, by his own admission, approaches research with skepticism. During our post-Q sort interview he said,

I like the fact that you've gone into it deeply, in order to choose the right [statements] and as many as you have. Because as survivors we've got millions. This would tell me that you've actually done some hard work. ... So I'm impressed with this ... because I feel that you have listened.... And I'm impressed with this catalogue of statements. ... So ultimately I have to commend you on this at least and say you've done a good job.<sup>178</sup>

This was a happy reflection to receive because it seemed to validate the investment of time and the decisions I made in organizing the concourse and developing the Q sample.

Another survivor participant said that she struggles to find the words for her experience or the words to communicate how she feels, but that the Q sample resonated deeply with her and gave her those words. This participant photographed several of the statements so that she could refer back to them in the future.<sup>179</sup> For me, this was probably the most poignant reflection any of the participants shared.

## CONCLUSION AND Q SAMPLE

In this chapter I discussed the meaning and significance of a concourse, as well as the rationale and good practices for building one. I then described in detail the process I followed and key decisions I made in building the concourse for this study. This led to a discussion of the

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<sup>178</sup> UK VMS 7, interview.

<sup>179</sup> UK VMS 5, field notes.

transition from building the concourse to refining the Q sample. Next, I explained how themes from the literature review were represented in the concourse and Q sample, as well as what happened when I gave participants the opportunity to name what they thought was missing from it. Following this I examined the significance of the concourse in each stage of a Q study. Finally, I reflected on my own experiences building the concourse and constructing the Q sample. The final words of reflection were given to two participants.

The 49 statements included in the Q sample are listed on the following pages and will be critical to reading the remainder of this thesis. Readers are encouraged to read each of these statements before proceeding to the chapters that present the findings from this study.

## The Q sample

1. Not being subject to prejudice, discrimination, racism, or misunderstanding
2. To be able to leave a place, a person, or a job without any fear of negative consequences
3. Being protected by the law and by social norms
4. Being able to make decisions in your own right and on your own terms
5. Determining your own way of life, as long as it does not negatively affect others
6. To know your heritage, culture, or origins and to be able to connect to other people who are like you
7. The ability to achieve goals that matter to you
8. To stop believing the lies others have told you about yourself and about the world, so that those lies no longer have power over you
9. To enjoy being alive or to feel there is a reason to be alive
10. To have a voice in how society runs or a voice in your community
11. Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave
12. Having the ability to question the ideas other people hand down to you and being able to reject ideas you cannot support
13. Freedom is created by a community deciding to work together to end human trafficking
14. Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so
15. Being able to do what you want and to go where you want, without anybody interfering or telling you no
16. Choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character

17. You achieve freedom the moment you are physically removed from your trafficker
18. The ability to choose who you associate with and who you do not associate with
19. Belonging to a community or belonging in society
20. Having relationships that support your personal development and growth
21. Having the right to choose where you live and where you work
22. Refusing to let a trafficking experience in your past devastate you or cripple your life
23. Knowing your own worth and knowing that it does not depend on other people
24. Feeling no shame
25. To be given an equal opportunity with everybody else to thrive
26. Living in a world without abuse or oppression
27. Knowing the things society requires you to do and knowing the consequences of not doing those things
28. Having a place to call home
29. Being able to trust people and not being betrayed when you are kind to them
30. To live without fear
31. To have access to justice against the people who trafficked you
32. To enjoy full citizenship in this country, including all the rights that come with it
33. To be protected in the areas of life where you are vulnerable
34. To be able to get an education
35. Having legal proof that you are not a slave

36. No longer having to make choices you don't like just so that you can survive
37. To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others
38. To be able to follow whatever values or moral authority you choose
39. To be able to defend yourself against people who try to limit your well-being, dominate you, or traffic you
40. The ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking
41. The process of adjusting to not being trafficked and being less impacted by your former trafficking experience
42. Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you
43. Living and working for your own benefit instead of for the benefit of others
44. Having political and economic systems that do not dominate you or limit your options to the point where your decisions are not really your own
45. Freedom is something you always possess in reality, even if someone else says you are a slave
46. Freedom is simply the opposite of slavery
47. To have enough money that you can save for your future and build a better life
48. To be able to get the basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life
49. To have the opportunity to learn about something or someone before making a commitment to that thing or to that person





# CHAPTER 4

## UK CONCEPTIONS OF FREEDOM

In this chapter I will present the findings from Q sorts conducted in the UK. Before I do, an explanatory note is necessary.

Q methodology allows us to understand how different people view the same subject, much as audience members view a performance in a theatre. Image 10 is of a seating chart from the Royal Albert Hall in London. Individuals seated in the Grand Tier will have a different view of any performance than individuals seated in the Arena. And individuals seated toward the front of the Arena will have a different view than those seated toward the back of the section, though any view from the Arena will be more like another view from the Arena than it will be like a view from the Grand Tier. The same is true of a Q method investigation of any topic; different individuals will have different perspectives on the same topic (in this case, freedom), though some may be seated figuratively closer to one another than to others. We can imagine the sections of the seating chart in Image 10 as representing the factors discussed in this and the following chapters.



Image 10: A seating chart from the Royal Albert Hall (<https://www.royalalberthall.com/>)

Factors are the shared perspectives of specific groups of people. They “cluster people together who think similarly.”<sup>180</sup> Where the column scores and statement identifier numbers described in Chapter 2 are the input during factor analysis, factors are the output. Factors are, therefore, the product of correlations between individual participants’ Q sorts. For this reason, this and the following chapter (which discusses the US factors) make frequent reference to the column score assigned to statements and to the statements themselves.

They also make frequent reference to composite sorts. A composite sort is a Q sort generated by the factor analysis software (KADE). It is effectively a visual aid that shows how the participants whose sorts are aligned to a factor would have sorted the Q sample if they were a single, composite participant. The placement of statements in composite sorts is based on the quantitative data behind factors. All the composite sorts printed in this thesis were generated using KADE.

Finally, the findings presented in this and the following chapter rely

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<sup>180</sup> *Q Methodology (a Taster)*.

heavily on statements' Z-scores. Z-scores (also known as standardization scores) show us how valuable a statement is, relative to other statements in a factor. Z-scores are "weighted [averages] of the values that the Q-sorts most closely related to the factor give to a statement."<sup>181</sup> A Z-score of 0 is a mean score; statements with a Z-score of 0 would have neutral value to the conception of freedom represented in that factor. A Z-score of 1 (or 1 standard deviation from the mean) would still be unremarkable. But Z-scores greater than 1 (regardless of whether the score is negative or positive) indicate that a statement is treated significantly differently than most other statements. The higher the Z-score, the more valuable a statement is to participants in comparison to other statements; the same is true for negative Z-scores, except in those cases the statements are valued significantly less than other statements. Statements with negative Z-scores are not often critical to understanding the factors discussed here—though, when they are, they will be addressed. Z-scores are discussed in this chapter and the next because they allow us to go deeper in understanding how valuable a statement is within factors—and between factors—than we can go by comparing where participants placed a statement on the grid or where a statement falls in a composite sort. I relied on both composite sorts and Z-scores when interpreting factors, as I do when explaining them.

In this chapter I will present five factors—conceptions of freedom—that emerged from the UK dataset. Each conception of freedom will be introduced in a factor overview, including a description of the participants represented in the factor. This overview will be followed by a discussion of the factor that is illuminated by interviews with participants who hold that

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<sup>181</sup> Zabala and Pascual, "Bootstrapping Q Methodology to Improve the Understanding of Human Perspectives."

shared conception of freedom. The factors discussed in this chapter are UK Factors 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7. It is important not to place importance on the number in the factors' names. These are automatically assigned by the factor analysis software and the only real benefit to retaining them is that they enable the researcher to easily identify each factor and quickly locate it in the analysis results, which span dozens of pages in Excel workbooks—portions of which are recreated throughout this thesis. A total of eight UK factors were discovered during analysis, but only those representing the shared viewpoints of three or more participants are considered in this study; two-person factors are not considered reliable.<sup>182</sup>

The UK research took place in three locations: Humberside, England; South East Wales; and Central Scotland.<sup>183</sup> Participant cohorts were represented by the following number of individuals, for a total of 30 participants in the UK:

- Law enforcement professionals (LE): 8
- Survivors (VMS): 7
- Victim service providers (VSP): 15

These cohorts are represented in Figure 1.

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<sup>182</sup> Brown 9 Nov 2020.

<sup>183</sup> I originally intended to engage participants in Northern Ireland, as well. However, it was decided with my supervisors that Northern Ireland's recent history of conflict—and the political notions of freedom that have become a part of it—would make data from Northern Ireland difficult to analyze and integrate consistently into this study, given the time constraints around it. Additionally, political violence during the fieldwork period rendered a trip to Northern Ireland unfeasible.

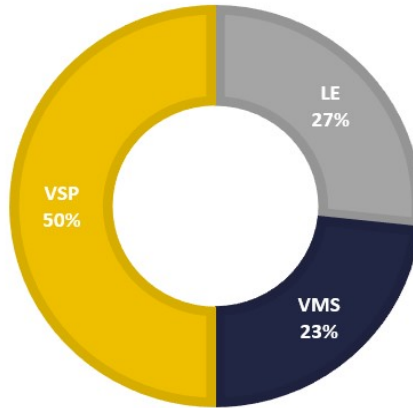


Figure 1: Cohorts represented by all UK participants, in percentages

## THE CENTRALITY OF FREE WILL

The statement *Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so* ranks consistently in Columns +4 and +5 in UK composite sorts. This statement's position in each composite sort and its Z-score in each factor are indicated in Table 4.

Free will is considered definitive of freedom; all the conceptions of freedom discussed in this chapter must be understood in the context of free will. It is central to all factors that a survivor *[has] free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so*.

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 4	Factor 6	Factor 7
Z-score	1.402	2.233	2.14	2.14	1.732
Composite sort position	+4	+5	+5	+5	+5

Table 4: Z-scores and position in composite sorts for the "free will" statement in the UK factors

## UK FACTOR 1: FREEDOM IS A SECURE PLACE IN AN IMPROVED WORLD

### Factor overview

Factor 1 emphasizes different kinds of securities in the context of an improved world. Image 11 shows the composite sort for UK Factor 1. This factor's positive emphasis on the statements *Living in a world without abuse or oppression* and *Having a place to call home* distinguish it from other UK factors and help to frame the other statements with which this factor agrees. For Factor 1, freedom depends upon external social conditions as opposed to depending on the actions or attitudes of a survivor. Respondents who load on Factor 1—that is, whose Q sorts define it or align to it—disagree with notions of freedom related to self-determination, or notions of freedom as an all-or-nothing concept.

## Composite Q sort for Factor 1

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Having legal proof that you are not a slave	Freedom is something you always possess in reality, even if someone else says you are a slave	Choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character	Being able to do what you want and to go where you want, without anybody interfering or telling you no	The ability to achieve goals that matter to you	To be able to defend yourself against people who try to limit your well-being, dominate you, or traffic you	Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you	The ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking	To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others	Not being subject to prejudice, discrimination, racism, or misunderstanding	To live without fear
You achieve freedom the moment you are physically removed from your trafficker	Living and working for your own benefit instead of for the benefit of others	Knowing the things society requires you to do and knowing the consequences of not doing those things	Determining your own way of life, as long as it does not negatively affect others	Belonging to a community or belonging in society	Having the right to choose where you live and where you work	To be able to get an education	To enjoy being alive or to feel there is a reason to be alive	To be protected in the areas of life where you are vulnerable	To be able to get the basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life	Living in a world without abuse or oppression
	Freedom is simply the opposite of slavery	To enjoy full citizenship in this country, including all the rights that come with it	Having the ability to question the ideas other people hand down to you and being able to reject ideas you cannot support	Having political and economic systems that do not dominate you or limit your options to the point where your decisions are not really your own	Being able to trust people and not being betrayed when you are kind to them	Being protected by the law and by social norms	To be given an equal opportunity with everybody else to thrive	Having a place to call home	Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so	
		To have enough money that you can save for your future and build a better life	Freedom is created by a community deciding to work together to end human trafficking	To stop believing the lies others have told you about yourself and about the world, so that those lies no longer have power over you	The ability to choose who you associate with and who you do not associate with	To know your heritage, culture, or origins and to be able to connect to other people who are like you	Knowing your own worth and knowing that it does not depend on other people	No longer having to make choices you don't like just so that you can survive		
			To have the opportunity to learn about something or someone before making a commitment to that thing or to that person	To have a voice in how society runs or a voice in your community	To have access to justice against the people who trafficked you	Feeling no shame	Being able to make decisions in your own right and on your own terms			
				To be able to leave a place, a person, or a job without any fear of negative consequences	Having relationships that support your personal development and growth	Refusing to let a trafficking experience in your past devastate you or cripple your life				
				To be able to follow whatever values or moral authority you choose	The process of adjusting to not being trafficked and being less impacted by your former trafficking experience	Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave				

### Legend

- \* Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.05$
- \*\* Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.01$
- z-Score for the statement is higher than in all other factors
- ◄ z-Score for the statement is lower than in all other factors

Image 11: Composite sort for UK Factor 1: Freedom is a secure place in an improved world

Factor 1 has ten distinguishing statements, or statements that it ranks significantly differently than other factors do.<sup>184</sup> Distinguishing statements are not the sole consideration when interpreting or making sense of a factor, but they can support factor interpretation. They are marked by an asterisk in composite sort images. In this case, some of Factor 1's distinguishing statements demonstrate the two-part definition of freedom as a secure place in an improved world. Those statements are listed below with their corresponding column score from the composite sort:

- *To live without fear* (+5)
- *Living in a world without abuse or oppression* (+5)
- *Not being subject to prejudice, discrimination, racism, or misunderstanding* (+4)
- *Having a place to call home* (+4)

Statements—including these—with Z-scores higher than 1 are listed in Table 5.

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<sup>184</sup> Watts and Stenner, *Doing Q Methodological Research*, 217.



Statement	Z-Score
<i>To live without fear</i>	2.118
<i>Living in a world without abuse or oppression</i>	1.734
<i>Not being subject to prejudice, discrimination, racism, or misunderstanding</i>	1.567
<i>To be able to get the basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life</i>	1.41
<i>Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so</i>	1.402
<i>To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others</i>	1.227
<i>To be protected in the areas of life where you are vulnerable</i>	1.164
<i>Having a place to call home</i>	1.044

Table 5: Statements with Z-scores greater than 1 in UK Factor 1

Participants from each cohort load on Factor 1: three LE participants, three VMS participants, and two VSP participants. Participant cohorts are represented in Table 6 and Figure 2.

Country		Wales	Scotland	England	Participants
Participants		2	5	1	8
Cohort	LE	2	1	0	3
	VMS	0	2	1	3
	VSP	0	2	0	2

Table 6: Participants loading on UK Factor 1, by cohort and country

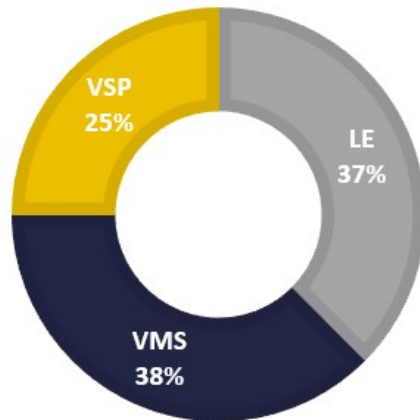


Figure 2: Cohorts represented by the participants loading on UK Factor 1, in percentages

## Discussion

Looking at Factor 1's composite sort in Image 11 can help broaden the landscape for us by showing us exactly where Factor 1 ranks each statement relative to the others. We can gain further insight into the meaning of Factor 1 by understanding the choices made by participants who load on Factor 1.

UK LE 1 is the participant who loads most strongly on Factor 1. His +5 column was identical to that in Factor 1's composite sort. This participant said his reason for populating that column as he did was that the statements *To live without fear* and *Living in a world without abuse or oppression*, "are a couple of very short but very succinct statements which ... reflect what the word freedom means. The wider reflection, if you like, not just to do with slavery. I just think that for me those two cards encapsulate exactly what freedom means."<sup>185</sup> For participant UK LE 1, freedom from slavery dovetails with a broader freedom that is not in reference to slavery. In one regard, this is not a surprising perspective; after all, modern slavery is intersectional with other issues, so freedom may be, too.

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<sup>185</sup> UK LE 1, interview.

Another observation that can be made about Factor 1 is that it strongly disagrees with statements that suggest freedom is an all-or-nothing concept or that freedom can be wholly accomplished by a simple status change or mechanism. We see this in its negative emphasis on the following statements:

- *Having legal proof that you are not a slave*—UK participants sometimes interpreted this statement in reference to the conclusive grounds decision (CG) survivors receive in the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).<sup>186</sup> This decision is a yes-or-no conclusion by the government that someone is or is not a victim of slavery. A positive CG could be considered “legal proof” that a person was once a slave and that, by nature of being in the NRM and no longer being actively victimized, they are no longer a slave.
- *You achieve freedom the moment you are physically removed from your trafficker*—This statement indicates that freedom can be obtained instantaneously or is directly correlated to one’s location relative to their exploiter.
- *Freedom is something you always possess in reality, even if someone else says you are a slave*—This is very much an all-or-nothing statement. It represents a more philosophical idea in the concourse that freedom is every person’s underlying meta-reality. If someone says you are slave or treats you as a slave, then it is they who are out of sync with reality—they do not have the power to actually change reality, only to defy it.

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<sup>186</sup> A negative CG means the government does not consider an individual a victim of slavery and they may not remain in the NRM; a positive CG means the government does consider an individual a victim of slavery. It should be noted that a CG may not correspond to the reality of whether an individual has experienced slavery.

- *Freedom is simply the opposite of slavery*—This statement downplays any possible complexities of freedom and focuses simply on the absence of slavery.

Participant UK VMS 7 also loads on Factor 1 and can offer insight on the statements that Factor 1 disagrees with. His two statements in Column -5 were *You achieve freedom the moment you are physically removed from your trafficker* and *Freedom is something you always possess in reality, even if someone else says you are a slave*. In the pre-sort, these were the only two statements this participant disagreed with, so while his -5 column is not identical to that of the Factor 1 composite sort, his exclusive disagreement with these statements occasioned a revealing discussion about the statements. When I asked this participant why these two statements were in Column -5, he said,

I escaped [slavery several] years ago and I'm still not in a better place. ... You're [the survivor] not really free. ... All you've done is expose [the trafficker], if you could, to the authorities. ... But nothing else, in my eyes, has actually come out of it. Maybe my issue is because they seem to think I'm proficient enough to sort myself out. Or I give myself an attitude or an aura that most people [think], "Oh yeah, he's smart as chips. He'll be able to [take care of himself]." But I can't because ... when you don't have [identification documents] you may as well be an illegal alien, as they say. And you do feel like one. Fine, I'm no longer persecuted, but I've gone to a different persecution—of ignorance, arrogance, all sorts, and it comes through the system and its administrators.<sup>187</sup>

For this participant, unfreedom continues even after being physically separated from his trafficker. He sees the sources of this unfreedom as the NRM and the UK Home Office.<sup>188</sup> He further explained to me that he feels this unfreedom, or "persecution," continues whenever he has to explain trafficking to a government employee or another professional

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<sup>187</sup> UK VMS 7, interview.

<sup>188</sup> UK VMS 7, interview.

who is in a position to support survivors, but who has not been educated on human trafficking or on how to engage sensitively with survivors.<sup>189</sup>

Participant UK LE 1 offers further insight regarding the statements in Factor 1's -5 column. He said,

I think there's far more to freedom than just being physically removed from your trafficker. Quite frankly there's all kinds of unseen shackles, if you like. If it was only that simple. But obviously the effects of not having that freedom go far deeper and far wider than just being physically removed from the person that's enslaved you. And I'm not sure the legal proof that you are not a slave is relevant at all, or how that would even look. We're all born free and we are all free, to an extent. I think it's just all to do with levels of freedom, almost. We're all imprisoned, in a way, to all kinds of different things, good and bad.<sup>190</sup>

## UK FACTOR 2: FREEDOM IS CONCRETE SECURITIES AND BASIC CHOICES WITH NO INTERFERENCE

### Factor overview

In Factor 2, freedom is conceived of as having one's basic needs secured and being able to make basic choices with little or no interference. Image 12 displays the composite sort for Factor 2.

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<sup>189</sup> UK VMS 7, interview.

<sup>190</sup> UK LE 1, interview.

## Composite Q sort for Factor 2

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
You achieve freedom the moment you are physically removed from your trafficker	To have the opportunity to learn about something or someone before making a commitment to that thing or to that person	Knowing the things society requires you to do and knowing the consequences of not doing those things	Living in a world without abuse or oppression	Knowing your own worth and knowing that it does not depend on other people	Determining your own way of life, as long as it does not negatively affect others	The ability to choose who you associate with and who you do not associate with	Choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character	Being able to make decisions in your own right and on your own terms	※ Having a place to call home	Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so
Freedom is something you always possess in reality, even if someone else says you are a slave	◀ Having political and economic systems that do not dominate you or limit your options to the point where your decisions are not really your own	To know your heritage, culture, or origins and to be able to connect to other people who are like you	To have enough money that you can save for your future and build a better life	Belonging to a community or belonging in society	Having relationships that support your personal development and growth	To be able to get an education	To be given an equal opportunity with everybody else to thrive	Being able to do what you want and to go where you want, without anybody interfering or telling you no	Having the right to choose where you live and where you work	To be able to get the basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life
	Having legal proof that you are not a slave	To have access to justice against the people who trafficked you	Being able to trust people and not being betrayed when you are kind to them	The process of adjusting to not being trafficked and being less impacted by your former trafficking experience	Not being subject to prejudice, discrimination, racism, or misunderstanding	▶ To have a voice in how society runs or a voice in your community	Living and working for your own benefit instead of for the benefit of others	To be able to leave a place, a person, or a job without any fear of negative consequences	To live without fear	
		※ Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave	Refusing to let a trafficking experience in your past devastate you or cripple your life	※ Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you	No longer having to make choices you don't like just so that you can survive	Being protected by the law and by social norms	Freedom is created by a community deciding to work together to end human trafficking	To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others		
			To enjoy full citizenship in this country, including all the rights that come with it	To stop believing the lies others have told you about yourself and about the world, so that those lies no longer have power over you	Feeling no shame	To be protected in the areas of life where you are vulnerable	The ability to achieve goals that matter to you			
				Freedom is simply the opposite of slavery	To be able to follow whatever values or moral authority you choose	To be able to defend yourself against people who try to limit your well-being, dominate you, or traffic you				
				※ The ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking	Having the ability to question the ideas other people hand down to you and being able to reject ideas you cannot support	To enjoy being alive or to feel there is a reason to be alive				

### Legend

- ※ Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.05$
- ※※ Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.01$
- ▶ z-Score for the statement is higher than in all other factors
- ◀ z-Score for the statement is lower than in all other factors

Image 12: Composite sort for UK Factor 2: Freedom is concrete securities and basic choices with no interference

Factor 2 ranks *Having a place to call home* more highly than other UK factors—including Factor 1. It is a distinguishing statement in Column +4. Participants loading on Factor 2 conceive of home as one of the literal *basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life*, which is different from the way in which it is viewed for participants loading on Factor 1.

Furthermore, Factor 2 places a negative value on statements about knowledge or internal thought processes, including:

- *Freedom is something you always possess in reality, even if someone else says you are a slave*
- *To have the opportunity to learn about something or someone before making a commitment to that thing or to that person*
- *Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave*
- *To know your heritage, culture, or origins and to be able to connect to other people who are like you*
- *Knowing the things society requires you to do and knowing the consequences of not doing those things*

It similarly places a low value on statements about structures or mechanisms in society, such as:

- *Having legal proof that you are not a slave*
- *Having political and economic systems that do not dominate you or limit your options to the point where your decisions are not really your own*
- *To have access to justice against the people who trafficked you*

This suggests that Factor 2 does not consider the role of political and economic structures in freedom to be substantial. This interpretation is supported by the fact that Factor 2 is distinguished from other factors by its uniquely low placement of the statement *Having political and*

*economic systems that do not dominate you or limit your options to the point where your decisions are not really your own* in Column -4.

Another distinguishing quality of this factor is its neutrality toward the statements *Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you* and *The ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking*. Factor 2's composite sort shows both of these statements in Column -1—lower than their places in any other factor's composite sort. These statements relate to a personal or internal experience of life after modern slavery. Another statement of this kind is *Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave*, which is in Column -3 of Factor 2's composite sort. Once again, this is lower than the statement is placed in any other factor.

A list of the distinguishing statements (and their composite sort column scores) that are most helpful to interpreting Factor 2 is below:

- *Having a place to call home* (+4)
- *Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you* (-1)
- *The ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking* (-1)
- *Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave* (-3)
- *Having political and economic systems that do not dominate you or limit your options to the point where your decisions are not really your own* (-4)

The statements with Z-scores higher than 1 in Factor 2 are listed in



Table 7.

Statement	Z-score
<i>Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so</i>	2.233
<i>To be able to get the basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life</i>	1.749
<i>Having a place to call home</i>	1.724
<i>Having the right to choose where you live and where you work</i>	1.521
<i>To live without fear</i>	1.507
<i>Being able to make decisions in your own right and on your own terms</i>	1.3
<i>Being able to do what you want and to go where you want, without anybody interfering or telling you no</i>	1.147
<i>To be able to leave a place, a person, or a job without any fear of negative consequences</i>	1.063

Table 7: Statements with Z-scores greater than 1 in UK Factor 2

The representation of participant cohorts is noteworthy for Factor 2. Seventy-five percent of the VSP participants from England load on this factor, and 57% of all participants from England load on this factor. Additionally, the VSP cohort is represented with surprising strength in Factor 2; VSP participants represent 50% of participants in the UK study but 60% of the participants loading on this factor.

This may explain why Factor 2 resonates so readily with gray literature produced by organizations providing direct victim services. Furthermore, none of the LE or VSP participants loading on Factor 2 work exclusively with survivors of modern slavery. Two participants specialize in working with homeless individuals, one works with victims or witnesses of any crime, and one works generally with vulnerable or excluded communities. This may help explain the high priority this factor places on

basic needs.

The breakdowns of participants by cohort and country are visualized in Table 8 and Figure 3.

Country		Wales	Scotland	England	Participants
Participants		1	0	4	5
Cohort	LE	0	0	1	1
	VMS	1	0	0	1
	VSP	0	0	3	3

Table 8: Participants loading on UK Factor 2, by cohort and country

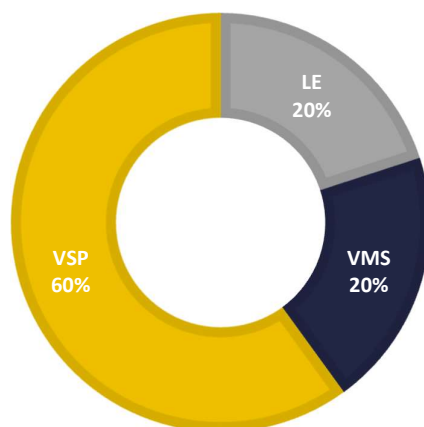


Figure 3: Cohorts represented by the participants loading on UK Factor 2, in percentages

## Discussion

Participant UK VSP 4's Q sort is the most similar to Factor 2. *Having a place to call home* is a distinguishing statement in Factor 2 and this participant placed it in Column +5 in his Q sort. He also placed the *free will* statement in this column. When I asked why he chose these two statements as the ones he most agreed with, he said,

Having a place to call home is, for me ... the starting point of everything. If you've got a safe place to call home, everything else can be built there. So how I look at it is, once you've got a safe place to call home, you can grow and develop from everything else. It's so much easier to achieve because you're not worried about your immediate living situation or safety. ... And then the next card follows on from that. ... Having free will and being able to make

choices is I think a really important step because it shows that the onus and direction of that person's life has been given back to that person. It's *up to them to make informed choices*, but they have the free will to be able to make them.<sup>191</sup>

Interestingly, this participant agreed with the statement *Having political and economic systems that do not dominate you or limit your options to the point where your decisions are not really your own* during the pre-sort but placed it in the -4 column, where it is also located in the composite sort for Factor 2. He offered the following explanation for this.

I don't know of any political systems that don't limit people's options. ... That card is almost like this exercise [Q sorting] where you have a degree of choice and free will, but it's confined within the restrictions imposed on you. To me that's not necessarily always free will. ... We all make decisions on a daily basis that we say to ourselves are our own free will and our own free choice, but they are really decisions we make in the confines of what policy and law determines we can make. So I don't necessarily think [that statement is] part of people surviving modern slavery because ... even as a survivor, they're still going to have to make difficult decisions. They're still going to have, quite often, a list of options that they need to choose from.<sup>192</sup>

He went on to say that, although the statement represents one aspect of freedom, it is not of the same significance as *Having a place to call home*.<sup>193</sup>

## UK FACTOR 4: FREEDOM IS PERSONAL RESILIENCE AND A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE OF THE WORLD

### Factor overview

Factor 4 places a high value on personal, internal resilience and on positive experiences of the external world. These values extend well

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<sup>191</sup> UK VSP 4, interview, (emphasis added).

<sup>192</sup> UK VSP 4, interview.

<sup>193</sup> UK VSP 4, interview.

beyond the +4 and +5 columns to include Columns +3 and +2, as demonstrated in the composite sort in Image 13.

### Composite Q sort for Factor 4

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Freedom is simply the opposite of slavery	Freedom is something you always possess in reality, even if someone else says you are a slave	Freedom is created by a community deciding to work together to end human trafficking	To have access to justice against the people who trafficked you	Having the ability to question the ideas other people hand down to you and being able to reject ideas you cannot support	Having a place to call home	Feeling no shame	※▶ To stop believing the lies others have told you about yourself and about the world, so that those lies no longer have power over you	Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you	To live without fear	Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so
You achieve freedom the moment you are physically removed from your trafficker	※※◀ Knowing the things society requires you to do and knowing the consequences of not doing those things	To have enough money that you can save for your future and build a better life	To be able to get an education	Not being subject to prejudice, discrimination, racism, or misunderstanding	※▶ To have the opportunity to learn about something or someone before making a commitment to that thing or to that person	Choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character	※ To be able to get the basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life	To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others	▶ To enjoy being alive or to feel there is a reason to be alive	Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave
	Having legal proof that you are not a slave	Being able to do what you want and to go where you want, without anybody interfering or telling you no	To have a voice in how society runs or a voice in your community	To be able to leave a place, a person, or a job without any fear of negative consequences	To be able to defend yourself against people who try to limit your well-being, dominate you, or traffic you	Being able to trust people and not being betrayed when you are kind to them	The ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking	Being able to make decisions in your own right and on your own terms	Refusing to let a trafficking experience in your past devastate you or cripple your life	
		To know your heritage, culture, or origins and to be able to connect to other people who are like you	Living in a world without abuse or oppression	Being protected by the law and by social norms	The ability to achieve goals that matter to you	Living and working for your own benefit instead of for the benefit of others	To be protected in the areas of life where you are vulnerable	Knowing your own worth and knowing that it does not depend on other people		
			Having political and economic systems that do not dominate you or limit your options to the point where your decisions are not really your own	The process of adjusting to not being trafficked and being less impacted by your former trafficking experience	Having relationships that support your personal development and growth	The ability to choose who you associate with and who you do not associate with	No longer having to make choices you don't like just so that you can survive			
				To enjoy full citizenship in this country, including all the rights that come with it	Belonging to a community or belonging in society	To be given an equal opportunity with everybody else to thrive				
				Having the right to choose where you live and where you work	To be able to follow whatever values or moral authority you choose	Determining your own way of life, as long as it does not negatively affect others				

#### Legend

- ※ Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.05$
- ※※ Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.01$
- ▶ z-Score for the statement is higher than in all other factors
- ◀ z-Score for the statement is lower than in all other factors

Image 13: Composite sort for UK Factor 4: Freedom is personal resilience and a positive experience of the world

Two distinguishing statements frame this conception of freedom: *To stop believing the lies others have told you about yourself and about the world, so that those lies no longer have power over you* (Column +2) and *To enjoy being alive or to feel there is a reason to be alive* (Column +4).

Additional statements that demonstrate personal resilience in Factor 4 include:

- *Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave*
- *To live without fear* (This statement also relates to positive experiences of the external world.)
- *To enjoy being alive or to feel there is a reason to be alive*
- *Refusing to let a trafficking experience in your past devastate you or cripple your life*
- *Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you*
- *Knowing your own worth and knowing that it does not depend on other people*

Statements that demonstrate a positive experience of the external world include *To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others* and *To live without fear*. (The latter statement also relates to personal resilience.)

Personal resilience and a positive experience of the external world are prioritized before any rights, relationships, or societal structures, as the composite sort and Z-score table (Table 9) show. Conversely, this factor does not consider freedom something that can be attained through knowledge, achievement, or status.

Statement	Z-score
<i>Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so</i>	2.14
<i>Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave</i>	1.475
<i>To live without fear</i>	1.469
<i>To enjoy being alive or to feel there is a reason to be alive</i>	1.302
<i>Refusing to let a trafficking experience in your past devastate you or cripple your life</i>	1.289
<i>Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you</i>	1.287
<i>To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others</i>	1.253
<i>Being able to make decisions in your own right and on your own terms</i>	1.042
<i>Knowing your own worth and knowing that it does not depend on other people</i>	1.017

Table 9: Statements with Z-scores greater than 1 in UK Factor 4

Participants loading on Factor 4 are from Scotland and Wales; no participants from England load on this factor. Participant information is presented in Table 10 and Figure 4.

Country	Wales	Scotland	England	Participants
<b>Participants</b>	3	3	0	<b>6</b>
<b>Cohort</b> LE	1	1	0	2
VMS	1	0	0	1
VSP	1	2	0	3

Table 10: Participants loading on UK Factor 4, by cohort and country

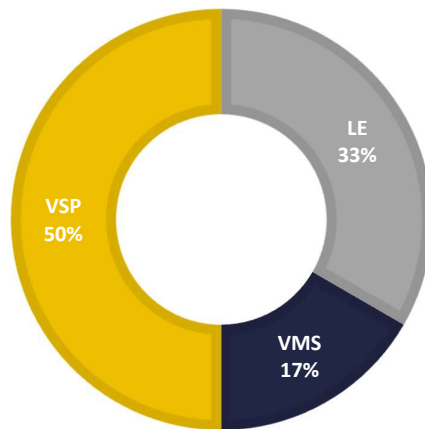


Figure 4: Cohorts represented by the participants loading on UK Factor 4, in percentages

## Discussion

Participant UK VSP 12 loaded most strongly on Factor 4. She placed the statement *To enjoy being alive or to feel there is a reason to be alive* in Column +5 in her Q sort. This is one of Factor 4's distinguishing statements. This participant also chose *To live without fear* for Column +5; in the Factor 4 composite sort, this statement is in Column +4. She said, "Love is ... key. Essentially, to be able to come to terms with loving yourself for who you are or being able to deal with yourself and accept yourself."<sup>194</sup> She also said that fear has been a dominant experience for people who have experienced slavery. Even when a survivor is physically free from their trafficker, she said, fear can be "created" by every new person and every new situation as a result of that former experience as a victim.<sup>195</sup> Freedom from slavery involves being able to live life without these experiences of fear.

This participant had only three cards in the Disagree pile after the pre-sort. These were:

<sup>194</sup> UK VSP 12, interview.

<sup>195</sup> UK VSP 12.



- *You achieve freedom the moment you are physically removed from your trafficker*
- *Freedom is something you always possess in reality, even if someone else says you are a slave*
- *Having legal proof that you are not a slave*

Factor 4's composite sort places these statements in Columns -4 and -5. Participant UK VSP 12 shared her reasons for disagreeing with these cards. She said that a survivor being *physically removed* from her trafficker is "just part of the journey" and does not necessarily mean that survivor will "move toward freedom."<sup>196</sup> This is consistent with Factor 4's emphasis on personal resilience—a person's relative physical location to someone who has enslaved them has no intrinsic bearing on that person's internal capacities. Reflecting on the statement *Freedom is something you always possess in reality, even if someone else says you are a slave*, this participant said, "We are social creatures... and a lot of our ideas about ourselves are created by the people that are around us."<sup>197</sup> This statement, she said, downplays the realities of slavery. Finally, *Having legal proof that you are not a slave* is an irrelevant and demeaning statement from this participant's perspective. Freedom is a "human process," she said; it's not about legal proof. An authority declaring, "'You're not a slave' ... dehumanizes people" by denying the human, internal process of freedom.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> UK VSP 12.

<sup>197</sup> UK VSP 12.

<sup>198</sup> UK VSP 12.

## UK FACTOR 6: FREEDOM IS SURVIVOR-CENTERED, COMPREHENSIVE RESILIENCE

### Factor overview

Factor 6's conception of freedom is survivor-centered, comprehensive resilience. Here, resilience means that an individual is able to recover from their experience of slavery and to withstand future threats of victimization. The composite Q sort for Factor 6 can be seen in Image 14.

## Composite Q sort for Factor 6

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Freedom is something you always possess in reality, even if someone else says you are a slave	Being able to do what you want and to go where you want, without anybody interfering or telling you no	To know your heritage, culture, or origins and to be able to connect to other people who are like you	Feeling no shame	Having a place to call home	Having political and economic systems that do not dominate you or limit your options to the point where your decisions are not really your own	To be protected in the areas of life where you are vulnerable	To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others	***► To be able to defend yourself against people who try to limit your well-being, dominate you, or traffic you	***► The process of adjusting to not being trafficked and being less impacted by your former trafficking experience	Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so
You achieve freedom the moment you are physically removed from your trafficker	Having legal proof that you are not a slave	**◄ To live without fear	Belonging to a community or belonging in society	The ability to choose who you associate with and who you do not associate with	Determining your own way of life, as long as it does not negatively affect others	To be able to leave a place, a person, or a job without any fear of negative consequences	Being protected by the law and by social norms	Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave	Refusing to let a trafficking experience in your past devastate you or cripple your life	► Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you
	◄ To have enough money that you can save for your future and build a better life	To enjoy full citizenship in this country, including all the rights that come with it	Knowing the things society requires you to do and knowing the consequences of not doing those things	Having the ability to question the ideas other people hand down to you and being able to reject ideas you cannot support	Knowing your own worth and knowing that it does not depend on other people	To be given an equal opportunity with everybody else to thrive	No longer having to make choices you don't like just so that you can survive	Freedom is created by a community deciding to work together to end human trafficking	To have access to justice against the people who trafficked you	
		**◄ To be able to follow whatever values or moral authority you choose	Having the right to choose where you live and where you work	To be able to get an education	Having relationships that support your personal development and growth	*** Living in a world without abuse or oppression	Living and working for your own benefit instead of for the benefit of others	The ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking		
			Being able to trust people and not being betrayed when you are kind to them	To have a voice in how society runs or a voice in your community	To be able to get the basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life	***► Freedom is simply the opposite of slavery	Being able to make decisions in your own right and on your own terms			
				The ability to achieve goals that matter to you	To enjoy being alive or to feel there is a reason to be alive	◄ To stop believing the lies others have told you about yourself and about the world, so that those lies no longer have power over you				
				To have the opportunity to learn about something or someone before making a commitment to that thing or to that person	Not being subject to prejudice, discrimination, racism, or misunderstanding	Choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character				

### Legend

- \*\*\* Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.05$
- \*\* Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.01$
- z-Score for the statement is higher than in all other factors
- ◄ z-Score for the statement is lower than in all other factors

Image 14: Composite sort for UK Factor 6: Freedom is survivor-centered comprehensive resilience

Resilience in Factor 6 is survivor-centered because it prioritizes a survivor's recovery—beginning first with the statement *Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you* and moving into statements about internal recovery. Here, a survivor's resilience is comprehensive, or whole-person resilience. Taken together, the following statements speak to this comprehensiveness:

- *Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you* is in reference not only to physical harm, but to any other *damaging effects* caused by trafficking, as defined by a survivor.
- *The process of adjusting to not being trafficked and being less impacted by your former trafficking experience* is about an internal process—often both cognitive and emotional. It speaks to a survivor's ability, over time, to separate their previous experience of slavery from their experience of the present.
- *Refusing to let a trafficking experience in your past devastate you or cripple your life* indicates cognitive resistance to potential long-term, negative effects of a slavery experience. This is about a survivor working toward a resilient future for themselves—or making their future self resilient to previous experiences.
- *Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave* is, similarly, an act of cognitive resistance. But this statement also speaks to a survivor's identity and self-image.
- *The ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking* is distinct from the

statement about *being healed*. Even if a survivor were clinically healed from the effects of slavery, they might still experience the world in reference to those effects. For example, they may measure their post-slavery experiences against experiences they had while in slavery. Or they may regularly rely on coping mechanisms to help them avoid psychological triggers that spark traumatic memories. The statement *The ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking* conceives of an ability to live without these, or other, regular references to past enslavement.

Resilience is comprehensive in another way, as well; its first priority is an individual survivor but its second priority is society's ability to recover from slavery and withstand future instances of it. Statements regarding this comprehensive aspect of resilience are examined below:

- *To have access to justice against the people who trafficked you* speaks to a survivor's access to legal justice against their perpetrator—which some consider an important element of freedom—but is predicated on the idea that justice would be available to them in the first place. A society that facilitates justice not only supports the resilience of survivors but its own resilience to modern slavery through the righting of wrongs.
- *To be able to defend yourself against people who try to limit your well-being, dominate you, or traffic you* certainly speaks to a survivor's personal resilience. But it also speaks to comprehensive resilience at the societal level because it implies that perpetrators will have less success committing future modern slavery crimes against survivors and, by nature of being less successful in their designs toward individuals, will have less

success in the society those individuals inhabit. If an individual is less vulnerable, society is less vulnerable. There is a further link between personal resilience and a community or society's resilience; being *able to defend yourself* might include making use of the structures society has in place to protect and maintain individuals' rights or well-being, including making use of programs aimed at supporting survivors.<sup>199</sup>

- *Freedom is created by a community deciding to work together to end human trafficking* indicates that a community commits to a resilient future alongside its commitment to the resilience of individuals within that community who have already been victimized.

Statements with a Z-score of 1 or greater in Factor 6 are listed in Table 11.

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<sup>199</sup> I am grateful to Ariel Okamoto for highlighting this connection.

Statement	Z-score
<i>Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so</i>	2.14
<i>Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you</i>	1.96
<i>The process of adjusting to not being trafficked and being less impacted by your former trafficking experience</i>	1.835
<i>Refusing to let a trafficking experience in your past devastate you or cripple your life</i>	1.58
<i>To have access to justice against the people who trafficked you</i>	1.183
<i>To be able to defend yourself against people who try to limit your well-being, dominate you, or traffic you</i>	1.168
<i>Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave</i>	1.157
<i>Freedom is created by a community deciding to work together to end human trafficking</i>	1.113
<i>The ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking</i>	1.085
<i>To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others</i>	1.043

Table 11: Statements with Z-scores greater than 1 in UK Factor 6

Participants from all three UK nations load on Factor 6, though the majority are from Scotland. Participant data is displayed in Table 12 and Figure 5.

Country	Wales	Scotland	England	Participants
<b>Participants</b>	1	4	1	<b>6</b>
<b>Cohort</b> LE	1	0	1	2
VMS	0	1	0	1
VSP	0	3	0	3

Table 12: Participants loading on UK Factor 6, by cohort and country

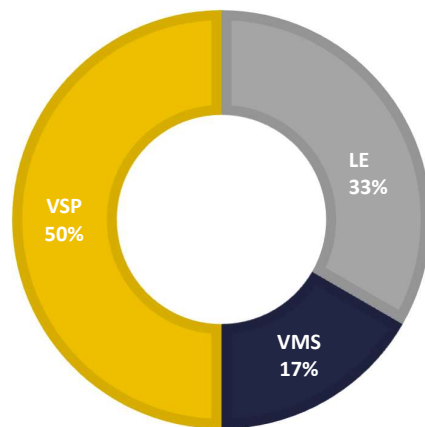


Figure 5: Cohorts represented by the participants loading on UK Factor 6, in percentages

## Discussion

Participant UK VSP 11 expounded on the meaning and importance of the statement *Freedom is created by a community deciding to work together to end human trafficking*. For her, it was almost a given that support services for survivors are a community effort. The real substance of the statement lies in a community's decision to stop modern slavery from continuing. "It's one of the important aspects of trying to combat modern slavery," she said. "It's about people taking responsibility, everybody taking responsibility for each other and the communities they live and work in. ... It's people working together, actually. Actually learning what the signs are, taking responsibility to report things."<sup>200</sup> For this participant, a community commitment to ending modern slavery also includes consumers being mindful of possible slavery in the supply chains of what they purchase and reducing the demand for "services" like forced sexual activity.<sup>201</sup>

<sup>200</sup> UK VSP 11, interview.

<sup>201</sup> UK VSP 11, interview.



## UK FACTOR 7: FREEDOM IS SELF-DETERMINATION IN A FAIR WORLD

### Factor overview

Factor 7 conceives of freedom as self-determination in a fair world.

Image 15 displays the composite sort for this factor.

## Composite Q sort for Factor 7

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
***◀ Having a place to call home	Freedom is created by a community deciding to work together to end human trafficking	To have enough money that you can save for your future and build a better life	To know your heritage, culture, or origins and to be able to connect to other people who are like you	Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave	* The ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking	Not being subject to prejudice, discrimination, racism, or misunderstanding	To be able to leave a place, a person, or a job without any fear of negative consequences	***▶ Determining your own way of life, as long as it does not negatively affect others	To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others	Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so
Having legal proof that you are not a slave	Freedom is something you always possess in reality, even if someone else says you are a slave	Belonging to a community or belonging in society	To enjoy full citizenship in this country, including all the rights that come with it	Refusing to let a trafficking experience in your past devastate you or cripple your life	Having relationships that support your personal development and growth	Having the ability to question the ideas other people hand down to you and being able to reject ideas you cannot support	* Living in a world without abuse or oppression	To live without fear	▶ Choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character	Being able to make decisions in your own right and on your own terms
	You achieve freedom the moment you are physically removed from your trafficker	Knowing the things society requires you to do and knowing the consequences of not doing those things	To stop believing the lies others have told you about yourself and about the world, so that those lies no longer have power over you	To have a voice in how society runs or a voice in your community	To be able to defend yourself against people who try to limit your well-being, dominate you, or traffic you	Living and working for your own benefit instead of for the benefit of others	To have access to justice against the people who trafficked you	To be given an equal opportunity with everybody else to thrive	Being able to do what you want and to go where you want, without anybody interfering or telling you no	
		◀ To be able to get an education	Feeling no shame	To enjoy being alive or to feel there is a reason to be alive	To be protected in the areas of life where you are vulnerable	The ability to achieve goals that matter to you	Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you	Having the right to choose where you live and where you work		
			To have the opportunity to learn about something or someone before making a commitment to that thing or to that person	The ability to choose who you associate with and who you do not associate with	Being protected by the law and by social norms	To be able to get the basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life	▶ To be able to follow whatever values or moral authority you choose			
				The process of adjusting to not being trafficked and being less impacted by your former trafficking experience	Knowing your own worth and knowing that it does not depend on other people	Being able to trust people and not being betrayed when you are kind to them				
				Freedom is simply the opposite of slavery	Having political and economic systems that do not dominate you or limit your options to the point where your decisions are not really your own	No longer having to make choices you don't like just so that you can survive				

### Legend

- \* Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.05$
- \*\*\* Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.01$
- ▶ z-Score for the statement is higher than in all other factors
- ◀ z-Score for the statement is lower than in all other factors

Factor 7 is distinguished by its high level of agreement—relative to all other UK factors—with three statements related to self-determination. These are:

- *Choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character*
- *Determining your own way of life, as long as it does not negatively affect others*
- *To be able to follow whatever values or moral authority you choose*

For participants loading on Factor 7, living in a fair world means living in a world where you are treated equally with others and have access to the justice you are due.

This factor is also distinguished by its remarkably low level of agreement—relative to all other UK factors—with the statement *Having a place to call home*.

Statements with Z-scores greater than 1 in Factor 7 are listed in Table 13.

Statement	Z-score
<i>Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so</i>	1.732
<i>Being able to make decisions in your own right and on your own terms</i>	1.608
<i>To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others</i>	1.582
<i>Choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character</i>	1.515
<i>Being able to do what you want and to go where you want, without anybody interfering or telling you no</i>	1.394
<i>Determining your own way of life, as long as it does not negatively affect others</i>	1.371
<i>To live without fear</i>	1.303
<i>To be given an equal opportunity with everybody else to thrive</i>	1.232
<i>Having the right to choose where you live and where you work</i>	1.172
<i>To be able to leave a place, a person, or a job without any fear of negative consequences</i>	1.158
<i>Living in a world without abuse or oppression</i>	1.083
<i>To have access to justice against the people who trafficked you</i>	1.015

Table 13: Statements with Z-scores greater than 1 in UK Factor 7

Breakdowns of the participant groups loading on Factor 7 are presented in Table 14 and Figure 6. Each UK nation is represented by these participants. The factor is weighted with VSP participants. No LE participants load on this factor.

Country		Wales	Scotland	England	Participants
Participants		2	2	1	5
Cohort	LE	0	0	0	0
	VMS	0	1	0	1
	VSP	2	1	1	4

Table 14: Participants loading on UK Factor 7, by cohort and country

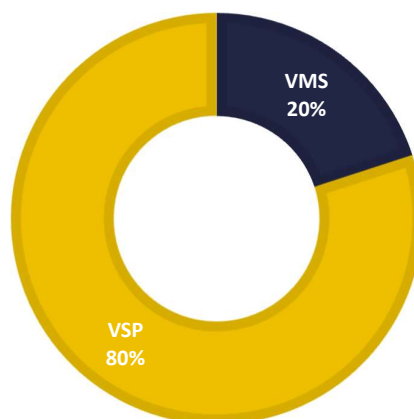


Figure 6: Cohorts represented by the participants loading on UK Factor 7, in percentages

## Discussion

VSP participants are even more disproportionately represented in Factor 7 than in Factor 2, compared to their representation in the whole UK study. One survivor does load on Factor 7, but this is largely a perspective shared among service providers. Two of the VSP participants loading on this factor work exclusively with children, which may inform their perspective on freedom.

Reflections from participant UK VSP 2 offer insight to how Factor 7 conceives of self-determination and why it is important. Her clients are children, and she said that many of the choices they make while being exploited are driven by survival rather than being driven by their personal ideas about the life they would like to live. She said, “Once they’re groomed and entrenched in [exploitation], it’s really difficult to bring them

out. ... I've never met a little child, [who] when you say, 'What do you want to be when they grow up?' [says], 'I want to be a drug dealer.' You know, they always want to be an ambulance driver, a nurse, a teacher. ... It's that sort of thing."<sup>202</sup> She went on to say that, by the time an individual is dealing drugs (for example, as a victim of county lines exploitation), they may believe that is what they want for their life. But this is not an idea that originates from their personal vision for their life. Rather, this participant attributes it to successful grooming by a perpetrator.<sup>203</sup>

Participant UK VSP 2 further drew a connection between the idea of perpetrators influencing what a child or young person thinks they want and the fact that sometimes victims—both children and adults—will not at first see themselves as victims when they exit a situation of modern slavery.<sup>204</sup> This can inhibit someone's recovery if they are reticent to engage the support services available, but which they do not believe they need. Perpetrators can have profound influence over how a person sees themselves and, therefore, over the life-shaping decisions a person makes.

Participant UK VSP 13 placed the statement *Choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character* in the +5 column; this statement is a distinguishing statement for Factor 7. He also placed *Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so* in Column +5. For this participant, there is a connection between the two. He selected these two cards

because they spoke not about the physical, but about the psychological. ... Free will is also I suppose a theoretical phrase that has its own meaning within academic circles, but I think the things that struck me about that card were "the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so." I think

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<sup>202</sup> UK VSP 2, interview.

<sup>203</sup> UK VSP 2, interview.

<sup>204</sup> UK VSP 2, interview.

that the psychological element of that spoke to me quite a lot. And again, “Choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character.” You have the right to choose, that’s something that spoke to me. Again, that’s getting away from the physical side of things.<sup>205</sup>

This resonates with participant UK VSP 2’s perspective on self-determination.

Participant UK VSP 13 placed the statement *Having legal proof that you are not a slave* in Column -5 during his Q sort—where it is also placed in Factor 7’s composite sort. He said he “recoiled” from the statement. It has “no relevance to modern slavery, at all. I am unequivocal on that point.”<sup>206</sup>

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Analysis of the UK dataset revealed five distinct factors, or conceptions of freedom. Those conceptions are:

- Freedom is a secure place in an improved world (UK Factor 1)
- Freedom is concrete securities and basic choices with no interference (UK Factor 2)
- Freedom is personal resilience and a positive experience of the world (UK Factor 4)
- Freedom is survivor-centered comprehensive resilience (UK Factor 6)
- Freedom is self-determination in a fair world (UK Factor 7)

Free will is central to all these conceptions. There are two further themes that have also emerged throughout this chapter: choice and resilience. In addition to placing a high value on free will, most of the UK factors also

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<sup>205</sup> UK VSP 13, interview.

<sup>206</sup> UK VSP 13, interview.

treat either choice or resilience as definitive of freedom. These themes recur in the US findings presented in the next chapter will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 6.



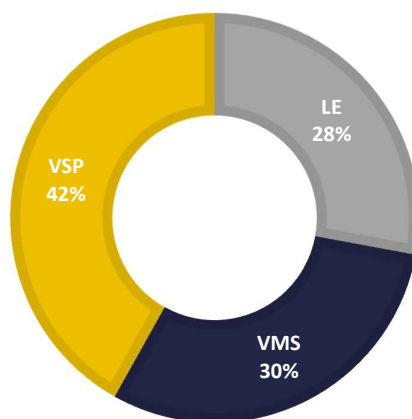
## CHAPTER 5

# US CONCEPTIONS OF FREEDOM

In this chapter I will present the findings from fieldwork conducted in the US. As in the UK, participant cohorts included law enforcement professionals (LE), survivors (VMS), and victim service providers (VSP). The US research took place in three locations: Central Florida, Southern California, and the Greater Seattle area in Washington State. Participant cohorts were represented by the following number of individuals, for a total of 43 participants.

- LE: 12
- VMS: 13
- VSP: 18

These cohorts are represented in percentages in Figure 7.



*Figure 7: Cohorts represented by all US participants, in percentages*

In this chapter I will present six factors that emerged from the US dataset: Factors 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7. These six factors each represent the shared perspective of at least three participants, or a total of 41 of the 43 US participants.

### THE CENTRALITY OF FREE WILL

As with the factors from the UK dataset, the statement *Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so* ranks consistently in Columns +4 and +5 for the US factors. Its Z-score and position in each factor’s composite sort is indicated in Table 15. Free will is considered definitive of freedom; all the conceptions of freedom discussed in this chapter must be understood in the context of free will. It is central to all factors that freedom from slavery involves *Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so*.

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 7
Z-score	1.902	2.252	1.055	1.378	1.335	1.537
Composite sort rank	+5	+5	+5	+4	+4	+5

Table 15: Z-scores and position in composite sorts for the “free will” statement in the US factors

### US FACTOR 1: FREEDOM IS LIVING WITHOUT FEAR

#### Factor overview

Factor 1 conceives of freedom as living without fear. That is, fear no longer acts as a guiding or governing consideration in an individual’s decisions or relationships if they are free. This factor’s composite sort can be seen in Image 16.

## Composite Q sort for Factor 1

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Freedom is simply the opposite of slavery	* Freedom is created by a community deciding to work together to end human trafficking	To have access to justice against the people who trafficked you	* Having the ability to question the ideas other people hand down to you and being able to reject ideas you cannot support	Living and working for your own benefit instead of for the benefit of others	The process of adjusting to not being trafficked and being less impacted by your former trafficking experience	To be able to get the basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life	Living in a world without abuse or oppression	Having a place to call home	No longer having to make choices you don't like just so that you can survive	* ** ► To live without fear
You achieve freedom the moment you are physically removed from your trafficker	To enjoy full citizenship in this country, including all the rights that come with it	* Being protected by the law and by social norms	Freedom is something you always possess in reality, even if someone else says you are a slave	To have the opportunity to learn about something or someone before making a commitment to that thing or to that person	Determining your own way of life, as long as it does not negatively affect others	To be able to get an education	Choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character	Having relationships that support your personal development and growth	* ** ► Being able to trust people and not being betrayed when you are kind to them	Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so
	Having legal proof that you are not a slave	Having political and economic systems that do not dominate you or limit your options to the point where your decisions are not really your own	Belonging to a community or belonging in society	To be able to leave a place, a person, or a job without any fear of negative consequences	The ability to achieve goals that matter to you	To be protected in the areas of life where you are vulnerable	To enjoy being alive or to feel there is a reason to be alive	To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others	Feeling no shame	
		Knowing the things society requires you to do and knowing the consequences of not doing those things	Not being subject to prejudice, discrimination, racism, or misunderstanding	To have enough money that you can save for your future and build a better life	To stop believing the lies others have told you about yourself and about the world, so that those lies no longer have power over you	Refusing to let a trafficking experience in your past devastate you or cripple your life	Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you	Knowing your own worth and knowing that it does not depend on other people		
			To have a voice in how society runs or a voice in your community	Having the right to choose where you live and where you work	Being able to do what you want and to go where you want, without anybody interfering or telling you no	The ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking	The ability to choose who you associate with and who you do not associate with			
				Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave	To be given an equal opportunity with everybody else to thrive	Being able to make decisions in your own right and on your own terms				
				To be able to follow whatever values or moral authority you choose	To know your heritage, culture, or origins and to be able to connect to other people who are like you	To be able to defend yourself against people who try to limit your well-being, dominate you, or traffic you				

### Legend

- \* Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.05$
- \* \* Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.01$
- z-Score for the statement is higher than in all other factors
- ◄ z-Score for the statement is lower than in all other factors

Image 16: Composite sort for US Factor 1: Freedom is living without fear

Factor 1 has two distinguishing statements with positive column scores: *To live without fear* (+5) and *Being able to trust people and not being betrayed when you are kind to them* (+4). Statements—including these two—with Z-scores higher than 1 are listed in Table 16. These statements show us what statements participants loading on Factor 1 agree with most strongly.

Statement	Z-score
<i>To live without fear</i>	2.107
<i>Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so</i>	1.902
<i>No longer having to make choices you don't like just so that you can survive</i>	1.675
<i>Being able to trust people and not being betrayed when you are kind to them</i>	1.434
<i>Feeling no shame</i>	1.376
<i>Having a place to call home</i>	1.165
<i>Having relationships that support your personal development and growth</i>	1.077
<i>To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others</i>	1.049

Table 16: Statements with Z-scores greater than 1 in US Factor 1

Participants loading on Factor 1 represent all three US sites and the VMS and VSP cohorts. No LE participants load on this factor. Participant information is displayed in Table 17 and Figure 8.

State		California	Florida	Washington	Participants
Participants		2	2	4	8
Cohort	LE	0	0	0	0
	VMS	1	0	4	5
	VSP	1	2	0	3

Table 17: Participants loading on US Factor 1, by cohort and state

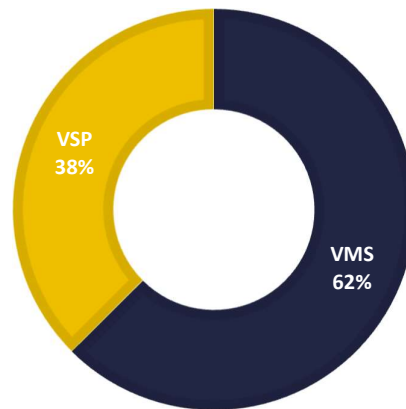


Figure 8: Cohorts represented by the participants loading on US Factor 1, in percentages

## Discussion

The idea that Factor 1 views freedom primarily through the lens of the statement *To live without fear* is supported by this statement's high Z-score and is further validated by interviews with the participants who load on the factor. Participant US VSP 3 has worked in a residential program for female child survivors of slavery. She said she was led by the notion of fear when completing her Q sort because she remembered how fear characterized the experiences of many of the girls in the program. She said,

My thoughts were, doing counseling, waking up with the victims, [bedtime] with the victims, the trauma, the tears, the fear, trust, the nightmares. I tried to place all the cards to "Agree," ... [but some] didn't matter as strongly as to be able *To live without fear*, to be able to live with *no shame*, to be able to live *without abuse*. So because I worked with young victims, I had the experience to share

their pain, the trauma, and we talked through the nightmares, the voices, why they want to run, being sick, being able to trust.<sup>207</sup>

Participant US VMS 6 highlighted the concept of stability and a corresponding fear of instability as she reflected on her Q sort. This participant shared that she and her son have yet to find stability in community with other people or in accommodation. She said,

Stability is very important to me. It's something I've always struggled with. A lot of that has been being bounced around from place to place, unable to set down roots, for whatever reason. Either we wore the community out or were just not comfortable with the environment. I don't know how it turns out but it just seems like every time I've ever thought that I've had an opportunity to actually establish roots and be able to get comfortable in a place, something will happen. ... *Chaos always finds its way in.* ... Stability, having a home, a place where you can lock the doors, it's yours, you get to choose who you let in.<sup>208</sup>

Interviews with participants US VMS 6 and US VSP 3 further revealed that, when they think about freedom from slavery, they value healthy, supportive relationships that are ultimately beneficial to survivors. These relationships need to exist in a stable and appropriate context (as opposed to an inappropriate context where a perpetrator might provide something of benefit to a victim but only in exchange for that victim's forced labor, for example). Within the framework of Factor 1, fearfulness is often linked to a fear of losing a positive relationship or to an even more fundamental fear for survival.

Accommodation, for example, is a fundamental need linked to survival. If a victim or survivor is fearful of losing their accommodation, they may feel that they must make a choice they do not personally want to make in order to maintain access to accommodation. Choices like that

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<sup>207</sup> US VSP 3, interview.

<sup>208</sup> US VMS 6, interview, emphasis added.

can lead to shame. The statements listed in Table 16 are linked by the fact that they represent living without fear.

Factor 1 decidedly disagrees that freedom is rooted in social structures, social institutions, or a community initiative to end modern slavery. This is validated by the de-prioritization of two additional distinguishing statements for Factor 1: *Freedom is created by a community deciding to work together to end human trafficking* and *Being protected by the law and by social norms*. These are in Columns -4 and -3, respectively, and received lower Z-scores in Factor 1 than in any other US factor.

## US FACTOR 2: FREEDOM IS RESILIENCE AGAINST PAST ENSLAVEMENT AND FUTURE HARM

### Factor overview

US Factor 2 conceives of freedom as resilience against a previous experience of slavery coupled with resilience against future harm. Resilience against a previous experience of slavery involves recovery from all aspects of that experience, culminating in a survivor's *ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking*. Resilience against future harm involves having the ability to protect oneself against various types of harm, including generally negative consequences for leaving a place, person, or a job; the recurrence of enslavement; and many harms on the spectrum in between.

Freedom as resilience against previous enslavement and against future harm also involves the internal resolve of *Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave*. These aspects of freedom are largely internal to an individual and can be attained or experienced with little dependence on others.

The composite sort for Factor 2 is displayed in Image 17.

## Composite Q sort for Factor 2

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Knowing the things society requires you to do and knowing the consequences of not doing those things	To have enough money that you can save for your future and build a better life	To have a voice in how society runs or a voice in your community	Feeling no shame	To be protected in the areas of life where you are vulnerable	To be able to get the basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life	Being able to do what you want and to go where you want, without anybody interfering or telling you no	Having the right to choose where you live and where you work	To be able to defend yourself against people who try to limit your well-being, dominate you, or traffic you	*▶ The process of adjusting to not being trafficked and being less impacted by your former trafficking experience	Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so
To know your heritage, culture, or origins and to be able to connect to other people who are like you	To have the opportunity to learn about something or someone before making a commitment to that thing or to that person	*◀ Having the ability to question the ideas other people hand down to you and being able to reject ideas you cannot support	The ability to choose who you associate with and who you do not associate with	To enjoy full citizenship in this country, including all the rights that come with it	To stop believing the lies others have told you about yourself and about the world, so that those lies no longer have power over you	Knowing your own worth and knowing that it does not depend on other people	To have access to justice against the people who trafficked you	*▶ The ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking	No longer having to make choices you don't like just so that you can survive	Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you
	*◀ The ability to achieve goals that matter to you	Not being subject to prejudice, discrimination, racism, or misunderstanding	To be able to get an education	Being able to trust people and not being betrayed when you are kind to them	Having relationships that support your personal development and growth	Freedom is created by a community deciding to work together to end human trafficking	Being able to make decisions in your own right and on your own terms	To be able to leave a place, a person, or a job without any fear of negative consequences	Refusing to let a trafficking experience in your past devastate you or cripple your life	
		To be able to follow whatever values or moral authority you choose	*◀ Choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character	To enjoy being alive or to feel there is a reason to be alive	Having legal proof that you are not a slave	*▶ Freedom is something you always possess in reality, even if someone else says you are a slave	Living and working for your own benefit instead of for the benefit of others	Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave		
			*◀ Having a place to call home	To live without fear	Being protected by the law and by social norms	Living in a world without abuse or oppression	To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others			
				*◀ To be given an equal opportunity with everybody else to thrive	You achieve freedom the moment you are physically removed from your trafficker	Freedom is simply the opposite of slavery				
				Belonging to a community or belonging in society	Determining your own way of life, as long as it does not negatively affect others	* Having political and economic systems that do not dominate you or limit your options to the point where your decisions are not really your own				

### Legend

- \* Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.05$
- \* \* Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.01$
- ▶ z-Score for the statement is higher than in all other factors
- ◀ z-Score for the statement is lower than in all other factors



Factor 2 has a relatively high number of distinguishing statements, including *The process of adjusting to not being trafficked and being less impacted by your former trafficking experience* and *The ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking* in Columns +4 and +3, respectively.

Statements—including two of the factor's distinguishing statements—with Z-scores higher than 1 are listed in Table 18. These statements are significant to participants loading on Factor 2.

Statement	Z-score
<i>Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so</i>	2.252
<i>Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you</i>	1.774
<i>The process of adjusting to not being trafficked and being less impacted by your former trafficking experience</i>	1.739
<i>No longer having to make choices you don't like just so that you can survive</i>	1.457
<i>Refusing to let a trafficking experience in your past devastate you or cripple your life</i>	1.447
<i>The ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking</i>	1.4
<i>To be able to defend yourself against people who try to limit your well-being, dominate you, or traffic you</i>	1.396
<i>To be able to leave a place, a person, or a job without any fear of negative consequences</i>	1.269

Table 18: Statements with Z-scores greater than 1 in US Factor 2

Participants from all three sites and all three cohorts load on Factor 2, as shown in Table 19 and Figure 9.

State		California	Florida	Washington	Participants
Participants		2	5	4	11
Cohort	LE	1	2	2	5
	VMS	1	0	0	1
	VSP	0	3	2	5

Table 19: Participants loading on US Factor 2, by cohort and state

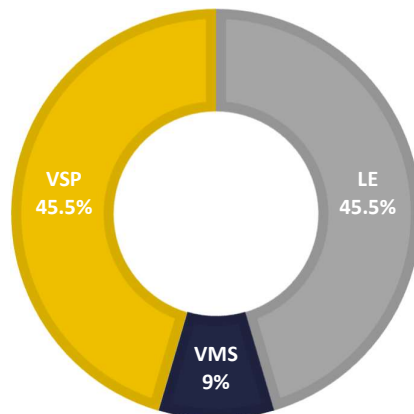


Figure 9: Cohorts represented by the participants loading on US Factor 2, in percentages

## Discussion

Participant US LE 11's perspective encapsulates this conception of freedom as resilience against past enslavement and future harm, and how it is a largely internal phenomenon.

I think of personal cases where I've worked with girls and, even years later, I think the trauma of what they go through is so bad that even though there isn't physically a pimp ... it's still controlling their lives. I remember one girl particularly. She'd been out of the life for probably two or three years. She called me up to tell me that she's thinking about maybe going back into it. ... To adjust to a normal life [was] just too difficult. ... I told her, "You wouldn't have called me if that's what you really want to do. I'd be the last person you're going to call. So I know you want help, and I know you don't want to do this." And it was a simple thing. Like, a car drove by that looked exactly like the pimp's, and it just sent her into this thing like it happened just yesterday.

So that's what I think. Getting [survivors] past [the] years of abuse and trauma where they can ... see how they become more

powerful. ... [Being *physically removed from your trafficker*] is really only the beginning. If we can't help them to continue on to that freedom in their own mind, they'll be pulled back into it. So we rescued them today, but if not more is done, they get sucked back into it.<sup>209</sup>

Factor 2 assumes that, to experience freedom, a person must necessarily have experienced slavery. This is not necessarily the case for many other factors. As such, freedom as conceived in Factor 2 is in reference to slavery. Participant US VMS 2 describes how this characterized her rationale when considering which statements she disagreed with or was neutral towards. Statements that were not specific to the experiences of survivors were placed in the Neutral and Disagree piles during her pre-sort. She said, "I feel like [those statements] could happen to anybody ... even those who have not been abused or beaten, been enslaved, been trafficked. ... For example, *Having a place to call home*. I know that trafficking survivors sometimes don't have that place to call home. ... [But] that could be anybody."<sup>210</sup>

## US Factor 3: Freedom is having dignity and choices

### Factor overview

In Factor 3, freedom is having dignity and choices. An individual who is free from slavery has their dignity recognized by others and can make unconstrained choices regarding people, places, and employment. The Factor 3 composite sort can be seen in Image 18.

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<sup>209</sup> US LE 11, interview.

<sup>210</sup> US VMS 2, interview.

### Composite Q sort for Factor 3

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Freedom is something you always possess in reality, even if someone else says you are a slave	Freedom is simply the opposite of slavery	Knowing the things society requires you to do and knowing the consequences of not doing those things	The ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking	Being protected by the law and by social norms	To be able to get an education	Having political and economic systems that do not dominate you or limit your options to the point where your decisions are not really your own	To be able to get the basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life	Having the right to choose where you live and where you work	Being able to make decisions in your own right and on your own terms	Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so
You achieve freedom the moment you are physically removed from your trafficker	✱ Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave	Being able to trust people and not being betrayed when you are kind to them	Freedom is created by a community deciding to work together to end human trafficking	Determining your own way of life, as long as it does not negatively affect others	To have enough money that you can save for your future and build a better life	The ability to achieve goals that matter to you	Being able to do what you want and to go where you want, without anybody interfering or telling you no	To stop believing the lies others have told you about yourself and about the world, so that those lies no longer have power over you	Living and working for your own benefit instead of for the benefit of others	To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others
	Feeling no shame	✱✱ Refusing to let a trafficking experience in your past devastate you or cripple your life	To know your heritage, culture, or origins and to be able to connect to other people who are like you	To be protected in the areas of life where you are vulnerable	Having relationships that support your personal development and growth	To be able to defend yourself against people who try to limit your well-being, dominate you, or traffic you	Having the ability to question the ideas other people hand down to you and being able to reject ideas you cannot support	The ability to choose who you associate with and who you do not associate with	To be able to leave a place, a person, or a job without any fear of negative consequences	
		Living in a world without abuse or oppression	To have the opportunity to learn about something or someone before making a commitment to that thing or to that person	To have a voice in how society runs or a voice in your community	To enjoy full citizenship in this country, including all the rights that come with it	The process of adjusting to not being trafficked and being less impacted by your former trafficking experience	Choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character	No longer having to make choices you don't like just so that you can survive		
			To live without fear	✱ Knowing your own worth and knowing that it does not depend on other people	Belonging to a community or belonging in society	To have access to justice against the people who trafficked you	To be able to follow whatever values or moral authority you choose			
				To enjoy being alive or to feel there is a reason to be alive	Having a place to call home	To be given an equal opportunity with everybody else to thrive				
				Not being subject to prejudice, discrimination, racism, or misunderstanding	Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you	Having legal proof that you are not a slave				

#### Legend

- ✱ Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.05$
- ✱✱ Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.01$
- z-Score for the statement is higher than in all other factors
- ◄ z-Score for the statement is lower than in all other factors

Image 18: Composite sort for US Factor 3: Freedom is having dignity and choices

Factor 3 has three distinguishing statements, ranking in Columns -1, -3, and -4 in the composite sort. These statements are *Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave*; *Refusing to let a trafficking experience in your past devastate you or cripple your life*; and *Knowing your own worth and knowing that it does not depend on other people*. Not all factors can be further illuminated by examining statements that participants generally disagree with, but in this case such an examination reveals something important about Factor 3; although this conception of freedom contains elements of internal experience (as demonstrated in quotes from participants US VSP 1 and US LE 12, below), freedom decidedly does not entail the personal resilience of Factor 2.

The emphasis on dignity in Factor 3 is reflected in the high Z-score for the statement *To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others*, but for participants loading on Factor 3 it is also important that an individual be free from the influence of those who did not show them dignity. This is reflected in the statement *To stop believing the lies others have told you about yourself and about the world, so that those lies no longer have power over you*. After dignity, Factor 3 prioritizes choices. Choice, for Factor 3, must be unconstrained by others and unconstrained by fear of negative consequences.

Statements with high Z-scores are listed in Table 20. I have included two statements in the table that have a Z-score greater than 0.9 (rather than using the threshold of 1 that informs other, similar tables in this thesis) because they further illuminate the themes of dignity and choices that are inherent to Factor 3.

Statement	Z-score
<i>Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so</i>	2.451
<i>To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others</i>	1.805
<i>Being able to make decisions in your own right and on your own terms</i>	1.593
<i>Living and working for your own benefit instead of for the benefit of others</i>	1.242
<i>To be able to leave a place, a person, or a job without any fear of negative consequences</i>	1.097
<i>Having the right to choose where you live and where you work</i>	1.055
<i>To stop believing the lies others have told you about yourself and about the world, so that those lies no longer have power over you</i>	1.048
<i>The ability to choose who you associate with and who you do not associate with</i>	0.966
<i>No longer having to make choices you don't like just so that you can survive</i>	0.905

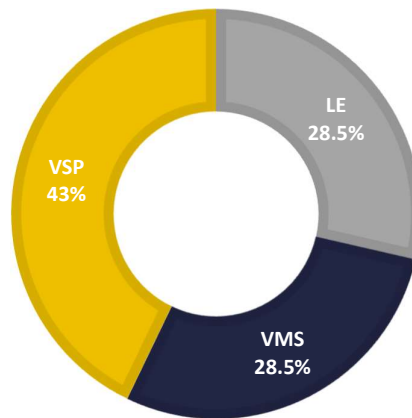
Table 20: Statements with Z-scores greater than 0.9 in US Factor 3

Participants from all three sites and all three cohorts load on Factor

3. Participant information is displayed in Table 21 and Figure 10.

State	California	Florida	Washington	Participants
Participants	2	1	4	7
Cohort LE	0	0	2	2
VMS	0	0	2	2
VSP	2	1	0	3

Table 21: Participants loading on US Factor 3, by cohort and state



*Figure 10: Cohorts represented by the participants loading on US Factor 3, in percentages*

## Discussion

For participant US VSP 1, freedom is about “knowing that you can do something if you want to ... you have the ability to choose. And that you feel the weight of your humanity. ... to have the dignity. To be recognized as a human.”<sup>211</sup>

Participant US LE 12’s closing thoughts on freedom at the end of an interview summarize the aspect of this conception that focuses on dignity and being free from the influence of those who did not offer dignity in the past. She said, “For me a key piece of being free from human trafficking is an individual’s ability to believe that they are safe within themselves. ... actually knowing and having the experience that they’re ... dignified just within them, and respected by them.”<sup>212</sup>

## US FACTOR 4: FREEDOM IS ENJOYING AND SHAPING YOUR LIFE

### Factor overview

In the framework of US Factor 4, freedom from slavery is a state of

<sup>211</sup> US VSP 1, interview.

<sup>212</sup> US LE 12, interview.

enjoying and being able to shape one's life. For participants loading on Factor 4, both of these elements of freedom pertain to an individual's relationship with others and to regaining control of their life after being trafficked. Statements that are positively significant in Factor 4 are characterized by positive, sometimes aspirational words, such as *enjoy*, *achieve*, *thrive*, *support*, *growth*, and *healthy*(see Table 22).

A composite Q sort for Factor 4 can be seen in Image 19.



## Composite Q sort for Factor 4

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Being able to do what you want and to go where you want, without anybody interfering or telling you no	Having legal proof that you are not a slave	You achieve freedom the moment you are physically removed from your trafficker	Knowing the things society requires you to do and knowing the consequences of not doing those things	Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave	The process of adjusting to not being trafficked and being less impacted by your former trafficking experience	Having the ability to question the ideas other people hand down to you and being able to reject ideas you cannot support	Having a place to call home	To be given an equal opportunity with everybody else to thrive	* ► The ability to achieve goals that matter to you	► * ► To enjoy being alive or to feel there is a reason to be alive
To live without fear	Not being subject to prejudice, discrimination, racism, or misunderstanding	Having political and economic systems that do not dominate you or limit your options to the point where your decisions are not really your own	To enjoy full citizenship in this country, including all the rights that come with it	Being protected by the law and by social norms	Refusing to let a trafficking experience in your past devastate you or cripple your life	To have access to justice against the people who trafficked you	To be able to defend yourself against people who try to limit your well-being, dominate you, or traffic you	Having relationships that support your personal development and growth	Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so	Knowing your own worth and knowing that it does not depend on other people
	Being able to trust people and not being betrayed when you are kind to them	Living in a world without abuse or oppression	No longer having to make choices you don't like just so that you can survive	Feeling no shame	To be protected in the areas of life where you are vulnerable	To have the opportunity to learn about something or someone before making a commitment to that thing or to that person	To stop believing the lies others have told you about yourself and about the world, so that those lies no longer have power over you	The ability to choose who you associate with and who you do not associate with	Choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character	
		Freedom is something you always possess in reality, even if someone else says you are a slave	Freedom is simply the opposite of slavery	Having the right to choose where you live and where you work	To have a voice in how society runs or a voice in your community	Being able to make decisions in your own right and on your own terms	Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you	To be able to get the basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life		
			Living and working for your own benefit instead of for the benefit of others	To know your heritage, culture, or origins and to be able to connect to other people who are like you	The ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking	Belonging to a community or belonging in society	To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others			
				Freedom is created by a community deciding to work together to end human trafficking	To be able to leave a place, a person, or a job without any fear of negative consequences	To be able to follow whatever values or moral authority you choose				
				To have enough money that you can save for your future and build a better life	Determining your own way of life, as long as it does not negatively affect others	To be able to get an education				

### Legend

- \* Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.05$
- \* \* Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.01$
- z-Score for the statement is higher than in all other factors
- ◄ z-Score for the statement is lower than in all other factors

Image 19: Composite sort for US Factor 4: Freedom is enjoying and shaping your life

Statements with high Z-scores in this factor are listed in Table 22.

Statement	Z-score
<i>To enjoy being alive or to feel there is a reason to be alive</i>	2.187
<i>Knowing your own worth and knowing that it does not depend on other people</i>	1.693
<i>The ability to achieve goals that matter to you</i>	1.561
<i>Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so</i>	1.378
<i>Choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character</i>	1.348
<i>To be given an equal opportunity with everybody else to thrive</i>	1.236
<i>Having relationships that support your personal development and growth</i>	1.229
<i>The ability to choose who you associate with and who you do not associate with</i>	1.179
<i>To be able to get the basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life</i>	1.012

Table 22: Statements with Z-scores greater than 1 in US Factor 4

Participants from all three sites and all three cohorts load on Factor 4. LE participants make up 50% of these participants. This data is displayed in Table 23 and Figure 11.

State	California	Florida	Washington	Participants
<b>Participants</b>	1	0	3	<b>4</b>
<b>Cohort</b> LE	0	0	2	2
VMS	0	0	1	1
VSP	1	0	0	1

Table 23: Participants loading on US Factor 4, by cohort and state

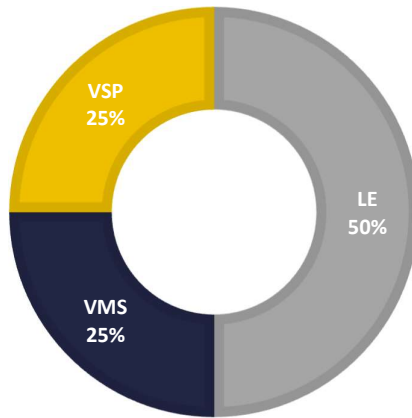


Figure 11: Cohorts represented by the participants loading on US Factor 4, in percentages

## Discussion

For participant US VMS 10, the statement *Choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character* was important because, in slavery, “you can’t do that. It’s other people who are ... running your whole life, controlling your whole life.”<sup>213</sup>

Participant US VSP 17 said that freedom is “really a state of mind, and it’s also whether or not you’re able ... to actually thrive in life. Because, for me, you’re truly not free if you’re not thriving, if you’re not doing well in life.”<sup>214</sup> For this participant, *To enjoy being alive or to feel there is a reason to be alive*, resonated with what she called an “inner place” for survivors—a “state of mind” in which a survivor knows they have the opportunity to thrive and knows when they are thriving. Further, that survivor can identify a personal motivation to thrive.<sup>215</sup>

Another element of enjoying and shaping one’s life is *Having relationships that support your personal development and growth*.

<sup>213</sup> US VMS 10, interview.

<sup>214</sup> US VSP 17, interview.

<sup>215</sup> US VSP 17, interview.

“Personal relationships are huge because that’s how you communicate,” according to participant US LE 10. “That’s how you can grow from something that happened. ... If it comes to the passing of somebody or even something exciting, like having a child, you need somebody to communicate that with. So I think a personal relationship will help you grow in multiple different areas of your life.”<sup>216</sup>

Statements that rank very low indicate something important in Factor 4. Participants whose Q sorts correlated most strongly to Factor 4 spoke with optimism in interviews, but their definition of freedom is not blindly optimistic. Rather, it takes account of real-world constraints. These participants understand, for example that “[nobody] can live a day without fearing something, whether it’s ... just something small and minor to living in fear of their trafficker or their trafficker’s family or friends. Fear can be healthy.”<sup>217</sup> (*To live without fear* falls in Column -5 in the composite sort for Factor 4.) This and additional forms of real-world constraints are acknowledged by the statements with the lowest Z-scores in Factor 4. These are listed in Table 24. Some of these statements have to do with an internal experience (such as fear). Others, like *Living in a world without abuse or oppression*, have to do with an experience of the external world. Still others, such as *Being able to do what you want and to go where you want, without anybody interfering or telling you no*, speak to the ability to make choices (choice is significant to other conceptions of freedom, like Factor 3). Taken together, these statements indicate that participants loading on Factor 4 are—while optimistic—not idealists. They believe that freedom from slavery can be attained within the context of the world as it is.

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<sup>216</sup> US LE 10, interview.

<sup>217</sup> US LE 10, interview.

Statement	Z-score
<i>Living in a world without abuse or oppression</i>	-1.36
<i>Freedom is something you always possess in reality, even if someone else says you are a slave</i>	-1.392
<i>Having legal proof that you are not a slave</i>	-1.446
<i>Not being subject to prejudice, discrimination, racism, or misunderstanding</i>	-1.472
<i>Being able to trust people and not being betrayed when you are kind to them</i>	-1.501
<i>Being able to do what you want and to go where you want, without anybody interfering or telling you no</i>	-1.578
<i>To live without fear</i>	-1.602

Table 24: Statements with low Z-scores in US Factor 4

## US FACTOR 5: FREEDOM IS RESILIENT SELF-PERCEPTION AND DIGNITY

### Factor overview

Factor 5 has much in common with Factor 2; their most important similarity is that they both consider dignity to be essential components of freedom. But where Factor 2 emphasizes healing and recovery from past enslavement in its conception of resilience, Factor 5 emphasizes an individual regaining control over their self-perception. The composite sort for Factor 5 is presented in Image 20.

## Composite Q sort for Factor 5

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Having legal proof that you are not a slave	To have enough money that you can save for your future and build a better life	To have the opportunity to learn about something or someone before making a commitment to that thing or to that person	Having the right to choose where you live and where you work	Living and working for your own benefit instead of for the benefit of others	The ability to achieve goals that matter to you	The ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking	To be protected in the areas of life where you are vulnerable	Refusing to let a trafficking experience in your past devastate you or cripple your life	Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you	Knowing your own worth and knowing that it does not depend on other people
You achieve freedom the moment you are physically removed from your trafficker	Freedom is simply the opposite of slavery	Being able to trust people and not being betrayed when you are kind to them	To have a voice in how society runs or a voice in your community	To be able to get the basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life	Having relationships that support your personal development and growth	Being able to make decisions in your own right and on your own terms	Not being subject to prejudice, discrimination, racism, or misunderstanding	To be able to defend yourself against people who try to limit your well-being, dominate you, or traffic you	To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others	To stop believing the lies others have told you about yourself and about the world, so that those lies no longer have power over you
	Freedom is something you always possess in reality, even if someone else says you are a slave	Knowing the things society requires you to do and knowing the consequences of not doing those things	The ability to choose who you associate with and who you do not associate with	To have access to justice against the people who trafficked you	Choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character	* Feeling no shame	Having political and economic systems that do not dominate you or limit your options to the point where your decisions are not really your own	Living in a world without abuse or oppression	Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so	
		To know your heritage, culture, or origins and to be able to connect to other people who are like you	To be able to follow whatever values or moral authority you choose	Freedom is created by a community deciding to work together to end human trafficking	To enjoy full citizenship in this country, including all the rights that come with it	To be able to leave a place, a person, or a job without any fear of negative consequences	To live without fear	To be given an equal opportunity with everybody else to thrive		
			Belonging to a community or belonging in society	Having a place to call home	Having the ability to question the ideas other people hand down to you and being able to reject ideas you cannot support	* No longer having to make choices you don't like just so that you can survive	The process of adjusting to not being trafficked and being less impacted by your former trafficking experience			
				To be able to get an education	To enjoy being alive or to feel there is a reason to be alive	Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave				
				Being able to do what you want and to go where you want, without anybody interfering or telling you no	Determining your own way of life, as long as it does not negatively affect others	Being protected by the law and by social norms				

### Legend

- \* Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.05$
- \* \* Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.01$
- z-Score for the statement is higher than in all other factors
- ◄ z-Score for the statement is lower than in all other factors

Statements with Z-scores greater than 1 in Factor 5 are listed in Table 25. *Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you* is very important to Factor 5 but, unlike Factor 2, this healing is secondary to a strong, positive, resilient self-perception.

Statement	Z-score
<i>Knowing your own worth and knowing that it does not depend on other people</i>	1.595
<i>To stop believing the lies others have told you about yourself and about the world, so that those lies no longer have power over you</i>	1.544
<i>Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you</i>	1.541
<i>To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others</i>	1.397
<i>Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so</i>	1.335
<i>Refusing to let a trafficking experience in your past devastate you or cripple your life</i>	1.208
<i>To be able to defend yourself against people who try to limit your well-being, dominate you, or traffic you</i>	1.167
<i>Living in a world without abuse or oppression</i>	1.135
<i>To be given an equal opportunity with everybody else to thrive</i>	1.12
<i>To be protected in the areas of life where you are vulnerable</i>	1.075

Table 25: Statements with Z-scores greater than 1 in US Factor 5

Participants from all three sites and all three cohorts load on Factor 5. Three quarters of participants loading on this factor are from the VSP cohort. Participant information is displayed in Table 26 and Figure 12.

State		California	Florida	Washington	Participants
Participants		5	3	0	8
Cohort	LE	1	0	0	1
	VMS	1	0	0	1
	VSP	3	3	0	6

Table 26: Participants loading on US Factor 5, by cohort and state

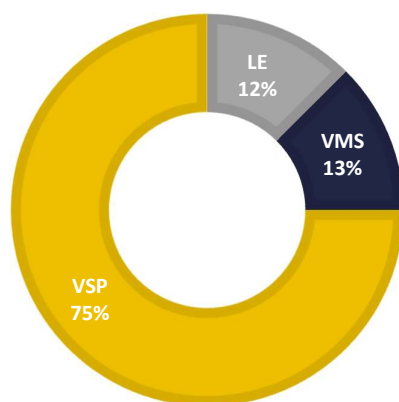


Figure 12: Cohorts represented by the participants loading on US Factor 5, in percentages

## Discussion

For participant US VSP 7, *To stop believing the lies others have told you about yourself and about the world, so that those lies no longer have power over you* was the “number one” statement.<sup>218</sup> Abuse and oppression are “just one of the sources of vulnerability to slavery,” he said. “But ... to stop believing what others have told you, that's a critical factor in healing. ... Specifically because I have heard survivors say that to me—[about] pushing them past the belief that you are not what people said you were.”<sup>219</sup> One of the questions I asked participants during interviews was, “Where do you think freedom comes from?” In his response to this question, this participant returned to the same

<sup>218</sup> US VSP 7, interview.

<sup>219</sup> US VSP 7, interview.



statement. He said, "My initial reaction is to say, 'from self,' ... getting back to this one on 'stop believing' what other people have said to us. [The] story that we're willing to accept? That's someone else's story other than our own, which suggests to us on some deeper level that we're unworthy and that we deserve to be."<sup>220</sup>

Participant US LE 4 wrote three statements during the pre-write exercise, which are listed below:

- "Being free from the psychological hold victims find themselves in"
- "Being free to make their own choices & yes, their own mistakes"
- "Being free to believe that as an individual they matter"<sup>221</sup>

These statements are not only indicative of how this participant views freedom but reflect key elements of Factor 5's conception of freedom as resilient self-perception and dignity more broadly. As participant US LE 4 explained during the interview,

Freedom is a mindset. ... The hard part is what I wrote on there [during the pre-write]. That is huge because we see it all the time. It is a mindset that [survivors] must learn and really, it's through all these other things that they must get to that. All the other things that I put up there toward that other end [of the Q mat]. "I'm valuable. I matter. I'm important. I'm special." All that stuff that they never had.<sup>222</sup>

The "other things" he is referring to are statements from the Q sample, including the statements listed below:

- *Knowing your own worth and knowing that it does not depend*

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<sup>220</sup> US VSP 7, interview.

<sup>221</sup> US LE 4, pre-write.

<sup>222</sup> US LE 4, interview.

*on other people*

- *To stop believing the lies others have told you about yourself and about the world, so that those lies no longer have power over you*
- *Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you*
- *To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others*

These statements not only have high Z-scores in Factor 5 but were ranked in Columns +5 and +4 by this participant.

## US FACTOR 7: FREEDOM IS UNCONSTRAINED CHOICE IN CONTRAST TO SLAVERY

### Factor overview

Participants loading on Factor 7 conceive of freedom as unconstrained choice in every area of life. Moreover, they draw an explicit contrast between freedom and slavery; the very choices these participants view as integral to freedom are the choices that were suppressed in their own experiences of slavery. The composite sort for Factor 7 can be seen in Image 21.

## Composite Q sort for Factor 7

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
To know your heritage, culture, or origins and to be able to connect to other people who are like you	To enjoy full citizenship in this country, including all the rights that come with it	Being able to trust people and not being betrayed when you are kind to them	Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave	Not being subject to prejudice, discrimination, racism, or misunderstanding	To enjoy being alive or to feel there is a reason to be alive	Having the ability to question the ideas other people hand down to you and being able to reject ideas you cannot support	Feeling no shame	Living and working for your own benefit instead of for the benefit of others	Choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character	Being able to do what you want and to go where you want, without anybody interfering or telling you no
The ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking	Having legal proof that you are not a slave	Freedom is something you always possess in reality, even if someone else says you are a slave	To have access to justice against the people who trafficked you	To have dignity; to have your humanity recognized by others	Living in a world without abuse or oppression	To be given an equal opportunity with everybody else to thrive	To be able to follow whatever values or moral authority you choose	To be able to leave a place, a person, or a job without any fear of negative consequences	Being able to make decisions in your own right and on your own terms	Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so
	To be able to get an education	To have enough money that you can save for your future and build a better life	To have a voice in how society runs or a voice in your community	The process of adjusting to not being trafficked and being less impacted by your former trafficking experience	Determining your own way of life, as long as it does not negatively affect others	To live without fear	To be able to defend yourself against people who try to limit your well-being, dominate you, or traffic you	Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you	Having political and economic systems that do not dominate you or limit your options to the point where your decisions are not really your own	
		Knowing the things society requires you to do and knowing the consequences of not doing those things	To be protected in the areas of life where you are vulnerable	You achieve freedom the moment you are physically removed from your trafficker	Freedom is created by a community deciding to work together to end human trafficking	Knowing your own worth and knowing that it does not depend on other people	To stop believing the lies others have told you about yourself and about the world, so that those lies no longer have power over you	No longer having to make choices you don't like just so that you can survive		
			Belonging to a community or belonging in society	Being protected by the law and by social norms	To be able to get the basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life	Refusing to let a trafficking experience in your past devastate you or cripple your life	Freedom is simply the opposite of slavery			
				To have the opportunity to learn about something or someone before making a commitment to that thing or to that person	The ability to choose who you associate with and who you do not associate with	The ability to achieve goals that matter to you				
				Having relationships that support your personal development and growth	Having the right to choose where you live and where you work	Having a place to call home				

### Legend

- \* Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.05$
- \* Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.01$
- z-Score for the statement is higher than in all other factors
- ◄ z-Score for the statement is lower than in all other factors

Image 21: Composite sort for US Factor 7: Freedom is unconstrained choice in contrast to slavery

The statements rated most highly by these participants are listed with their Z-scores in Table 27.

Statement	Z-score
<i>Being able to do what you want and to go where you want, without anybody interfering or telling you no</i>	2.132
<i>Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so</i>	1.537
<i>Choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character</i>	1.527
<i>Being able to make decisions in your own right and on your own terms</i>	1.439
<i>Having political and economic systems that do not dominate you or limit your options to the point where your decisions are not really your own</i>	1.056
<i>Living and working for your own benefit instead of for the benefit of others</i>	1

Table 27: Statements with Z-scores greater than 1 in US Factor 7

All three participants loading on Factor 7 are survivors, as seen in Table 28 and Figure 13. Each is from a different research site.

State	California	Florida	Washington	Participants
Participants	1	1	1	3
Cohort LE	0	0	0	0
VMS	1	1	1	3
VSP	0	0	0	0

Table 28: Participants loading on US Factor 7, by cohort and state

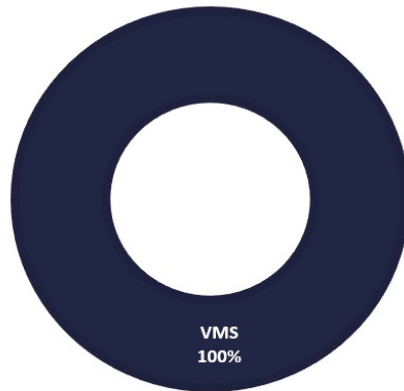


Figure 13: Cohorts represented by the participants loading on US Factor 7, in percentages

## Discussion

Factor 7's conception of freedom as unconstrained choice in contrast to slavery is consistent with the statements these participants wrote during the pre-write exercise. Their statements are listed below:

- "When we wake up in the morning to dress ourselves"<sup>223</sup>
- "More people to respect us"<sup>224</sup>
- "We can talk loud. We can go wherever we want. Do what we do when we want to do it."<sup>225</sup>
- "Freedom = Free dominion; Freedom from human trafficking is not being trafficked"<sup>226</sup>
- "No longer being controlled by people or fear"<sup>227</sup>

One quality that sets Factor 7 apart from other US factors is that *Freedom is simply the opposite of slavery* is a distinguishing statement with a positive Z-score of 0.725. This is the highest Z-score assigned to this statement by any UK or US factor. While still lower than 1, the fact that

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<sup>223</sup> US VMS 13, pre-sort.

<sup>224</sup> US VMS 13, pre-sort.

<sup>225</sup> US VMS 13, pre-sort.

<sup>226</sup> US VMS 7, pre-sort.

<sup>227</sup> US VMS 1, pre-sort.

this statement usually receives negative Z-scores and is ranked in negative columns in other factors makes this worth mentioning. It suggests that the idea of freedom and slavery as opposites is more relevant or more valuable to these participants than to others.

Participant US VMS 7 personally expressed a very strong level of agreement with this statement, which he placed in the +5 column along with *Being able to do what you want and to go where you want, without anybody interfering or telling you no*. His rationale for choosing these two statements sheds light on this factor's conception of freedom and slavery as in contrast. He explained, "To be a slave is, you're doing something else for someone else that you don't want to do or [you're] controlled, which is not freedom. To me freedom is free dominion so you can kind of just do what you want, which is kind of what the second [statement] says."<sup>228</sup> For US VMS 7, freedom is *Being able to do what you want and to go where you want, without anybody interfering or telling you no*. And since his conception of slavery is having no ability to do this then, from his perspective, freedom must also be *simply the opposite of slavery*

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Analysis of the US dataset revealed six distinct factors, or conceptions of freedom. Those conceptions are:

- Freedom is living without fear (US Factor 1)
- Freedom is resilience against past enslavement and future harm (US Factor 2)
- Freedom is having dignity and choices (US Factor 3)
- Freedom is enjoying and shaping your life (US Factor 4)
- Freedom is resilient self-perception and dignity (US Factor 5)

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<sup>228</sup> US VMS 7, interview.

- Freedom is unconstrained choice in contrast to slavery (US Factor 7)

As was the case with the UK factors, free will is central to all these US-based conceptions of freedom. The themes of choice and resilience continue to resonate here, as well. The next chapter will take a broad view of all 11 factors from both countries and, in introducing four claims that can be made about freedom on this basis, will explore how those themes ultimately answer the question, “What is freedom from slavery?”





# CHAPTER 6

## DISCUSSION

In Chapters 4 and 5 I discussed each UK and US factor in detail. In this chapter I will offer a brief summary of those findings and an overview of the study's participants before discussing four claims that can be made about freedom in light of the findings.

### COUNTRY-LEVEL FINDINGS

This study found five conceptions of freedom shared by UK participants and six shared by US participants. UK conceptions of freedom include the following:

- Freedom is a secure place in an improved world (UK Factor 1)
- Freedom is concrete securities and basic choices with no interference (UK Factor 2)
- Freedom is personal resilience and a positive experience of the world (UK Factor 4)
- Freedom is survivor-centered, comprehensive resilience (UK Factor 6)
- Freedom is self-determination in a fair world (UK Factor 7)

These were described in detail in Chapter 4. Table 29 shows the correlation scores across the UK factors. These scores show the degree of similarity or dissimilarity between any two factors. The closer to zero the correlation is, the less similarity two factors share. Each factor is identical

to itself; the correlation score between Factor 2 and Factor 2 would be 1, but that is extraneous information.

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 4	Factor 6	Factor 7
Factor 1	-				
Factor 2	0.5115	-			
Factor 4	0.6549	0.5011	-		
Factor 6	0.4203	0.2915	0.5507	-	
Factor 7	0.4289	0.5436	0.4966	0.395	-

Table 29: Factor correlation scores matrix for UK factors

US conceptions of freedom are listed below:

- Freedom is living without fear (US Factor 1)
- Freedom is resilience against past enslavement and future harm (US Factor 2)
- Freedom is having dignity and choices (US Factor 3)
- Freedom is enjoying and shaping your life (US Factor 4)
- Freedom is resilient self-perception and dignity (US Factor 5)
- Freedom is unconstrained choice in contrast to slavery (US Factor 7)

These were described in detail in Chapter 5. Table 30 shows the correlation scores for the US factors.

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 7
Factor 1	-					
Factor 2	0.1938	-				
Factor 3	0.2466	0.2412	-			
Factor 4	0.3346	0.0446	0.4237	-		
Factor 5	0.5383	0.4351	0.3519	0.3866	-	
Factor 7	0.3329	0.2918	0.3909	0.223	0.4107	-

Table 30: Factor correlation scores matrix for US factors

## LOCAL-LEVEL FINDINGS

In addition to these country-level findings, I also analyzed factors local to each research site. These are included as a set of six briefings in Appendix A. While localized factors and briefings were not in the original scope of this thesis, they proved an invaluable undertaking and help to illuminate discussion later in this chapter. Table 31 summarizes the conceptions of freedom that emerged from each local dataset.

I committed to examining local findings not only because I was curious what they would reveal, but because participants wanted to know what the study could tell them about their own antislavery context and what the study meant for them. I had always planned to analyze local findings as an independent undertaking—partly because I felt that individual participants and their organizations deserved a snapshot of their conceptions of freedom, and I was equipped to provide this. Participants' particular curiosity left no doubt that this should be done concurrently with the country-level analysis so that the results could be shared as early as possible. Local-level analysis was completed in spring and summer 2020. The local research briefings were shared with the appropriate antislavery community leaders and participants beginning in summer 2020.

Location (alphabetically by country)	Conceptions of freedom
Central Scotland (UK)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom is having free will and shaping a future without reference to your past</li> <li>• Freedom is the ability to act according to your own will rather than being compelled by your vulnerabilities</li> <li>• Freedom is leading a life you love with no fear</li> <li>• Freedom is the ability to shape who you are and to be dignified by others</li> </ul>
Southeast Wales (UK)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom is having free will within normal societal constraints and being healed from the effects of modern slavery</li> <li>• Freedom is determining your own way of life, beginning with choosing where you live and work</li> </ul>
Humberside, England (UK)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom is having your basic needs met so that you can exercise free will</li> </ul>
Central Florida (US)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom is psychological recovery from trauma</li> </ul>
Greater Seattle (US)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom is having the choices that trafficking once suppressed</li> <li>• Freedom is having relationships that support your goals and vision for your life</li> <li>• Freedom is living without fear and having stability</li> <li>• Freedom is having free will and dignity</li> <li>• Freedom is having your basic needs met and being personally resilient after trafficking</li> <li>• Freedom is being personally resilient after trafficking and able to resist future harm</li> </ul>
Southern California (US)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom is being psychologically removed from your trafficker and having the opportunity to thrive</li> <li>• Freedom is reclaiming your life</li> <li>• Freedom is being wholly removed from your trafficker and having choices</li> </ul>

*Table 31: Summary of local conceptions of freedom at each research site*

This exercise also had a direct benefit to the main project of the thesis: aiding in understanding country-level results. As is evident from Chapters 4 and 5, factors from the country-level findings often represented the shared viewpoints of participants from multiple sites. This does provide an answer to the research question of what perspectives are shared by those in the antislavery movement. However, the country-level factors may not resonate with a specific antislavery community. Analyzing the data for local-level findings helps us understand whether the country-level findings can only speak to broad patterns within the movement or if those patterns are operant on a local level. Based on the analysis occasioned by the local briefings and on local stakeholder engagement since those briefings were shared, most local conceptions of freedom do align with the broad patterns identified at the country level. Local conceptions of freedom reveal important local nuance but do not confound the country-level findings or the themes of free will, choice, and resilience that characterize them.

In addition to illuminating the UK and US findings, the local findings also helped shape my ideas about applications of this research, recommendations, and why or for whom this research is most useful. The influence of this can be seen in the “Conclusion and Recommendations” section at the end of this thesis.

## PARTICIPANTS

In the UK, the following participants took part in this study:

- 8 law enforcement professionals (LE) (26.7% of UK participants)
- 7 survivors (VMS) (23.3% of UK participants)
- 15 victim service providers (VSP) (50% of UK participants)

UK LE participants did not seem to face the same challenge as some

did in the US—that is, when they were required to ask their supervisors' permission to participate, this did not pose a significant barrier. (This will be discussed below.)

The VMS cohort was the most difficult cohort to engage in the UK. As it pertained to my experience recruiting participants, there seemed to be two key differences between how antislavery communities in the UK and in the US interacted with the survivors among them. The first difference is that, in the UK, survivors did not seem to have active roles in the antislavery communities or to be regularly in touch with members of the VSP cohort unless they were current clients. The second difference is that members of the UK VSP cohort were more hesitant or noncommittal about extending an invitation to participate to survivors than their US counterparts were. These differences were clear at two sites in the UK; it is worth noting that they were not characteristic of the third.

In the US I conducted Q sorts with the following participants:

- 12 LE (27.9% of US participants)
- 13 VMS (30.2% of US participants)
- 18 VSP (41.9% of US participants)

Particularly at one site in the US, I invited many more people to participate in this study than actually did. I had difficulty securing LE and VMS participants at this site. Many LE participants who were invited desired to participate but could not, due to approval processes they had to follow within their organizations. I was not made aware of these processes ahead of time by the NGOs through which I was being introduced to potential participants. It is possible that they were likewise unaware of these approval processes, or that the organizations knew about them but did not anticipate the processes would pose a difficulty for me. Whatever the case, many potential law enforcement participants

at this site were denied their supervisors' approval to participate or said they felt their participation would not be approved by their supervisors. This accounts for why LE participants are under-represented according to my original goal of at least 30% representation for each cohort. I did not encounter the same procedural challenges at the other two US sites, with the exception of one potential participant whose role required her to seek approval (her request was denied).

## DISCUSSION

There are four claims we can make about freedom, based on the conceptions explored in Chapters 4 and 5. These are listed below:

- Free will is a dominant quality of freedom.
- Freedom is subjective but not without parameters.
- Participants from different cohorts often agree on aspects of freedom.
- Conceptions of freedom are sometimes correlated to local focuses.

The remainder of this chapter will be spent discussing these claims in detail.

Free will is a dominant quality of freedom

One statement, *Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so*, featured in Column +5 of the composite sorts for eight of 11 factors. Interviews suggest that this is because the words “coerced” and “forced” feature in this statement, connoting legislative framings of modern slavery. The three factors that did not rank the *free will* statement in Column +5 ranked it in Column +4. These are UK Factor 1 and US Factors 4 and 5.

A statement's placement in Column +4 is still significant. Column +5

of the grid for this study can contain two statements. The fact that the *free will* statement is not placed in this highest-ranking column only indicates that there are at least two qualities of freedom that rank more highly than *free will* for participants loading on UK Factor 1 and US Factors 4 and 5; it does not mean that free will is not a prominent quality of freedom in those factors. Further, when I examined composite sorts for each participant cohort independently of the others, the *free will* statement was ranked in Column +5 by all three cohorts.

An important question for participants to consider would be why they ranked the statement *Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so* as highly as they did. It could be that the reason they agree so strongly with the statement is that they have come to think implicitly of freedom as the opposite of slavery, even though when presented with that binary explicitly, they often reject it (as the results of this study show). But perhaps they agree with the *free will* statement so strongly because it reflects a law—and so, one could argue, a matter of perceived fact. The two possibilities are linked.

In the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (MSA), “Securing services etc by force, threats or deception” is one meaning of exploitation.<sup>229</sup> And in the US, federal law characterizes modern slavery activities as being carried out by means of “force, coercion, fraud, or deception.”<sup>230</sup> Certainly, we can make the observation that the language of the MSA and the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (TVPA) in the US is very similar to that of this statement, and that these acts may be partly responsible for participants—on the whole—gravitating toward the *free will* statement

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<sup>229</sup> Modern Slavery Act 2015, sec. 3 para. 5.

<sup>230</sup> Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000.



more readily than toward others.

Some participants vocalized an immediate, strongly positive reaction to the *free will* statement precisely because it sounded obviously antithetical to their legally informed conceptions of slavery; if they considered *feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced* to do something the definition of slavery, then *Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so* must be freedom. This pattern is exemplified by Participant US LE 1. When I asked why this statement was ranked in Column +5 in her Q sort, she said, “This is something of course I’m thinking about in a legal way [because] the definition of human trafficking is that you are doing things because you are coerced, forced, or compelled to do them in such a way.”<sup>231</sup>

But neither the MSA nor the TVPA make reference to freedom. Instead, they criminalize modern slavery offences, establish provisions to protect victims, and aim to prevent future instances of modern slavery. These acts are written in reference to modern slavery offences, versus the experience of freedom. It would be a worthwhile exercise for LE and VSP participants, in particular, to examine why language from legislation appears so prominently in their conceptions of freedom. It could be due to a conviction that the legislation contains a meaningful, implicit conception of freedom through negative liberties. Indeed, some participants said they placed the statement so highly because the law reflects something true about freedom, despite the law making explicit reference only to slavery. The moral impetus in undertaking this reflection comes from the fact that these LE and VSP practitioners bring their own conceptions of freedom to bear on the lives and recovery processes of

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<sup>231</sup> US LE 1, interview.

survivors every day.

One thing this shows us is that the language of policy and legislation matters, even regarding topics it is not explicitly trained on. Neither the MSA nor the TVPA are written to address freedom, yet they deeply inform key stakeholders' conceptions of freedom. Policy frames issues and shapes stakeholders' ideas. If policymakers are writing what becomes the vocabulary of people's lived experiences or realities then they, too, have a moral imperative: to choose that vocabulary well.

Freedom is subjective but not without parameters

The study findings demonstrate that freedom is a subjective matter; instead of a factor or two emerging for each country, there are 11 factors between the UK and the US. And when the data is analyzed further for each specific research site, there is rarely a single local definition of freedom that emerges. Instead, it is common for three or more factors to emerge at the local level (see Table 31 and Appendix A).

However, there are a few common themes in the country-level findings, introduced in Chapters 4 and 5. The first theme is that free will is a defining feature of freedom in eight factors, as further described above. *Free will* was largely understood as *the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so*, according to interview responses that complemented the meaning of the statement in the Q deck. Second, in the UK and US, choice is definitive of four factors. *Choice* is a broad term but assumes that an individual has options (usually very specific choices, e.g., *where you live and where you work*) and that they have some independence in decision making rather than having those choices made for them. Third and finally, *resilience* was definitive of four factors. Resilience is broadly understood across these factors as the ability to overcome challenges or thrive, despite a previous experience of

slavery. It is success despite slavery, whether those successes are achieved at an individual level (e.g., *Never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave*) or at a community level (e.g., *Freedom is created by a community deciding to work together to end human trafficking*). A closer inspection of any factor reveals nuance in the definitions of free will and, especially, choice and resilience. That is why these themes are defined broadly in the present discussion. These themes and their corresponding factors are displayed in Table 32.

It may be helpful here to recall the metaphor of a theatre, introduced in Chapter 4. Each participant was, as it were, viewing freedom from their unique vantage point or seat. We can think of each factor as we might think of different sections of seating within the same theatre. The themes of free will, choice, and resilience are parameters—they help us to further construct this image by suggesting what it is that characterizes the possible views within this theatre. What do these 11 factors and these three themes show us about freedom? Primarily, that conceptions of freedom are varied and subjective, but not arbitrary and not infinite. There are definite patterns of thinking about freedom that are common across the antislavery field and, moreover, there are parameters within which those patterns sit.

Factors	Theme		
	Free will <i>* indicates Column +5</i>	Choice	Resilience
<b>UK Factor 1:</b> A secure place in an improved world	✓		
<b>UK Factor 2:</b> Concrete securities and basic choices with no interference	✓*	✓	
<b>UK Factor 4:</b> Personal resilience and a positive experience of the world	✓*		✓
<b>UK Factor 6:</b> Survivor-centered comprehensive resilience	✓*		✓
<b>UK Factor 7:</b> Self-determination in a fair world	✓*	✓	
<b>US Factor 1:</b> Living without fear	✓*		
<b>US Factor 2:</b> Resilience against past enslavement and future harm	✓*		✓
<b>US Factor 3:</b> Having dignity and choices	✓*	✓	
<b>US Factor 4:</b> Enjoying and shaping your life	✓		
<b>US Factor 5:</b> Resilient self-perception and dignity	✓		✓
<b>US Factor 7:</b> Unconstrained choice in contrast to slavery	✓*	✓	

Table 32: UK and US factors, as aligned with key themes

Taken together, these three themes allow us to answer the question, “What is freedom from slavery?” in the form of a composite definition. That composite definition of freedom is: *having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so; usually experienced together with choice or resilience.*

Participants from different cohorts are often in agreement

Participants from all three cohorts load on four of the five UK factors and on four of the six US factors. This is an important observation because of how common it is for the antislavery field to be divided down professional lines. Victim service providers frequently suspect—or accuse outright—law enforcement professionals of missing the mark in terms of victim support and of de-prioritizing victim care in favor of perpetrator arrests and prosecutions. Law enforcement professionals, in turn, stereotype victim service providers as tree huggers and hippies,<sup>232</sup> or bemoan victim service providers' priorities when those priorities obstruct access to survivors or information during an investigation. And survivors relay mixed experiences of the messaging conveyed by both law enforcement and service provider professionals. But the findings of this study show that, when it comes to freedom, conceptions are often shared by a mix of individuals from across cohorts; they are not the proprietary or exclusive views of one group or another.

This should be encouraging. Antislavery stakeholders value breaking down silos and they often champion collaboration across sectors—whatever it takes to improve investigations, victim support, or any other element of antislavery strategy. But silos and collaboration challenges stubbornly remain, partly rooted in stereotypes—assumptions about another party's implicitly inferior ideas or position in the field. The mix of participants loading on so many factors indicates that conceptions of freedom are shared and that actors from one sector may have more in common with actors from another than they might expect to. For example, participant US VMS 4 said that he not only found it difficult to see how he “fit” into local antislavery efforts as an individual but that the

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<sup>232</sup> US field notes.

“best” vision of freedom those local efforts could achieve was the arrest of his traffickers, through the actions of law enforcement actors.<sup>233</sup> This fell short of this participant’s personal conception of freedom. However, he loaded on US Factor 3 along with two LE participants and one additional VMS participant (and no VSP participants) from the same site.

Cross-sector commonalities such as this appear not only in the country-level findings but at the local level, as well. Across the 17 local conceptions of freedom identified at the six research sites, only five (≈28%) are exclusive to one cohort, and this occurs at only half of the sites.

Given the antislavery field’s oft-stated value of understanding and including survivors’ perspectives, and given that victim service providers (anecdotally) have greater aptitude than law enforcement professionals at practicing this value, it is worth exploring the relationship of LE and VSP participants to VMS participants. VMS and VSP participants load together on ten factors in the country-level findings. This may not be surprising, given the amount of time victim service providers and survivors spend together and given the reciprocal influence the two groups have on one another. But shared meaning between these cohorts at the local level is less common, as evidenced at both the country-level and local-level factor analysis.

Factors such as UK Factor 4 demonstrate that, at the country level, participants from the VMS and VSP cohorts might share a conception of freedom but be located at more than one research site, while factors such as UK Factor 2 show that a conception of freedom might be shared by participants from the two cohorts but from completely separate sites. Furthermore, the local level of analysis demonstrates that VMS and VSP participants from the same research site share conceptions of freedom

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<sup>233</sup> US VMS 4, interview.

seven out of 17 times and at four sites. By comparison, LE and VMS participants load together on eight factors at the country level. At the local level, participants from these cohorts load together on six of 17 factors and at four sites.

These findings suggest that survivors and victim service providers do not have a significantly greater degree of shared meaning around freedom than law enforcement professionals and survivors do. It also shows that law enforcement professionals are not as aloof to survivors' perspectives or as coldly operational as commonly traded narratives could lead us to believe. This is not a statement to devalue or invalidate victim service providers' expertise, but it does suggest that individuals from that stakeholder group should be humble when representing the views of survivors in advocacy work and should seek to understand the perspectives of local law enforcement professionals before further perpetuating the divide between them. Similarly, law enforcement professionals should not accept the narrative that they know or understand less about freedom, or that they are inherently less capable of relating to survivors than victim service providers are.

Conceptions of freedom are sometimes correlated to local focuses

The fourth claim that can be made is that conceptions of freedom are sometimes correlated to specific elements of local victim service provision or other local antislavery focuses. For example, UK Factor 2 is: Freedom is concrete securities and basic choices with no interference. After *free will*, the statements with the highest Z-scores in Factor 2 are *To be able to get the basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life;* *Having a place to call home;* *Having the right to choose where you live and where you work;* and *To live without fear*. Four of the five participants loading on UK Factor 2 are based at the same research site. Those four

participants all have professional roles linked specifically to supporting the local homeless population and similarly vulnerable or excluded groups; two of them work exclusively with the local homeless population. The statements listed above characterize these participants' daily professional concerns on behalf of their clients and the groups they serve. The statements further characterize the influence that homelessness support initiatives have at this site.

That conceptions of freedom sometimes correlate to local focuses is even more evident in the local-level findings described in Appendix A. At the Florida research site, for example, the influence of local mental healthcare providers is clear. There are two shared conceptions of freedom that emerged from the Florida findings; both emphasize psychological recovery from slavery. At the Florida site, mental healthcare providers are members of human trafficking task forces and have been given positions of influence at both the regional and state levels. Mental health professionals are also on the staff teams of some victim service provider organizations, even when mental healthcare is not those organizations' primary service offer. The findings of this study do not prove that the strong value this research site places on mental healthcare provision wholly accounts for the origin of the two local definitions of freedom, but the correlation is noteworthy.

A related observation can be made, again at the local level; communities that do not regularly have focused discussions about freedom are unlikely to have shared conceptions of freedom. However well-organized local antislavery efforts may be, shared conceptions of freedom are unlikely to emerge by chance. The country-level analysis was bound to reveal patterns in thinking because the P sample for both the UK and the US was large enough. But the local P samples for each site were



small enough that shared meaning was not a given. The findings from the Wales and Washington sites reveal very low levels of shared meaning among participants, for example.

Participants at these sites said that freedom was not a frequent topic of conversation locally. One participant said, “It was really interesting to ... really think about this question, [What is freedom from slavery?]. You say ‘slavery’ or you talk about freedom but you never really think about it in detail.”<sup>234</sup> And, when asked if freedom is a topic of conversation with antislavery colleagues, another participant responded that it is topics like “safeguarding” and “reintegration into society”—not freedom—that are usually at the center of multi-agency conversations.<sup>235</sup> This participant indicated that those topics equate to freedom in conversations with his colleagues, but the topic of freedom does not arise explicitly. Instead, conversations around safeguarding and reintegration cover specific, operational client offers such as life skills training.<sup>236</sup>

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This chapter opened with a summary of the 11 UK and US factors that were first presented in Chapters 4 and 5. This was followed with an overview and discussion about participant engagement at the six sites. I then introduced findings from the local level of analysis for the six sites to lend support to the four claims this thesis makes about freedom. Those claims are:

- Free will is a dominant quality of freedom.
- Freedom is subjective but not without parameters.

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<sup>234</sup> US VSP 11, interview.

<sup>235</sup> UK LE 3, interview.

<sup>236</sup> UK LE 3, interview.

- Participants from different cohorts are often in agreement on aspects of freedom.
- Definitions of freedom are sometimes correlated to local focuses.

The claims made in this chapter can serve as a foundation for the field as it begins to articulate and address the idea of freedom more explicitly in its work.

Antislavery stakeholders are not presently cognizant of holding shared meanings of freedom. And this study shows that stakeholders do not all assume the same things or value the different possible parts of freedom in the same way (as represented by their different ways of sorting the Q sample). But three core subject themes were identified: free will, choice, and resilience. When taken together as definitional parameters, these themes encompass the conceptions of freedom discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 while giving latitude for nuance at both the national and local levels.

The research question was, “What is freedom from slavery?” The answer is: *freedom is having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so; usually experienced together with choice or resilience.*

# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This concluding section will present the preceding six chapters in review. It will then acknowledge the limitations of this study. Next, it will revisit the literature explored in Chapter 1 and make clear the contributions this thesis makes to the antislavery field, including empirical, methodological, and theoretical contributions. A description of the value of this research to antislavery scholars, the practice community, and to our understanding of cross-sector collaboration will follow. The greatest space will be left for the final substantive section of the thesis, titled, “What is next for the antislavery field?” This will be followed by a list of future research questions and a comment on how any future antislavery research should be approached.

## A REVIEW OF THIS THESIS

“What is freedom from slavery?” now seems an obvious choice of research question to me, but this was not always the case. Initially I, like so many of the participants in this study, used the word “freedom” frequently and loosely. When I began this doctoral program, I wanted to examine whether survivors who accessed support offered by organizations in antislavery partnerships in the UK, or task forces in the US, had a higher likelihood of realizing sustained freedom than those who accessed services outside of these antislavery communities. But I encountered a fundamental problem while designing the research project that would explore that question: I did not know what I meant by freedom and I could find no definition to adopt. Despite three years of experience

(at that point) in designing and delivering direct support services for survivors of modern slavery, I could not articulate my own conception of freedom—much less articulate what my fellow antislavery actors might conceive it to be. And so the focus of my doctoral work turned to defining freedom from slavery.

This thesis opened with a literature review that identified four categories under which the concept of freedom from slavery can be classified in antislavery literature to date. Those four categories are:

- Freedom as a moment in time
- Freedom as a transition
- Freedom as a social reality
- Freedom as belonging

While not problematic in and of themselves, these categories are only de facto ways of thinking about freedom. There is very little literature that directly addresses freedom from slavery and none that seeks to define it empirically through engagement with individuals directly affected by slavery.

This study utilized Q methodology to answer the question, “What is freedom from slavery?” Two chapters were dedicated to methodological considerations. Chapter 2 explained Q and justified its use, and Chapter 3 detailed the process and decisions involved in creating the concourse and Q sample for this study.

Chapters 4 and 5 introduced the 11 conceptions of freedom that emerged from fieldwork in the UK and the US in 2018 and 2019. Those 11 conceptions, or factors, are listed in Table 33 and are mapped across the three definitional themes of freedom: free will, choice, and resilience. Each of these conceptions was a finding that emerged from the combined

quantitative and qualitative data collected during fieldwork. The conceptions of freedom and the three themes were discussed in detail.

Factors	Theme		
	Free will <i>* indicates Column +5</i>	Choice	Resilience
<b>UK Factor 1:</b> A secure place in an improved world	✓		
<b>UK Factor 2:</b> Concrete securities and basic choices with no interference	✓*	✓	
<b>UK Factor 4:</b> Personal resilience and a positive experience of the world	✓*		✓
<b>UK Factor 6:</b> Survivor-centered comprehensive resilience	✓*		✓
<b>UK Factor 7:</b> Self-determination in a fair world	✓*	✓	
<b>US Factor 1:</b> Living without fear	✓*		
<b>US Factor 2:</b> Resilience against past enslavement and future harm	✓*		✓
<b>US Factor 3:</b> Having dignity and choices	✓*	✓	
<b>US Factor 4:</b> Enjoying and shaping your life	✓		
<b>US Factor 5:</b> Resilient self-perception and dignity	✓		✓
<b>US Factor 7:</b> Unconstrained choice in contrast to slavery	✓*	✓	

*Table 33: UK and US factors, as aligned with key themes (this is a copy of Table 32)*

Chapter 6 discussed the significance of those conceptions when taken as a whole. I made four claims about the meaning of freedom from slavery. First, free will is a dominant and consistent quality of freedom. Second, freedom is subjective, but not without parameters. In fact, this study supports the following composite definition of freedom: *having free*

*will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so; usually experienced together with choice or resilience.* Third, participants from different cohorts are often in agreement around conceptions of freedom. Fourth, conceptions of freedom are sometimes correlated to local antislavery focuses.

## LIMITATIONS

There were two limitations to the study from the outset. First, generalization is limited—at least as it is commonly understood. Second, Northern Ireland was excluded from the UK research. A third limitation developed while the study was underway; the participant group (P sample) is weighted toward the victim service provider (VSP) cohort.

The first limitation is due to the fact that Q methodology does not allow for generalization—at least, not in the way that typical statistical reliability is generally understood to. van Exel and de Graaf summarize the discussion of Q's reliability. They say,

Q methodological studies have often been criticised for their reliability and hence the possibility for generalisation (Thomas and Baas, 1992). The most important type of reliability for Q is replicability. ... Based on the findings of two pairs of tandem studies, Thomas and Baas (1992) concluded that scepticism over this type of reliability is unwarranted. The more common notion of statistical reliability, regarding the ability to generalise sample results to the general population, is of less concern here. The results of a Q methodological study are the distinct [ideas] about a topic that are operant, not the percentage of the sample (or the general population) that adheres to any of them.<sup>237</sup>

Rather than attempting to generalize about how many people share a common viewpoint (in this case, a conception of freedom), "Q methodology generally aims only to establish the existence of particular

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<sup>237</sup> van Exel and de Graaf, "Q Methodology: A Sneak Preview," 3.

viewpoints and thereafter to understand, explicate and compare them.”<sup>238</sup>

We can reasonably expect that the 11 conceptions of freedom discussed in this thesis will resonate with other American or British antislavery communities, so long as this study was well designed. Those same 11 conceptions should recur in replications of the study—they are, in other words, representative of the conceptions of freedom operant across antislavery communities in the UK (excluding Northern Ireland) and the US. We can also expect that the themes of free will, choice, and resilience will not only resonate with other communities but would undergird the conceptions of freedom held across additional antislavery communities in those countries in a replication of this study or in studies designed similarly to it.

The second limitation is that Northern Ireland was excluded from the UK fieldwork and, for that matter, most states in the US were not included in the study. Excluding Northern Ireland from the study introduces a different kind of limitation than excluding any US state does because, unlike the US, the UK has a national mechanism for identifying victims and supporting survivors. Furthermore, Northern Ireland is one of only four UK nations but is frequently excluded from antislavery discourse; excluding it here risks further minimizing the views of any antislavery actors in Northern Ireland. In large part, this limitation is a result of the limited resources inherent to doctoral research (namely, money and time). But in the case of Northern Ireland, it is due to three additional factors.

First, the nation’s recent history of conflict creates a significantly different cultural, historical, and ideological context in which to define freedom. Especially in light of the fact that political freedom has featured

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<sup>238</sup> Steven Brown, cited in Watts and Stenner, *Doing Q Methodological Research*, 72.

so prominently in this conflict, it was deemed likely that many participants would view freedom through a political or religious lens. Without adequate resources to parse their responses, this would render Northern Irish conceptions of “freedom from slavery” incompatible for analysis with those of participants in other UK nations. Second, it was understood that there was a very low level of coordinated antislavery work in Northern Ireland compared to other UK nations; an antislavery community of adequate size could not be identified at the time fieldwork sites were chosen. As of spring 2020, there is evidence that this is changing. Northern Ireland is slated for inclusion in a proposed postdoctoral study that builds on this research. Third, violence and riots in Derry in 2018 suggested that Northern Ireland could become unsafe during the fieldwork period.

A third limitation arose over the course of field research: law enforcement (LE) and survivor (VMS) participants each make up only 27.4% of the overall P sample. In the UK, LE and VMS participants represent 27% and 23% of the P sample, respectively. In the US, they represent a slightly higher percentage, at 28% and 30%, respectively. This means the P sample is weighted toward the VSP cohort, which represents 45.2% of all participants. Absolute balance is not necessary for Q and does not undermine or delegitimize findings. However, it does limit my ability to share this study as a one where each cohort was equally represented. It is true that Q equalizes every participant’s voice, but the P sample composition does fall short of my ideal of equal representation among the cohorts. Reasons for this were discussed in Chapters 2 and 6.

## RELATIONSHIP TO LITERATURE

The four categories, or ways of speaking about freedom, that were



identified in Chapter 1 represent recurring patterns of thought in existing antislavery literature. This thesis has not sought to challenge, refute, or test any of them, largely because none of them are asserted explicitly as definitions of freedom; they are merely common ways that freedom has been described (and often, described passively).

Those four categories do map across some of the factors from this study, but they do not map across them neatly. This surprised me somewhat. I had expected that some factors would correspond so closely to these categories that the factors could justifiably be named after them. This did not turn out to be the case.

Statements representing these four patterns were represented in the Q sample. To the extent that participants collectively agreed with them, those statements appear in some of the factors. For example, *The process of adjusting to not being trafficked and being less impacted by your former trafficking experience* represents the category of freedom as a transition or process and appears in Column +4 of the composite sort for UK Factor 6. But although this holds a high-ranking place in the factor, the statement itself is insufficient as a whole conception of freedom. This is clear even from Q sorts and interviews with participants who valued *process* as an element of freedom; only three placed it in the +5 column.

I would like to return briefly to my early decision to exclude traditional political theory texts and their corresponding definitions of freedom from this study. The primary reason this thesis is not positioned within the body of literature that includes the likes of Alexis de Tocqueville, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, or even Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx is that, while they spoke about freedom (and sometimes slavery) they were neither members of antislavery communities nor did they interact directly with victims or survivors of slavery who could help

shape their views on freedom. While previous antislavery literature has not set out to define freedom from slavery, much of it has been written by survivors or by those who have engaged with survivors directly. Moreover, philosophers such as those listed above were not concerned with freedom from slavery, *per se*, but with freedom in a broader political sense. Julia O'Connell Davidson, while squarely opposed to today's antislavery movement, is featured in the literature review because she confronts ideas that are born out of—and are often held dear in—antislavery literature. This is not the case for most political theory. Finally, philosophers have not asked people directly affected by slavery, or people ostensibly experiencing freedom, what freedom means. In this study, I did.

## EMPIRICAL, METHODOLOGICAL, AND THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Rather than criticizing antislavery literature for failing to accomplish something it does not explicitly set out to achieve (defining freedom), this thesis makes four new, empirical claims about freedom—including advancing a composite definition—which are derived directly from engagement with communities affected by slavery. The results of this study effectively act as a mirror, reflecting back to the antislavery field its own conceptions which were, until now, largely unobserved and unspoken. This is my chief original contribution to the field.

A related theoretical contribution is that, over the course of this study, I argued, tested, and still maintain that freedom ought not be defined in the traditional style of philosophy or political theory, but must be grounded in the perspectives of individuals affected by slavery. What this means for antislavery stakeholders in academia and in practice (including law enforcement professionals) is that we now have a

definitional starting point when it comes to talking about freedom. And that starting point never again needs to default to freedom as *simply the opposite of slavery*. Practical implications of this will be presented as recommendations in the following section, as will implications for how future antislavery research is conducted.

The design of this study reflects my point of departure: that freedom is both subjective and operant. The study draws heavily on the theoretical concept of operant subjectivity developed by William Stephenson, Steven Brown, and other practitioners of Q methodology. Whereas Q is often employed strictly to gather individuals' opinions, this study took seriously the methodology's power to do more than this. I applied Q not only to the aim of understanding how participants conceive of freedom but of assessing what conceptions of freedom operate in and on the antislavery field. I further harnessed the power of Q to functionally put participants in conversation with one another and with the field at large through the Q sample, pointed interview questions, and data analysis. I was cognizant of doing this throughout the study, rather than taking for granted that this would be an effect of the study, and it informed the questions I asked during interviews and the claims and implications I name in this thesis. I often expressly shared this concept with participants, as well.

This is a critical contribution not only because it makes meaningful use of Q's underlying principles, but because, in turn, it took seriously the stated value of collaborative working in the antislavery field (and the related value of understanding<sup>239</sup>). This value is oft-repeated; it has been affirmed since at least 2000 in the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (TVPA) and as recently as January 2021 in the Modern

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<sup>239</sup> Semione, "Preparing for Impact," 28–39.

Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre's latest UK report.<sup>240</sup> Thus, this study married a theory of subjectivity and the value of collaboration in its very design, putting both into practice and facilitating cross-stakeholder understanding in the process.

The contributions of this research extend beyond its discoveries about freedom to its means of arriving at them. This Q study broke freedom down into its possible parts in the concourse and resulting Q sample, then, through Q sorts, asked participants to put it back together—to place each part in its proper place relative to the others. The approach that sets this work apart is twofold: First, it asks people the direct question, “What is freedom from slavery?” Second, it asks that question of people who are directly affected by slavery and have a vested interest in freedom. This leads to three methodological contributions.

The first is bringing Q to bear on this research question for the first time. Q has several strengths that made it an excellent choice of methodology. The resulting five UK and six US conceptions of freedom thoroughly answer the research question and validate the application of Q methodology to this task.

One of the reasons I chose Q was because it embraces subjectivity and can capture nuance in participants' shared meaning. My second methodological contribution lies in my decision to choose varimax rotation over judgmental rotation in determining what conceptions of freedom exist within the antislavery field. Some Q researchers might view this as a weakness of the study or as a sign of inexperience. Though Watts and Stenner treat judgmental and varimax rotation as equally valid,<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000; Balch, “Consultation on the Modern Slavery PEC's Research Priorities.”

<sup>241</sup> Watts and Stenner, *Doing Q Methodological Research*, chap. 6.

others look on varimax less equitably. Brown and Richard Robyn, for example, come out strongly against the use of varimax in general, preferring that the researcher apply her prior knowledge of the field and pursue her own “hunches” at the factor analysis stage.<sup>242</sup> But I chose varimax for the reasons stated in Chapter 2: it was better suited to my aim of capturing the previously unobserved conceptions of freedom that are operant on the field and it reinforced other mechanisms inherent to Q that minimized the influence of my own subjectivity. This choice framed the factors in a way that is consistent with the needs and values of the antislavery field, but I believe it can also provide for the Q community a strong example of an appropriate and measured decision to choose varimax over judgmental rotation.

My third methodological contribution is detailed tracking and transparency around the concourse, which I reported in Chapter 3. This should be of interest to researchers who practice Q. While there are many resources expounding on the concept of concourse, there is little literature available concerning the step-by-step process one might follow in developing a concourse and the decisions that can arise during that process. I hope that this transparency and careful documentation will serve to improve the concourses, and therefore overall projects, of Q studies moving forward. Though hopefully of interest to the Q community at large, Chapter 3 may also serve as a guidebook, of sorts, to other graduate or postgraduate students undertaking a Q study for the first time.

This thesis has captured how both Q methodology and the findings of this study can help advance real-world dialogue and improve

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<sup>242</sup> Brown and Robyn, “Reserving a Key Place for Reality: Philosophical Foundations of Theoretical Rotation,” 122.

collaboration in service of more effective antislavery work. That dialogue and collaboration have already begun. In the time since the fieldwork concluded, I have heard encouraging news from many of the research sites. Stakeholders have engaged with one another concerning this study and they have also engaged with me after receiving local research briefings (available in Appendix A), to discuss how the findings might be put into practice in their communities. A story from a bright moment during fieldwork illustrates this well.

I spoke with the leader of one antislavery community about a month after completing research sessions with her and with several LE participants from the same site. This VSP participant told me that she and the LE participants had a long conversation about their Q sorts after I left the site. They told one another their thoughts about the Q sample and laughed about some of the differences in their arrangements of the statements. But, more importantly, they discussed why they had those differences of opinion and explained to one another why they had placed the statements as they did.

This thesis synthesizes a definition of freedom but it does not jump to resolving differences among various conceptions. Instead, the research concludes with the advent of new, intentional conversations about the meaning of freedom and the hope of using those conversations to drive more focused visioning, planning, implementation, and evaluation in the antislavery field in the years to come.

## **FURTHER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ANTISLAVERY FIELD**

Further to the contributions described above, this thesis holds significant value for antislavery scholars, policymakers, and practitioners, and to our understanding of multi-sector collaboration. The most

immediate contribution for stakeholders across all sectors is that we now have a definition of freedom from slavery. This expands the capacity of the antislavery field to pursue its work in every area and has significant, specific implications. Recommendations to this effect will be made in the next section. The paragraphs below provide a basis for those recommendations by briefly describing the significance of this research for the antislavery field. As we will see, this research empowers stakeholders from across sectors, but it also imparts to them some responsibility.

Antislavery scholars will benefit from the empirical, methodological, and theoretical contributions above. But by advancing an empirically sound definition of freedom, this thesis calls upon researchers to be intentional and precise in their use of the word “freedom.” We should not have been ambivalent about freedom for as long as we have been, and we cannot continue in ambivalence any longer. This thesis plants a stake in the ground, so to speak; antislavery scholars should not make reference to freedom without contending with the claims made here. Another implication of defining freedom is that future antislavery research that examines survivor support programs—including monitoring, evaluation, and learning work—can do so in light of freedom, among the other measures of success that may be relevant. Furthermore, this research challenges the academic community to seek knowledge from within affected communities, rather than relying on laws or theory to produce the definitions against which we frame our relationship to those communities. The research design of this study demonstrates one way this can be done without compromising research integrity or vigor.

This research empowers direct victim service providers to continue their work whilst making more targeted use of their (often scant)

resources to support survivors into sustained freedom. Further, my research enables policymakers and policy influencers to create and advocate for policy that supports sustainable freedom, countering the challenges and vulnerabilities survivors face under the current legislative focus on eliminating slavery. The responsibility corresponding to this, as is the case with researchers, is that practitioners and policymakers should now be accountable to precision and purposefulness in their pursuit of freedom and in their use of the term; they can no longer harbor ambiguity around freedom.

Finally, this research has value for multi-sector collaborations and how we understand them. Prior to analyzing the data from this study, I was neither seeking nor expecting that it would have significance in this area—only that the research itself would be of value to those collaborations by offering a definition of freedom that stakeholders could adopt. By the time I had completed data analysis, though, it had become clear that my perspective was too limited in this regard. Two of the claims made in this thesis illuminate the value that this research brings to our understanding of multi-sector collaborations: participants from different cohorts are often in agreement around conceptions of freedom and conceptions of freedom are sometimes correlated to local antislavery focuses. Antislavery communities can leverage these two facts to help shift the antislavery field's focus from being against slavery to being for freedom; there is power in concerted effort.

The first of these claims suggests that there is ideological common ground across sectors in antislavery communities. This means that antislavery stakeholders are not only united by a common goal of fighting slavery in their communities but that they already hold shared conceptions about the meaning of freedom—about what comes after



slavery for individuals and for their communities. Shared meaning can support fruitful ways forward in the collaborative work that many anti-slavery stakeholders undertake but which is, too often, riddled with conflict. Stakeholders who may disagree on operational best practices or allocation of funding in collaborative work are often working toward similar ideological ideals—though they are not necessarily doing so knowingly. As I have previously said, this should be encouraging in terms of relationships and uncovering commonalities among law enforcement professionals, survivors, and victim service providers. Shared meaning can provide individuals with a basis on which—or a purpose for which—to persevere through cross-sector frustrations or conflict. The common stereotypes between sectors and the inevitable tensions that arise in collaborative work will never fully dissipate, but cross-sector agreement shows that stakeholders can be united not only in what they stand against, but what they stand for—and freedom-oriented work promises ways forward that are both constructive and hopeful. Cross-sector agreement exists and should serve as the basis for collaboration.

A definition of freedom also has serious implications for multi-agency collaborative work. Many organizations will be familiar with quantifiable deliverables, such as increasing the number of survivors accessing a specific service or increasing prosecutions by a specific percentage. With a definition of freedom, antislavery communities can begin working toward establishing observable, even measurable freedom through their collaborative work in the same way that they collaborate toward eradicating slavery from the regions that they serve. Indeed, I argue they are even obligated to do so. This research supports the many existing, multi-sector antislavery partnerships in their regional aims to create slavery-free communities and to support the survivors living

among those communities. The recommendations listed in the next section offer specific examples of how this study can help them achieve this.

The second of these claims suggests that collaborative, operational work directly influences how individuals within antislavery communities think about freedom. It also shows us that implicit shared meaning may, in turn, be unconsciously operationalized through local service provision. While none of the antislavery communities I visited during fieldwork have a stated definition of freedom, the specific focuses of their local and regional work were frequently reflected in the factors discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, and in Appendix A. In short, antislavery communities may be key to both forming and normalizing conceptions of freedom. But it is only through collaboration and active engagement over the topic of freedom that this shared meaning can be discovered—and only when this shared meaning is named can antislavery communities realize its full power and operationalize freedom to the maximum benefit of those they serve. Leaders of antislavery communities, in particular, need to be aware of the influence that their cross-sector, multi-agency collaborations have. Further, they should create opportunities for collaborative work that focuses intentionally on operationalizing freedom—rather than leaving this influence to chance. Ideas for how to operationalize freedom will be discussed in the recommendations below.

I am suggesting that multi-sector collaborations prioritize arriving at shared meaning and then achieving reflective equilibrium—where a shared meaning around freedom is first acknowledged, then purposefully reflected outwardly through the operational activities these collaborations undertake (including support services, advocacy, and awareness raising, among many other possibilities). Not only should there be a collective,

explicit coherence concerning freedom within antislavery communities, but freedom as operationalized through these communities' activities should be coherent with that shared meaning rather than being a byproduct of implicit shared meaning (as seemed to be the case in the examples given to support this claim in Chapter 6). For many antislavery stakeholders, including academics, this requires a deepening of how collaboration is understood. This research helps achieve this by revealing not only the core freedom principles of free will, choice, and resilience, but by delineating—through factors and statements—the relational and material priorities that participants believe can manifest those principles in survivors' lives.

## WHAT IS NEXT FOR THE ANTISLAVERY FIELD?

The greatest value of this research to the antislavery field lies at the intersection of the contributions described above and the recommendations made below.

The big-picture benefit of a growing understanding of freedom is that the antislavery field can begin to identify with what it stands *for* rather than what it stands *against*. “Anti-” language is useful and even necessary in efforts to end slavery, deconstruct the drivers of it, and identify and prosecute perpetrators. But this language does not speak to what can follow slavery in the lives of survivors or in communities. In short, “anti-” language is insufficient for freedom work. Building on the four claims this thesis makes about freedom and the definition it advances, stakeholders in the antislavery field might start to build an identity around freedom rather than around slavery and begin, with common purpose, to construct something in the metaphorical space after slavery.

Is this future likely to evolve from the status quo? This future where “antislavery”—long the primary descriptor of the field—is replaced with something more positive and constructive? No. This new trajectory will not occur organically. Stakeholders will need to set this course intentionally and cooperatively.

The suggestion that antislavery stakeholders collaborate is not novel. Many antislavery communities in the US began as—and remain—part of human trafficking task forces, the very basis for which is the conviction that “multidisciplinary” or cross-sector antislavery work is “best practice.”<sup>243</sup> Internationally, the three-pronged antislavery paradigm of prevention, protection, and prosecution has been gradually expanding for years to include a fourth “P”: partnership. A 2020 report from the Office of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner brought antislavery researchers into the fold, calling for collaboration between them and antislavery stakeholders on the ground.<sup>244</sup> But what I am suggesting as this thesis draws to a close is that the antislavery field widen—and sometimes completely shift—its focus from being against slavery to being for freedom. This new focus should be firmly rooted in the shared thinking around freedom evidenced here and should be translated into action on that basis, by means of collaboration. It is by embracing the practical implications of this research and following the recommendations made below that antislavery stakeholders from across sectors can begin to bring about this shift.

No sector can be said to be leading the way in delineating freedom or integrating it into the fabric of their work. While this declaration might

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<sup>243</sup> Office for Victims of Crime and Bureau of Justice Assistance, “Human Trafficking Task Force E-Guide.”

<sup>244</sup> Semione, “Preparing for Impact.”

cause us some dismay, we should instead be looking on it as an opportunity for collaboration. Freedom, as a value and as a substantial concept, both crosses the three P's and represents what is, arguably, the most ambitious but most definite answer to the challenge of slavery. If partnership on the basis of freedom itself is not effective “as a pathway to achieve progress on [prevention, prosecution, and protection] in the effort against modern slavery,”<sup>245</sup> what can be? This thesis enables anti-slavery scholars and stakeholders from across sectors (such as direct victim service providers, law enforcement professionals, and policymakers) to understand what freedom is; where the principles of free will, resilience, and choice come from; and how to integrate freedom into their own work—beginning with the recommendations and suggested action plans below.

Implications and practical recommendations for this are organized under three categories in this section: policy implications and recommendations, practice implications and recommendations, and a note for survivors. Some of these implications and recommendations are rooted in implications that cut across sectors, and so there are some interdependencies and similarities among them. But there is one recommendation for the antislavery field at large, under which I want to frame everything that follows: **freedom and its inherent principles of free will, choice, and resilience, should be integrated into the daily work and governance frameworks of individual organizations and cross-sector collaborations.**

#### Policy implications and recommendations

The themes of free will, choice, and resilience in freedom carry implications at the national policy level because they reflect stakeholders’

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<sup>245</sup> U.S. Department of State, “The 3Ps: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution.”

perspectives from across the country in both the UK and the US. We know that freedom is subjective; by its nature, a one-size-fits-all approach will never suffice. But centralized approaches to most matters (including, for example, survivor support through the UK's National Referral Mechanism, or NRM) either take a one-size-fits-all tactic or attempt individualization in ways that feel clumsy to those on the receiving end. So, what relevance can freedom have to governments? How can they be expected to bear any responsibility for such a subjective matter? This is a prime example of the significance in a composite definition of freedom. Policy cannot be tailored to every survivor or every community's conception of freedom, but it can secure an appropriate context for them. If laws and policy are not supporting outcomes in the areas of free will, choice, and resilience, at a minimum, then, however sufficient they may be for fighting slavery, they are insufficient for supporting freedom from slavery.

We know that antislavery laws and policy inform how stakeholders understand freedom. Possibly the greatest takeaway for lawmakers and policymakers is that the words they choose to frame issues become reality and shape people's experiences in a real way. There is an opportunity for reflection—an opportunity for lawmakers and policymakers to ask themselves if they have a conception of freedom. Is freedom from slavery a substantial, positive freedom or set of positive freedoms, with elements that can be delineated as they are in the Q sample? Or is freedom a negative liberty—the absence of someone exercising rights of ownership over another person? The latter is insubstantial and insufficient, as revealed by participants' reaction to the statements reading *You achieve freedom the moment you are physically removed from your trafficker* and *Freedom is simply the opposite of*

*slavery*, and as evidenced in the 11 substantial conceptions of freedom discussed in this thesis.

**Lawmakers, policymakers, and policy influencers should frame their work in terms of specific aspects of freedom rather than continuing in the present pattern of framing law and policy primarily in terms of slavery or trafficking.** This is especially important where law or policy have a direct influence on the lived experiences of survivors.

Though this is pertinent to both the UK and the US contexts, I will use the NRM, a policy mechanism, as an example because of the new (as of January 2021) Victim Care Contract (VCC) and ongoing NRM transformation project. The NRM guarantees victims of modern slavery a recovery period during which they are entitled to accommodation, psychological care such as counseling, legal support, and other basic provisions. These all resonate with different conceptions of freedom as discussed in this thesis, but neither the NRM nor the Modern Slavery Act (MSA) use the term freedom. Arguably the closest the NRM comes is in its use of the word recovery—a word that, while undefined officially, refers to a victim’s presumably improved overall condition after exiting slavery and while receiving support via the NRM.<sup>246</sup> There are opportunities to operationalize conceptions of freedom here. A Recovery Needs Assessment (RNA) is now required on entry into the NRM, as is a “personalised journey plan.”<sup>247</sup> The latter is “a living document that is mutually agreed between the support worker and the ... victim and is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in circumstances

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<sup>246</sup> I am grateful to Vicky Brotherton for engaging in discussions around NRM and policy-related issues such as this. Her engagement over these matters has informed this and other UK policy implications discussed below.

<sup>247</sup> Home Office, “Modern Slavery: Statutory Guidance for England and Wales (under S49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015) and Non-Statutory Guidance for Scotland and Northern Ireland, Version 2.0,” 61.

and/or new goals or aspirations.”<sup>248</sup> One objective of this journey plan is to “provide support tailored to the individual needs of each ... victim to help them to recover from their modern slavery experiences, to begin to move on to independence outside of [VCC] support.”<sup>249</sup> That freedom is a subjective matter fits organically with all of this. What is missing from Home Office guidance, though, is consistent framing for concepts like journey, recovery, independence, or moving on in terms that can be linked meaningfully to holistic success (as opposed to success in one area only, such as a decreased need for psychological support). **This could be remedied by reframing NRM language in terms of free will, choice, and resilience; in other words, freedom.**

Accountability for this could be seated with the Care Quality Commission, “who are soon to commence inspections of ... NRM safehouses (and potentially outreach services).”<sup>250</sup> This could be accomplished, for example, by “ensuring these conversations are embedded in the VCC.”<sup>251</sup> What if the RNA accounted for freedom in its substance rather than merely “ongoing recovery needs arising from ... modern slavery experiences”?<sup>252</sup> The actionable support needs would likely remain the same (e.g., a victim’s need for psychological support), but the outcomes of the support offered should be measured against freedom itself (that is, free will, choice, and resilience in their mutually agreed, personalized manifestations) as “recovery ~~needs arising from~~ a victim’s modern slavery experiences.”<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Home Office, 61.

<sup>249</sup> Home Office, 61.

<sup>250</sup> Brotherton, “Freedom - Policy Asks,” January 18, 2021.

<sup>251</sup> Brotherton; outreach services are NRM services for victims not in safe houses.

<sup>252</sup> Home Office, “Recovery Needs Assessment (RNA), Version 3.0,” 7.

<sup>253</sup> Home Office, 7 (striketrough added for illustration).



The many benefits of this shift in language include giving NRM support workers and victims a holistic way of understanding how the varied elements of NRM support (legal advice, medical care, English language courses, etc.) relate and giving them an aspirational yet pragmatic framing for the construction of a journey plan. Considerations when constructing the latter could include a victim's personal assessment of whether they feel they have free will; what choices they feel are available to them and what choices they desire to have; what their own understanding of resilience is; what practical support provisions would help to achieve these; and personal markers for assessing whether the individual's experience is progressing toward those aspirations. The RNA, as it stands, requires that VCC support continue until appropriate non-VCC support can take its place in assisting a victim toward recovery. Under my proposed framing, the non-VCC services (which will often be disjointed and will not always be managed by a single support worker) that an NRM support worker recommends should be "sufficient"<sup>254</sup> not only to extend a victim's access to legal advice and the like, but should be sufficient for facilitating a victim's continued progress toward freedom. The services should furthermore be held together, so to speak, by this aspiration of freedom—support workers and victims should mutually understand how each service supports this aspiration before the victim exits the NRM.

Shared meaning around freedom has additional implications at the regional and local levels, in both the UK and the US. In antislavery communities in both countries, it is individual service providers interacting with individual survivors to secure sustainable freedom, recovery, integration, and the myriad other umbrella terms used for a desired post-slavery outcome in a survivor's life. Regardless of centralized law and

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<sup>254</sup> Home Office, 16.

policy, it is these actors who action or operationalize ideas in reality. Legislation and policies informed by freedom would significantly enable these regional and local actors to operationalize freedom in their daily duties, but these individuals are not wholly dependent on the central government to do so. Rather, they can take advantage of even vague policy that may not be trained on freedom. **Organizations under contracts should leverage the interpretability of contractual language to infuse freedom principles into proposed deliverables.**

In the UK, NRM provisions are delivered by charity sector organizations via the VCC. The prime contractor (lead organization overseeing the national contract and operations) and subcontractors (any partner organizations operating in specific locations across the country) propose specific operationalizations or delivery of those provisions when bidding for the VCC. The prime contractor who is awarded the VCC is then accountable for making good on those deliverables. In each nation of the UK, this happens on a nation-wide level. Organizations could propose crafting journey plans around free will, choice, and resilience as the three key components of freedom.

There is not a direct US parallel to the NRM, but the same recommendation applies. For instance, as of May 2020 there were 427 “human trafficking services grantees and task forces” funded by the US Office for Victims of Crime and the Bureau of Justice Assistance.<sup>255</sup> Additional parties receive separate funding from further federal bodies. These organizations and task forces operate at the local or regional (e.g., state) level. They secure funding through grants such as the Enhanced Collaborative Model to Combat Human Trafficking grant. This grant is

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<sup>255</sup> Office for Victims of Crime, “Matrix of OVC/BJA-Funded Human Trafficking Services Grantees and Task Forces.”

designed to facilitate the US antislavery agenda and TVPA provisions through multi-sector working. But the grant's language around survivor support is even more open-ended than that of the VCC in the UK because there is not a single, centralized model of support delivery in the US. I consider this a strength in the campaign to introduce freedom into policy-driven outputs like task force deliverables. Organizations applying to grants like the Enhanced Collaborative Model to Combat Human Trafficking grant can take advantage of language around deliverables such as, "assisting victims ... in achieving increased safety, independence, self-sufficiency, and well-being through the provision of appropriate services"<sup>256</sup> by proposing actions, targets, and even evaluations centered on free will, choice, and resilience.

Even failing centralized directives or initiatives, **regional and local actors can and should leverage policy mechanisms and central or federal government funding to proactively secure opportunities to engage the survivors they serve as active participants in their own journeys, using a freedom-centered framework of free will, choice, and resilience.** This is applicable to charity sector organizations, law enforcement agencies, and local government bodies that pursue central government-funded opportunities. Survivors' experiences of free will, choice, and resilience should be maximized in all cases and by all parties. And wherever possible, personalization of these guiding concepts should be facilitated. **Where grants require empirical evidence to validate this new approach, organizations should appeal to this study and the country- and local-level findings it presents.**

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<sup>256</sup> US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs and Office for Victims of Crime, "Enhanced Collaborative Model Task Force to Combat Human Trafficking: OJP FY 2020 Competitive Grant Solicitation," 7.

## Practice implications and recommendations

Implications for practice are not limited to stakeholders who influence policy or receive funding to implement it. The examples of practical applications through direct service delivery that are included in the “Policy implications and recommendations” section, for example, will largely translate to practice that falls outside government funding as well. **At the organizational level, freedom should inform practice and program development in all aspects, from design and implementation to evaluation and revision.** Service providers can and should accomplish this by asking clients directly what they think freedom is, and what free will, choice, and resilience mean to them. The support offered should be tailored to that end. Speaking very pragmatically, the items in the Q sample or the 11 conceptions of freedom in Chapters 4 and 5 may provide practitioners and survivor clients alike with possible responses to the question, “What is freedom?”—a question that is likely new to both parties in its directness. (While I contend that freedom should inform all areas of practice, including community awareness raising, survivor-facing law enforcement operations, and even prosecutions, that discussion is outside the scope of this thesis.)

This recommendation can also be accomplished by utilizing the country-level or, where appropriate, the local-level findings from this research to inform operational decisions and strategy. Through the specific statements that are highly ranked in each factor, the findings show which elements of freedom antislavery communities should commit resources to and should focus on operationally (e.g., stable accommodation as a means of building survivors’ resilience, in the case of Briefing 5 in Appendix A). **Practitioners and antislavery communities should leverage these findings to support evidence-based decisions at the**

**local level and when writing bids to secure funding for local activities or programs.**

Monitoring and evaluation is often built in to government-funded grants, which usually require financial reporting and reports of progress or success in delivering the funded activity. (This is another reason it is important that organizations inject the language and substance of freedom when they bid for funding—so that they have both the justification to focus on freedom and the built-in accountability of maintaining their focus on it.) But despite it being best practice, many antislavery organizations or stakeholder groups who are not required to engage in monitoring and evaluation activities will not do so. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning often fall low on practitioners' priority lists because they require man-hours and funding (both of which are usually in short supply—even for those who do win grants). Despite these challenges, **antislavery practitioners should evaluate service delivery and related programming according to the core concepts of freedom.** This should include monitoring and evaluating the efficacy of their survivor-facing programs according to how well those programs support survivors in realizing free will, choice, and resilience. In short, the definition of freedom advanced in this thesis should serve as a monitoring, evaluation, and learning metric.

There are three additional recommendations that are specific to direct service providers.

First, direct service providers are often in a position to represent the views of survivors to the media, the public (for example, during volunteer recruitment or advocacy work), and to the government in both the UK and the US. But this study showed that, as it relates to freedom, the views of VMS participants were not always aligned to those of VSP

participants at the same site. Victim service providers should be humble when representing the views of survivors concerning life after slavery. Ideally, practitioners with this platform would extend such opportunities directly to survivors. But when this is not possible or when survivors are not interested in the opportunities, practitioners should proactively seek survivors' perspectives. Furthermore, such platforms should be leveraged whenever possible to advance freedom-centered narratives and infuse freedom language into the public and statutory consciousness, enabling a shift in focus away from the abuses suffered in slavery (however shocking) and toward freedom.

Second, direct service providers should resist opportunities to further perpetuate the common divide that places themselves and survivors on one side and law enforcement professionals on the other. This study shows cross-sector agreement on freedom, and further that the VMS cohort's conceptions of freedom complemented those held by both the LE and VSP cohorts. On the bases of the antislavery field's stated value of collaboration and shared conceptions of freedom, service providers in particular are encouraged to minimize this divide. Interviews revealed that both LE and VSP participants can hold noncomplimentary views of one another. But it is service providers, not law enforcement professionals, who are more often in a position to influence public opinion and survivors' views of the other party. This can happen in the context of media interviews, one-to-one conversations, or partnership or task force meetings.

Third, direct service providers are often in positions to act as gatekeepers, standing in the figurative space between survivor clients and interview or participation requests from the media or researchers. Certainly, some of these opportunities might be illegitimate or even

dangerous and should not be shared with survivors. But it is not clear that decisions about which opportunities to share are made according to consistent criteria. In several instances during the course of this research, it was not an informed decision that precluded research invitations being extended to survivors, but service providers being pressed for time. If an individual in a gatekeeping role did not have time to learn about the research, they would not pass on the invitation to survivors. And in some instances where these individuals did have time to learn about the research, they did not have time to forward or repeat that information to survivors. In their capacity as gatekeepers, practitioners should not filter legitimate opportunities—such as invitations to participate in ethical research—on behalf of survivors but should extend those opportunities to survivors and allow them to make informed decisions about whether to accept invitations. In order for their voices to be heard, survivors must have opportunities to engage with those who are in positions to make record of and disseminate their views. With full awareness that service providers' time is one of their scarcest resources, but with equal awareness that such requests arise frequently, practitioners are encouraged to ring-fence time—as they would a financial resource—to understand these requests and to share them with survivors. Failure to do so can inadvertently limit survivors' opportunities to be heard and can unnecessarily perpetuate the exclusion of survivors' voices from important antislavery discourse.

There are three additional recommendations I will make to law enforcement professionals, and they dovetail with much of what I have said to service providers.

First, law enforcement professionals in antislavery communities should not accept the all-too-common narrative that they are inherently

less capable of relating to survivors than victim service providers are. The fact that participants from the LE and VMS cohorts load together on many factors—sometimes with strongly correlated individual Q sorts—indicates that this is not the case. While it is often true that service providers will engage with an individual survivor longer than law enforcement partners will, and over a wider scope of issues, it is clear that law enforcement professionals are not incapable of understanding and internalizing ideas and values that are important to survivors and resonate across the antislavery field.

Second, it must be acknowledged that law enforcement professionals also have a role to play in mending any divide where they sit figuratively on one side and service providers sit with survivors on the other. This role begins with how law enforcement professionals talk about service providers in internal agency meetings or partnership or task force meetings.

The third recommendation for law enforcement professionals falls in line with the first two. Pre-sort data from the LE cohort shows that these participants do not generally agree that *freedom is simply the opposite of slavery*. Preliminary analysis that isolated LE cohort Q sorts suggests that most composite sorts representing LE participants alone would place that statement in lower columns than country-wide composite sorts representing all cohorts. Furthermore, no LE composite sort would rank that statement above Column -1. Antislavery law enforcement professionals should not give any ground to the idea that they are so operationally minded or so focused on prosecution that they subscribe to so simplistic a conception of freedom. Rising above this stereotype begins with simple changes during engagements within antislavery communities. For example, when describing antislavery



operations such as raids at pop-up brothels or at businesses serving as fronts for trafficking, law enforcement professionals should avoid saying to one another or to service provider partners that victims will be freed during the operations; instead they should use language around separating victims from traffickers, removing victims from the situation, or other precise turns of phrase. Similar choices in language should be made when law enforcement partners share stories of successful operations at task force or partnership meetings, or at public-facing events. Interviews indicate that some LE participants already speak precisely and avoid perpetuating this stereotype. But others, though they would personally reject freedom as *simply the opposite of slavery*, speak loosely and often conflate freedom with *the moment [victims] are physically removed from [their] trafficker*.

#### A note for survivors

Interviews indicate that very few participants had ever been directly asked, “What is freedom from slavery?” This included VMS participants. Interviews further revealed that many participants were articulating their conceptions of freedom for the first time during our research sessions together. This was not the case for most VMS participants. Nearly every participant in the VMS cohort already knew their mind on the topic of freedom and many had articulated it to themselves or to others before.

Any survivor reading this thesis may also be a policy influencer, practitioner, or researcher. For those who are policy influencers and practitioners, the above implications and recommendations apply equally to survivor and non-survivor readers.

But there is one additional recommendation I will make specifically for survivors. It is this: survivors should be bold to share their conceptions of freedom in antislavery communities when they feel ready to do so. For

those in the community who hold similar conceptions, it will validate that they understand something about survivors' experiences and give them confidence to let freedom inform their work going forward. For those whose conceptions are different, it may expand their capacity to think about the various subjective conceptions of freedom that can exist. Furthermore, survivors who are accessing services within those communities can tell support workers what freedom means to them and how the support provided can facilitate a personally meaningful experience of free will, choice, and resilience. In any case, these three themes may prove useful in framing conversations around freedom or specific requests for tailored support because they encapsulate the varied ways that participants in this study conceive of freedom; in other words, free will, choice, and resilience should be familiar categories to other antislavery stakeholders even if they have not yet articulated their own conception of freedom or have never heard how others conceive of freedom.

## FUTURE RESEARCH

This thesis opens a door to a wide variety of future research questions. These include the following questions and sub-questions.

*What is freedom from slavery?*

- How do the three themes of free will, choice, and resilience manifest in the local-level findings from this study?
- Expand this study to include antislavery communities in Northern Ireland and additional UK and US locations.
- Given that many participants said their conceptions of freedom had changed over time, there is ground for a longitudinal study on freedom. This would be especially useful locally in

understanding how survivors' views on freedom take shape over time, and in training law enforcement professionals or victim service providers so that they do not perform their duties out of underdeveloped conceptions—especially early in their careers when they have had few opportunities to engage with survivors or with one another.

- Replicate this study in countries where the UK or the US have invested time and money in antislavery work. How do UK and US conceptions of freedom compare to conceptions in countries heavily influenced by UK or US aid, policy, or sanctions?
- Replicate this study (with new concourses as appropriate) in additional countries to understand global conceptions of freedom.

*What conceptions emerge if the UK and US data from this study are combined?*

- Do the claims of this thesis hold?
- Where do commonalities lie across cohorts and regions when the country-level data is mixed? Why might these exist?

*When Q sort data from this study is isolated by cohort, what factors emerge, and how do they map onto the themes of free will, choice, and resilience at the country level and local level?*

*How do antislavery law enforcement professionals, survivors, and victim support providers outside of antislavery communities conceive of freedom?*

- Is there shared meaning among individuals from different geographic areas?

- Do shared conceptions correlate to any common history or common operational focuses?

*How do antislavery communities influence the public's idea of freedom?*

*How does the definition of freedom advanced in this thesis, and the 11 conceptions of freedom that it encompasses, relate to notions of freedom advanced in the field of political philosophy?*

*How do antislavery lawmakers, policymakers, and policy influencers outside the existing participant cohorts conceive of freedom?*

- Are their conceptions reflected in the law and policy they have produced?
- How do their conceptions compare to those held by the antislavery communities affected by the law and policy they have produced?

*How do antislavery scholars conceive of freedom?*

- Are these conceptions made explicit in their antislavery research?
- To what degree do scholars' conceptions of freedom influence their published research or influence their audiences' conceptions of freedom?
- How do antislavery scholars' conceptions of freedom compare to those held by antislavery communities?

*How do legal experts, such as prosecutors, conceive of freedom?*

- How have their conceptions influenced their arguments in court and the outcomes they pursue on behalf of survivors?
- Do their conceptions align with those of the survivors they have

engaged with, or are likely to engage with?

Future research based on these questions would further contribute to the antislavery field by going deeper into the findings of this study and going wider by expanding the range of stakeholders included, both geographically and by sector or profession. Though they are a varied set of research questions, they all investigate the meaning of freedom and how individuals' conceptions of freedom shape the field. The questions are motivated by the necessity and benefits of understanding freedom and the power that comes with shared meaning.

The question, "What is freedom from slavery?" may well have different answers in different contexts. Taking a wide-lens perspective, what is of particular interest is discovering whether (or to what extent) the four claims this thesis makes about freedom would hold across those contexts. How much does what we now know about freedom in the UK and the US tell us about freedom from slavery further afield? Is free will as highly valued by antislavery stakeholders around the world as it is by those in the UK and US? If so, is that notion informed by the Palermo Protocol's language of "force," "fraud," and "coercion" in its definition of trafficking?<sup>257</sup> Do the themes of free will, choice, and resilience recur in findings from other countries, indicating that the definition of freedom put forward in this thesis encompasses freedom in additional contexts? Do participants from different sectors share conceptions of freedom in different settings? And do conceptions of freedom correlate to local antislavery focuses outside of UK and US antislavery communities? The research questions listed above would test the universality or limits of

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<sup>257</sup> United Nations, Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, art. 3, para. a.

these claims.

Finally, how should this future research be undertaken? Theoretical and methodological considerations will always be central to research and should always be carefully considered. Throughout this thesis, I have been clear about these matters as they pertain to this study. But these are not the subjects I will close with. The values of survivor engagement and cross-sector collaboration should underpin any future research—whether investigating freedom or other antislavery concerns—as non-negotiable practices.

Any future research should follow the example of this study in engaging survivors and should improve upon it. Survivors should be proactively sought as participants in any research where the research question concerns them. This will sometimes require persistence and tenacity on the part of the researcher. Furthermore, survivors should be engaged in research design and discussion wherever possible. There is an increasing level of expectation for survivor involvement and an increasing number of resources to guide researchers in achieving this.<sup>258</sup> Going forward, I would emphasize the need for survivor engagement at the stages of research when implications and recommendations are written. Survivors should be asked what follows from the findings—asked what should be done about them

I do not highlight survivor engagement in a vacuum; I do so in the spirit of collaboration. Survivors are antislavery stakeholders. Researchers should design their projects and act in light of the antislavery field's value of collaboration. Wherever possible, research should be utilized to engage ever-greater numbers of antislavery actors and, in doing so, to facilitate

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<sup>258</sup> See, for example, Survivor Alliance, "Fundamentals of Survivor Inclusion"; Semione, "Preparing for Impact"; Balch, "Consultation on the Modern Slavery PEC's Research Priorities."

cross-sector or inter-stakeholder understanding and collaboration, as this study does. Freedom (and the many other topics pertinent to this field) should continue to be explored in collaboration. The implications of future research should be determined in collaboration. And the resulting recommendations should be acted upon in collaboration. In short, future research should engage stakeholders from across the field not only in the pursuit of knowledge but in the application of that knowledge.





# APPENDIX A

## LOCAL RESEARCH BRIEFINGS



## What is freedom?

Central Florida research  
briefing on a study defining  
“freedom from modern  
slavery”<sup>1</sup>

by Juliana Semione

*This study engaged UK and US participants from six locations over the question, “What is freedom from slavery?” One of these locations was Central Florida, researched in Fall 2018. Participants were survivors of human trafficking and individuals who engage professionally in anti-trafficking efforts. This briefing is a summary of the Central Florida findings.*

### Key research findings

Participants in Central Florida primarily define freedom as **psychological recovery from trauma**. This understanding of freedom emphasizes an individual’s mental and emotional recovery from the trauma of human trafficking. The ability to make choices and to have positive relationships with others are acknowledged as elements of freedom but are definitively secondary to psychological recovery.

For many participants in Central Florida, freedom from human trafficking is understood as an internal experience. Their individual conceptions of freedom were heavily informed by a psychological perspective—sometimes an explicitly clinical perspective. This conception of freedom from slavery as **psychological**

**recovery from trauma** is shared by over 69% of Central Florida participants.

Among those participants, two (≈15%) emphasized “healing” as a broader concept that requires wraparound support. For them, wraparound support includes, but is not limited to, support for psychological recovery. They also consider the role of wider political and economic systems as integral to freedom.

The remaining ≈31% of local participants conceived of freedom in ways that were unique; their perspectives had very little in common with the above and very little in common with one another.

### Why is this important?

Anti-slavery researchers and practitioners have long focused on defining and measuring modern slavery. However, little attention has been paid to how we define or measure freedom. Anti-slavery efforts around the world work to identify victims and support them toward “freedom.” Many anti-slavery professionals and organizations say they do their daily work in the name of “freedom.” But what does this mean? What is freedom?

This study allows UK and US anti-slavery stakeholders to better understand one another; to initiate meaningful conversations around freedom; to better understand the substance of freedom; and to consider how we might begin to measure freedom in the future. This series of six research briefings is one output of the “What is freedom?” study. The briefings are designed to provide each research site with localized findings so that individuals and anti-slavery organizations

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<sup>1</sup> The term used to describe human trafficking in this study is “modern slavery.” This is because the Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham is located in England. “Modern slavery” in England is synonymous with what is meant by “human trafficking” throughout the United States.

can share in those same benefits at the community level.

## Local Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1: Discuss these findings with your clients, your peers, or other participants.** Defining freedom is only a fruitful exercise if we engage with one another over the topic. Discuss freedom with others and do so often. Does your definition of freedom differ from those of your peers and colleagues? How so, and why might that be?
- **Recommendation 2: Share your thoughts on these findings.** Do you see your own perspective reflected in these definitions? What do the findings mean to you? Do you have insights from your local work or experience that could provide further context for these findings? *Your reflections are very welcome. Contact information is above.*
- **Recommendation 3: Consider what these findings mean for you.** Do you think of your work primarily in terms being *against* trafficking, or *for* freedom? Do you see new connections between freedom and the work of others? How might these findings help Central Florida professionals and survivors measure freedom or gauge the success of programs? If you work with survivors, ask how these findings resonate with their ideas about freedom. If you are a survivor, consider sharing your perspective on freedom with local service providers.
- **Recommendation 4: Imagine how you would measure freedom.** Is there value in measuring freedom for the local anti-trafficking community? If so, how might these findings help Central Florida anti-trafficking professionals and survivors measure freedom or gauge the success of programs?

## Research overview

This study took place at six sites—three in the US and three in the UK. There were a

total of 73 participants. Of these, 43 were from US sites and 30 were from UK sites. At least 26 individuals from Central Florida were invited to participate in the study. Thirteen individuals agreed to do so. Of these 13, nine were direct victim service providers, three were law enforcement professionals, and one was a survivor.

This study used Q methodology to understand how individual participants define freedom and how their definitions compare or contrast to one another across sites and between countries. The aim of the study is to learn what definitions of “freedom” exist among individuals in the anti-trafficking field—not to define freedom legally or philosophically.

Participants were given a deck of 49 cards, each displaying a different possible answer to the question, “What is freedom from slavery?”<sup>2</sup> They sorted these into three piles according to their level of agreement with the cards: Agree, Neutral, and Disagree. Participants then sorted the cards onto a grid, which required them to rank them in relationship to the other cards in the deck. This process is called “Q sorting.” Each participant was also interviewed.

The results were analyzed using KADE, software designed to show patterns and differences among Q sorts. Key elements of the Central Florida research findings are described below. They are based on KADE results and on interviews with participants.

## Freedom is psychological recovery from trauma

The majority of participants from Central Florida define freedom as **psychological recovery from trauma**. Freedom from slavery is understood as an internal experience that survivors may someday attain when they are emotionally and mentally healed from the trauma they experienced when they were trafficked.

The views of over 69% of Central Florida participants are represented in this definition. The aspects of freedom that

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<sup>2</sup> A PDF file containing this deck of cards (the “Q sample”) can be found at [https://uniofnottm-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/juliana\\_semione\\_nottingham\\_ac\\_uk/EZ9iPVxh69JtnnGtJk1nI8B4BYs3JqrWllvOYVxfUexgA?e=2ipms0](https://uniofnottm-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/juliana_semione_nottingham_ac_uk/EZ9iPVxh69JtnnGtJk1nI8B4BYs3JqrWllvOYVxfUexgA?e=2ipms0)

these participants value the most are listed below.

- Being healed from the damaging effects trafficking had on you and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did to you
- Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so
- Refusing to let a trafficking experience in your past devastate you or cripple your life
- To live without fear
- To be able to defend yourself against people who try to limit your well-being, dominate you, or traffic you
- To stop believing the lies others have told you about yourself and about the world, so that those lies no longer have power over you
- Knowing your own worth and knowing that it does not depend on other people

Participants whose Q sorts correlate strongly to this definition made comments during their interviews that help to further explain this definition. One participant explained that she sorted the Q sample onto the grid according to how important the statements were for psychological healing. Another participant said that “being healed” is related to being “able to defend yourself” because, without being emotionally healed it

is easy for a survivor to return to their trafficker or to another exploitative situation. Several participants emphasized the psychological bondage involved in trafficking, with one saying it is worse than any physical aspect of modern slavery.

### **A subset of participants emphasized wraparound care and structural systems**

Whereas the majority of participants considered psychological recovery definitive of freedom, two participants felt that this was an incomplete definition of freedom. They emphasized “wraparound care” and valued “having political and economic systems that do not dominate you or limit your options to the point where your decisions are not really your own” in their conception of freedom.

### **Four individuals had standalone definitions of freedom**

Four individuals (about ≈31% of Florida participants) held definitions of freedom that had little in common with one another or with the definition described above. These participants include two direct victim service providers and two law enforcement professionals. As Q methodology looks for patterns, these definitions have been recorded but are not included in this briefing.



## What is freedom?

Greater Seattle research briefing  
on a study to define “freedom  
from modern slavery”<sup>1</sup>  
by Juliana Semione

*This study engaged UK and US participants from six locations over the question, “What is freedom from slavery?” One of these locations was the Greater Seattle (“Seattle”) area in Washington, where research took place in Winter 2018-2019. Participants were survivors of human trafficking and anti-trafficking professionals. This briefing is a summary of the findings from Seattle.*

### Key research findings

Among participants from Seattle, there is **no general consensus** on a definition of freedom. Rather, six definitions of freedom emerged, each of which are shared by a small number of participants. These are:

- Having the choices that trafficking once suppressed
- Having relationships that support your goals and vision for your life
- Living without fear and having stability
- Having free will and dignity
- Having your basic needs met and being personally resilient after trafficking
- Being personally resilient after trafficking and able to resist future harm

These distinct definitions represent a low level of agreement among Seattle participants; there is no general consensus on the meaning of freedom. Furthermore, it is clear from interviews that local anti-trafficking professionals believe that they

understand freedom differently than their colleagues do. However, their beliefs about *how* their colleagues understand freedom were inaccurate. Taken together, the findings suggest that individuals and organizations within the local anti-trafficking community do not regularly or actively engage over the topic of freedom itself.

### Why is this important?

Anti-slavery researchers have long focused on defining and measuring modern slavery. However, little attention has been paid to how we define or measure freedom. Anti-slavery efforts around the world work to identify victims and support them toward “freedom.” Many anti-slavery professionals and organizations say they do their daily work in the name of “freedom.” But what does this mean? What is freedom?

This study identifies patterns—definitions of freedom that are shared across groups of participants. It presents these patterns as working definitions of freedom, grounded in the realities and perspectives of survivors and anti-slavery professionals.

The findings enable UK and US anti-slavery stakeholders to better understand one another; to initiate meaningful conversations around freedom; to better understand the substance of freedom; and to consider how we might begin to measure freedom in the future. This series of six research briefings is one output of the “What is freedom?” study. The briefings are designed to provide each research site with localized findings so that individuals and anti-slavery organizations can share in those same benefits at the community level.

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<sup>1</sup> The term used to describe human trafficking in this study is “modern slavery.” This is because the Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham is located in England. “Modern slavery” in England is synonymous with what is meant by “human trafficking” in the US.

## Local Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1: Discuss these findings with your clients, your peers, or other participants.** The findings from Seattle show a low level of consensus around freedom. Are there strengths and/or challenges to having such a variety of definitions of freedom among the local anti-trafficking community? Discuss freedom with others and do so often. Does your definition differ from those of your peers and colleagues? How so, and why might that be? Is this important?
- **Recommendation 2: Share your thoughts on these findings.** Do these findings resonate with you? What do the findings mean to you? Do you have insights from your local work or experience that could provide further context for these findings? *Your reflections are very welcome. Contact information is above.*
- **Recommendation 3: Consider what these findings mean for you as an advocate or professional.** Do you think of your work primarily in terms of being *against trafficking*, or *for freedom*? Do you see new connections between freedom and the work of others? If you work with survivors, ask how these findings resonate with their views on freedom. If you are a survivor, consider starting a conversation about freedom with local service providers.
- **Recommendation 4: Imagine how you would measure freedom.** Is there value in measuring freedom for the local anti-trafficking community? If so, how might these findings help Seattle anti-trafficking professionals and survivors measure freedom or gauge the success of programs?

## Research overview

This study utilized Q methodology to understand how individual participants define freedom and how their definitions compare or contrast to one another across sites and between countries. The aim of the

study is to learn what definitions of “freedom” exist among individuals in the anti-trafficking field—not to define freedom legally or philosophically.

To accomplish this, participants were given a deck of 49 cards, each displaying a different possible answer to the question, “What is freedom from slavery?”<sup>2</sup> They sorted these cards into three piles according to their level of agreement with the statements: Agree, Neutral, and Disagree. Participants then sorted these cards onto a grid, which required them to rank the statements into smaller sets, further specifying their personal level of agreement with each card. This process is called “Q sorting.” Each participant was then interviewed. The manner in which every participant sorted the cards onto the grid was analyzed using KADE, software designed to show patterns and differences among Q sorts.

This study took place at six locations and included 73 participants. Of these, 30 were from UK sites and 43 were from US sites. At least 22 individuals from Seattle were invited to participate; 16 agreed to do so. Of these, two were direct victim service providers, six were law enforcement professionals, and eight were survivors. The six definitions of freedom to emerge from the Seattle-area research are described below. They are based on KADE results and interviews.

### Having the choices that trafficking once suppressed

This definition of freedom is shared by both of the service provider participants and one survivor (18.75% of local participants). This view stands out from the other five definitions because of how highly it ranked the statement, “Freedom is simply the opposite of slavery.”

For participants whose Q sorts correlate strongly to this definition, slavery is an experience where choices are suppressed; freedom is the opposite experience, where choice is restored. The choices that are most pertinent under this definition of

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<sup>2</sup> A PDF file containing these cards (the “Q sample”) can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y4cg3otg>



freedom are, “Having the right to choose where you live and where you work, “To be able to leave a place, a person, or a job without any fear of negative consequences,” and “Being able to do what you want and to go where you want, without anybody interfering or telling you no.”

### **Having relationships that support your goals and vision for your life**

This definition of freedom is shared by two survivors and one law enforcement professional (18.75% of local participants). “The ability to achieve goals that matter to you” is the most important aspect of freedom for these participants. After this, they prioritize having relationships that support someone’s goals and vision for their life. This includes a survivor’s relationship to their trafficker, in the form of “access to justice” against them.

### **Living without fear and having stability**

This definition of freedom is shared by two survivors (12.5% of local participants). They consider living without fear to be the most important quality of freedom. This is related to the value they place on stability inasmuch as instability can foster fear rather than allowing an individual to be free from it. Stability includes “Being able to trust people and not being betrayed when you are kind to them,” “No longer having to make choices you don’t like just so that you can survive,” and “Having a place to call home.”

After living without fear and having stability, these participants value having an accurate self-perception and having the ability to make choices—including choices about inter-personal relationships.

### **Having free will and dignity**

This definition of freedom is shared by two law enforcement professionals and one survivor (18.75% of local participants). This definition of freedom stands out from the others because of how highly it ranks the statement, “Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled,

coerced, pressured, or forced to do so.” For these participants, free will is the most important quality of freedom by far. Having free will is more important than having any one specific choice.

After free will, these participants place a high value on dignity. This includes an individual having an accurate and dignified view of themselves and of the world, as well as having their humanity “recognized by others.”

### **Having your basic needs met and being personally resilient after trafficking**

One law enforcement professional and one survivor share this perspective (12.5% of local participants). They rank being able to “get the basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life” more highly than any other aspect of freedom. “Basic things” include “having a place to call home.” They also place a high value on personal resilience. This resilience is in reference to a survivor’s ability to never see themselves as a slave—despite being treated as one in the past—and “to enjoy being alive or to feel there is a reason to be alive.”

### **Being personally resilient after trafficking and able to resist future harm**

Two law enforcement professionals share this definition (12.5% of local participants). Under this definition, a survivor is free when they are personally resilient and able to resist future harm. For these participants, the two go hand-in-hand. Personal resilience is different here than it is in the definition described above. Here, resilience is an internal experience that touches many areas of life and is characterized by “the ability to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking.” It is also directly connected to a survivor’s ability to resist returning to their trafficker and to defend themselves “against people who try to limit your well-being, dominate you, or traffic you.”



## “What is freedom?” Research Briefing 3 of 6 • August 2020

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# What is freedom?

Southern California research briefing on a study defining “freedom from modern slavery”<sup>1</sup>  
by Juliana Semione

*This study engaged UK and US participants from six locations over the question, “What is freedom from slavery?” One of these locations was Southern California, researched in Winter 2018-2019. Participants were survivors of human trafficking and individuals who engage professionally in anti-trafficking efforts. This briefing is a summary of the California findings.*

### Key research findings

Among participants in Southern California, there are three predominant definitions of freedom. These are listed below.

- Freedom is being psychologically removed from your trafficker and having the opportunity to thrive
- Freedom is reclaiming your life
- Freedom is being wholly removed from your trafficker and having choices

Taken together, these conceptions represent how over 78% of California participants define freedom. There are three additional participants (≈21%) whose conceptions of freedom do not correlate to any of the definitions above. The views of these three participants also have little in common with one another.

### Why is this important?

Anti-slavery researchers have long focused

on defining and measuring modern slavery. However, little attention has been paid to how we define or measure freedom. Anti-slavery efforts around the world work to identify victims and support them toward “freedom.” Many anti-slavery professionals and organizations say they do their daily work in the name of “freedom.” But what does this mean? What is freedom?

This study identifies patterns—definitions of freedom that are shared across groups of participants. The resulting definitions are grounded in the realities and perspectives of survivors and anti-slavery professionals.

This study allows UK and US anti-slavery stakeholders to better understand one another; to initiate meaningful conversations around freedom; to better understand the substance of freedom; and to consider how we might begin to measure freedom in the future. This series of six research briefings is one output of the “What is freedom?” study. The briefings are designed to provide each research site with localized findings so that individuals and anti-slavery organizations can share in those same benefits at the community level.

### Local Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1: Discuss these findings with your clients, your peers, or other participants.** Defining freedom is only a fruitful exercise if we engage with one another over the topic. Discuss freedom with others and do so often. Does your definition of freedom differ from those of your peers and colleagues? How so, and why might that be?
- **Recommendation 2: Share your thoughts on the findings.** Do you see your own perspective reflected in any of

<sup>1</sup> The term used to describe human trafficking in this study is “modern slavery.” The Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham is located in England. “Modern slavery” in England is synonymous with what is meant by “human trafficking” in the US.



these definitions? What do the findings mean to you? Do you have insights from your local work or experience that could provide further context for these findings? *Your reflections are very welcome. Contact information is above.*

- **Recommendation 3: Consider what these findings mean for you.** Do you think of your work primarily in terms being *against* trafficking, or *for* freedom? Do you see new connections between freedom and the work of others? If you work with survivors, ask how these findings resonate with their ideas about freedom. If you are a survivor, consider sharing your perspective on freedom with local service providers.
- **Recommendation 4: Imagine how you would measure freedom.** Is there value in measuring freedom for the local anti-trafficking community? If so, how might these findings help Southern California anti-trafficking professionals and survivors measure freedom or gauge the success of programs?

## Research overview

This study took place in six communities—three in the UK and three in the US. There were a total of 73 participants. Of these, 30 were from UK locations and 43 were from US locations. At least 15 individuals from Southern California were invited to participate in the study. Fifteen agreed to do so, though one research session was canceled due to extenuating circumstances. Of the 14 active participants, seven were direct victim service providers, three were law enforcement professionals, and four were survivors.

This study used Q methodology to understand how individual participants define freedom and how their definitions compare or contrast to one another across communities and between countries. The aim of the study is to learn what definitions of “freedom” exist among individuals in the anti-trafficking field—not to define freedom legally or philosophically.

To accomplish this, participants were given a deck of 49 cards, each displaying a different possible answer to the question, “What is freedom from slavery?”<sup>2</sup> They sorted these cards into three piles according to their level of agreement with the statements: Agree, Neutral, and Disagree. Participants then sorted these cards onto a grid, which required them to rank the statements into smaller sets, further specifying their personal level of agreement with each statement in relationship to the other statements. This process is called “Q sorting.” Each participant was then interviewed. The manner in which every participant sorted the cards onto the grid was analyzed using software called KADE.

Key elements of the Southern California research findings are described below. They are based on KADE results and on interviews with participants.

## Freedom is being psychologically removed from your trafficker and having the opportunity to thrive

This definition of freedom is shared by two victim service providers and two law enforcement professionals (28.6% of California participants). For these participants, freedom has two defining qualities.

The first is that a survivor is emotionally and mentally removed from the influence of their trafficker. This involves the ability to act “without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so,” “knowing your own worth,” and “never seeing yourself as a slave and never accepting slavery, even if others once treated you like a slave.”

The second is that a survivor “be given an equal opportunity with everybody else to thrive.” These participants believe that thriving, or “doing well in life,” is important because survivors who are not presented with sufficient opportunity to thrive after trafficking may be at greater risk of re-victimization. Having an equal opportunity to thrive includes

- Having “your humanity recognized by

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<sup>2</sup> A PDF file containing these cards (the “Q sample”) can be found at [https://uniofnottm-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/juliana\\_semione\\_nottingham\\_ac\\_uk/EZh9iPVXh69JtnnGtJk1nI8B4BYs3JqrWllvOYVXfUexgA?e=2ipms0](https://uniofnottm-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/juliana_semione_nottingham_ac_uk/EZh9iPVXh69JtnnGtJk1nI8B4BYs3JqrWllvOYVXfUexgA?e=2ipms0)

others”

- Being “able to defend yourself against people who try to limit your well-being, dominate you, or traffic you” (including a previous trafficker)
- Being “protected in the areas of life where you are vulnerable” and
- Finding the internal “motivation” to take advantage of opportunities to thrive.

These participants believe that freedom is an ideal; not everyone will be given an equal opportunity to thrive in the world. However, the ideal is something we should all strive for.

### **Freedom is reclaiming your life**

This definition of freedom is shared by three survivors and two victim service providers (35.7% of California participants). These participants believe that “the ability to achieve goals that matter to you” is the most important aspect of freedom. This ability must be in the context of “No longer having to make choices you don’t like just so that you can survive”—a survivor is not yet truly free if their choices and goals are driven by a need to survive. According to one participant, one of the first steps toward freedom may be a survivor coming to understand that they are still able to make choices despite their trafficking experience.

For these participants, freedom is as much about achieving “dreams” for one’s life as it is about “feeling no shame” or “choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character.” Although these goals might be realized through a series of choices, choice itself is not the defining quality of freedom.

Rather, freedom is a survivor’s ability to reclaim what their goals are and who they are. Reclaiming one’s life comes about over time through a personal process.

### **Freedom is being wholly removed from your trafficker and having choices**

This definition of freedom is shared by one law enforcement professional and one survivor (14.3% of California participants). These participants believe that “Freedom is something you always possess in reality, even if someone else says you are a slave.” By this they mean that a person can mentally conceive of themselves as free even while in a trafficking situation. However, they cannot fully experience freedom as a reality until they are both physically and psychologically removed from their trafficker; the “whole person ... has to experience freedom.” While physical separation from a trafficker may be a one-time event (for example, during a police operation), becoming psychologically removed from a trafficker may be a long “process of adjusting.” A person is not fully free until they cease to experience the effects of their trafficker’s influence over them and are “healed from the damaging effects ... and healed from the physical harm” of trafficking.

When a survivor comes into this experience of freedom, they will have “free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so.” They will be “able to make decisions in their own right and on their own terms.”



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# What is freedom?

Wales research briefing on a study defining 'freedom from modern slavery'  
by Juliana Semione

*This study engaged UK and US participants from six locations over the question, 'What is freedom from slavery?' The Wales Anti-Slavery Leadership Group facilitated participation in Wales during Summer 2019. Participants were survivors of modern slavery and individuals who engage professionally in anti-slavery efforts.*

*This briefing is a summary of the Wales research findings.*

## Key research findings

Among participants from Wales, there is **little consensus** on a definition of freedom. Rather, six definitions of freedom were identified. Two are shared by a small number of participants:

- Freedom is having free will within normal societal constraints and being healed from the effects of modern slavery
- Freedom is determining your own way of life, beginning with choosing where you live and work

The additional four definitions of freedom were the personal perspectives of four individual participants. Their perspectives had little in common with one another or with the two definitions listed above.

These several and distinct conceptions represent a low level of agreement among Wales participants; there is no general consensus on the meaning of freedom. Furthermore, it is clear from interviews that local anti-slavery professionals do not regularly discuss the topic of freedom.

## Why is this important?

Anti-slavery researchers and practitioners have long focused on defining and measuring modern slavery. However, little attention has been paid to how we define or measure freedom. Anti-slavery efforts around the world work to identify victims and support them toward 'freedom'. Many anti-slavery professionals and organisations say they do their daily work in the name of 'freedom'. But what does this mean? What is freedom?

This study allows UK and US anti-slavery stakeholders to better understand one another; to initiate meaningful conversations around freedom; to better understand the substance of freedom; and to consider how we might begin to measure freedom in the future. This series of six research briefings is one output of the 'What is freedom?' study. The briefings are designed to provide each research site with localised findings so that individuals and anti-slavery organisations can share in those same benefits at the community level.

## Local Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1: Discuss these findings with your clients, your peers, or other participants.** The findings from Wales indicate a low level of shared definition around freedom. Are there strengths and/or challenges to having such a variety of conceptions of freedom among the local anti-slavery community? Discuss freedom with others and do so often. Is it important to have a shared definition or definitions of freedom? Furthermore, there was no consensus around freedom between survivors and anti-slavery professionals in Wales. It is recommended that anti-slavery professionals explore this locally and include survivors in any ensuing conversations.

- **Recommendation 2: Share your thoughts on these findings.** Do you see your own perspective reflected in any of these definitions? What do the findings mean to you? Do you have insights from your local work or experience that could provide further context for these findings? *Your reflections are very welcome. Contact information is above.*
- **Recommendation 3: Consider what these findings mean for you.** Do you think of your work primarily in terms being against modern slavery, or for freedom? Do you see new connections between freedom and the work of others? If you work with survivors, ask how these findings resonate with their ideas about freedom. If you are a survivor, consider sharing your perspective on freedom with local service providers.
- **Recommendation 4: Imagine how you would measure freedom.** Is there value in measuring freedom for the local anti-slavery community? If so, how might these findings help anti-slavery professionals and survivors in Wales measure freedom or gauge the success of programmes?

## Research overview

This study took place at six sites—three in the US and three in the UK. There were a total of 73 participants. Of these, 43 were from US sites and 30 were from UK sites. Nine individuals in Wales participated. Of these nine, three were direct victim service providers, four were law enforcement professionals, and two were survivors.

This study used Q methodology to understand how individual participants define freedom and how their definitions compare or contrast to one another across locations and between countries. The aim of the study is to learn what definitions of ‘freedom’ exist among individuals in the anti-slavery field—not to define freedom legally or philosophically.

Participants were given a deck of 49 cards, each displaying a different possible answer to the question, ‘What is freedom from

slavery?’<sup>1</sup> They sorted these into three piles according to their level of agreement with the cards: Agree, Neutral, and Disagree. Participants then sorted the cards onto a grid, which required them to rank them in relationship to the other cards in the deck. This process is called ‘Q sorting’. Each participant was also interviewed.

The results were analysed using KADE, software designed to show patterns and differences among Q sorts. Key elements of the Wales research findings are described below. They are based on KADE results and on interviews with participants.

### Freedom is having free will within normal societal constraints and being healed from the effects of modern slavery

This definition of freedom represents the viewpoints of three law enforcement professionals (33.3% of Wales participants).

For these individuals, the most important quality of freedom is that survivors have ‘free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so’. But this necessarily exists within the societal limitations that every person is subjected to—for instance, not causing harm to others. These societal limitations exist for the good of all people in society and support—rather than contradict—the anti-slavery movement. People cannot ‘follow whatever values or moral authority’ they choose without these limitations, otherwise ‘we [would have to] let people enslave people.’

After free will, the second most important quality of freedom is that a survivor is ‘healed from the damaging effects trafficking had’, both physically and psychologically. These participants believe that ‘healing means healing fully’, that is, no longer ‘suffering or experiencing the impact’ of modern slavery. No other definitions of freedom from within the Wales participant group rate ‘being healed’ as a significant component of freedom.

Finally, these participants do not believe

<sup>1</sup> A PDF file containing this deck of cards (the ‘Q sample’) can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y4cg3otg>

that freedom is merely an ideal. Freedom as they define it is attainable for survivors of modern slavery.

### **Freedom is determining your own way of life, beginning with choosing where you live and work**

This definition of freedom represents the viewpoints of two direct victim service providers (22.2% of Wales participants).

According to this definition, the most important element of freedom is that individuals have 'the right to choose where you live and where you work'. These choices must be independent of a perpetrator's influence, including the influence of being groomed for exploitation from a young age.

Beyond choosing where to live and work, survivors should be able to '[determine their] own way of life, as long as it does not negatively affect others'. This includes a variety of decisions regarding their lifestyles, goals, character, and general life decisions. Furthermore, they should be able to make these determinations 'without fear'.

Both of these participants said that freedom may require a 'process of adjusting to not being trafficked and being less impacted by your ... experience', but the process itself is not freedom.

### **Four individuals had standalone definitions of freedom**

Four individuals held definitions of freedom that had little in common with one another or with the two definitions described above. These participants include one direct victim service provider, one law enforcement professional and two survivors (44.4% of Wales participants). As Q methodology looks for patterns, these definitions have been recorded but are not included in this briefing.

It is not uncommon in Q methodology for some study participants to fall outside of the patterns that emerge. However, 44.4% represents an unusually high number of participants. Multiple anti-slavery professionals said in interviews that they do not regularly discuss freedom with their colleagues. Survivors' support needs and operational multi-agency matters are common topics of conversation, but 'freedom' itself is not. This may account for some of the diversity of views that emerged from the Wales-based research.

Furthermore, there was very little in common between the definitions held by survivor participants and those held by anti-slavery professionals. Whilst it is not unusual for at least one survivor to have a standalone definition of freedom at each of this study's six locations, it is worth noting that no consensus between survivors and anti-slavery professionals was found in Wales.





## ‘What is freedom?’ Research Briefing 5 of 6 • August 2020

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# What is freedom?

## Humberside research briefing on a study defining ‘freedom from modern slavery’ by Juliana Semione

*This study engaged UK and US participants from six locations over the question, ‘What is freedom from slavery?’ One of these locations was Humberside, where research took place during Summer 2019.*

*Participants were survivors of modern slavery and individuals who engage professionally in anti-slavery efforts.*

*This briefing is a summary of the Humberside findings.*

### Key research findings

Among participants from Humberside, there was one predominant definition of freedom: **freedom is having your basic needs met so that you can exercise free will.** Humberside is the only research location where there is strong consensus that ‘having your basic needs met’ is definitive of freedom.

Additionally, there were three participants whose definitions of freedom were almost entirely unique. Two of these three participants prioritised free will in their definitions of freedom.

### Why is this important?

Anti-slavery researchers and practitioners have long focused on defining and measuring modern slavery. However, little attention has been paid to how we define or measure freedom. Anti-slavery efforts around the world work to identify victims and support them toward ‘freedom.’ Many anti-slavery professionals and organisations say they do their daily work in the name of ‘freedom.’ But what does this mean? What is freedom?

This study allows UK and US anti-slavery stakeholders to better understand one another; to initiate meaningful conversations around freedom; to better understand the substance of freedom; and to consider how we might begin to measure freedom in the future. This series of six research briefings is one output of the ‘What is freedom?’ study. The briefings are designed to provide each research site with localised findings so that individuals and anti-slavery organisations can share in those same benefits at the community level.

## Local Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1: Discuss these findings with your clients, your peers, or other participants.** Compared to other locations, Humberside has a low level of consensus around a definition of freedom. (This will be discussed overleaf.) Are there strengths and/or challenges to having a low level of consensus around freedom among the local anti-slavery community? Discuss freedom with others and do so often. Does your definition of freedom differ from those of your peers and colleagues? How so, and why might that be? Is it important to have a shared definition or definitions of freedom?
- **Recommendation 2: Share your thoughts on these findings.** Do you see your own perspective reflected in this definition of freedom? What do the findings mean to you? Do you have insights from your local work or experience that could provide further context for these findings? *Your reflections are very welcome. Contact information is above.*
- **Recommendation 3: Consider what these findings mean for you.** Do you think of your work primarily in terms being *against modern slavery, or for freedom?* Do you see new connections between

freedom and the work of others? If you work with survivors, ask how these findings resonate with their ideas about freedom. If you are a survivor, consider sharing your perspective on freedom with local service providers.

- **Recommendation 4: Imagine how you would measure freedom.** Is there value in measuring freedom for the local anti-slavery community? If so, how might these findings help anti-slavery professionals and survivors in Humberside and throughout England measure freedom or gauge the success of survivor support programmes?

## Research overview

This study took place at six sites—three in the UK and three in the US. There were a total of 73 participants. Of these, 30 were from UK sites and 43 were from US sites. At least 17 individuals from Humberside were invited to participate; seven agreed to do so. Of these seven, four were direct victim service providers, two were law enforcement professionals, and one was a survivor.

This study used Q methodology to understand how individual participants define freedom and how their definitions compare or contrast to one another across locations and between countries. The aim of the study is to learn what definitions of ‘freedom’ exist among individuals in the anti-slavery field—not to define freedom legally or philosophically.

Participants were given a deck of 49 cards, each displaying a different possible answer to the question, ‘What is freedom from slavery?’<sup>1</sup> They sorted these into three piles according to their level of agreement with the cards: Agree, Neutral, and Disagree. Participants then sorted the cards onto a grid, which required them to rank them in relationship to the other cards in the deck. This process is called ‘Q sorting’. Each participant was also interviewed.

The results were analysed using KADE, software designed to show patterns and

differences among Q sorts. Key findings from the Humberside research are described below. They are based on KADE results and on interviews with participants.

### Freedom is having your basic needs met so that you can exercise free will

This definition of freedom represents the viewpoints of one law enforcement professional and three victim service providers (57.1% of Humberside participants).

For these individuals, the most important quality of freedom is ‘having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so’. Almost as important is being able ‘to live without fear’.

One reason that it is so important to be able to ‘live without fear’ is that fear is ‘crippling’. It can affect a person’s mental health and can even inhibit their ability to exercise free will. For these participants, fear is directly relevant to having ‘the basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life’. When a person does not have the ‘basic things’ they need, they are ‘in crisis’ or ‘desperate’; they ‘don’t feel like [they] have any choices.’

The ‘basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life’ include, among other things, ‘having a place to call home’. To the extent that the absence of these causes people to live in fear and inhibits their ability to exercise free will, these ‘basic things’ are a requisite for freedom.

Once a person is able to exercise free will, the most important choice for them to have is where to live and work.

### Three individuals had standalone definitions of freedom

Three individuals held definitions of freedom that had little in common with one another or with the definition described above. These participants include one direct victim service provider, one law enforcement professional and one survivor

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<sup>1</sup> A PDF file containing this deck of cards (the ‘Q sample’) can be found at [https://uniofnottm-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/juliana\\_semione\\_nottingham\\_ac\\_uk/EZh9iPVxh69JtnnGtJk1nI8B4BYs3JqrWllvOYVxfUexgA?e=2ipms0](https://uniofnottm-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/juliana_semione_nottingham_ac_uk/EZh9iPVxh69JtnnGtJk1nI8B4BYs3JqrWllvOYVxfUexgA?e=2ipms0)

(42.9% of Humberside participants). As Q methodology looks for patterns, these definitions have been recorded but are not included in this briefing.

Of these three individuals, two of them (the service provider and law enforcement professional) share one thing in common with the consensus definition described above: they believe 'Having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so' is the most important aspect of freedom.

The survivor participant agreed that free will is a part of freedom, but ranked it as significantly less important than fourteen other specific aspects of freedom. This participant's top priorities—each given equal importance—were 'having a place to call home' and 'to be able to get the basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life'. This is of great importance to

the definition described under the previous heading, but that definition does not otherwise encapsulate this participant's perspective.

It is not uncommon in Q methodology for some study participants to fall outside of the patterns that emerge. However, 42.9% represents an unusually high number of participants. Only one other research site had a similar number of standalone definitions. At that location, it was clear from interviews that anti-slavery professionals do not regularly discuss freedom. This may have contributed to that site's low level of consensus around definitions of freedom. It is not clear from interviews whether this is also the case in Humberside, but it is recommended that Humberside professionals discuss freedom regularly with one another and with survivors.





## What is freedom?

### Scotland research briefing on a study defining 'freedom from modern slavery'<sup>1</sup>

by Juliana Semione

*This study engaged UK and US participants from six locations over the question, 'What is freedom from slavery?' Research took place in Scotland—largely in the Glasgow area—during Summer 2019. Participants were survivors of human trafficking and individuals who engage professionally in anti-trafficking efforts. This briefing is a summary of the Scotland-based findings.*

#### Key research findings

Among participants from Scotland, there are four shared definitions of freedom. These are listed below.

- Freedom is having free will and shaping a future without reference to your past
- Freedom is the ability to act according to your own will rather than being compelled by your vulnerabilities
- Freedom is leading a life you love with no fear
- Freedom is the ability to shape who you are and to be dignified by others

Together, these definitions represent the perspectives of 85.7% of participants based in Scotland.

#### Why is this important?

Anti-trafficking researchers and practitioners have long focused on defining and measuring human trafficking. However, little attention has been paid to how we define or measure freedom. Anti-trafficking efforts around the world work to identify victims and

support them toward 'freedom.' Many anti-trafficking professionals and organisations say they do their daily work in the name of 'freedom.' But what is freedom?

This study allows UK and US anti-trafficking stakeholders to better understand one another; to initiate meaningful conversations around freedom; to better understand the substance of freedom; and to consider how we might begin to measure freedom in the future. This series of six research briefings is one output of the 'What is freedom?' study. The briefings are designed to provide each research site with localised findings so that individuals and anti-trafficking organisations can share in those same benefits at the community level.

#### Local Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1: Discuss these findings with your clients, your peers, or other participants.** Defining freedom is only a fruitful exercise if we engage with one another over the topic. Discuss freedom with others and do so often. Does your definition of freedom differ from those of your peers and colleagues? How so, and why might that be?
- **Recommendation 2: Share your thoughts on these findings.** Do you see your own perspective reflected in any of these definitions? What do the findings mean to you? Do you have insights from your local work or experience that could provide further context for these findings? *Your reflections are very welcome. Contact information is above.*
- **Recommendation 3: Consider what these findings mean for you.** Do you think of your work primarily in terms being *against* human trafficking, or *for* freedom? Do you see new connections between

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<sup>1</sup> The term used to describe human trafficking in this study is 'modern slavery'. This is because the University of Nottingham is located in England, where 'modern slavery' is synonymous with what is meant by 'human trafficking' in Scotland.

freedom and the work of others? If you work with survivors, ask how these findings resonate with their ideas about freedom. If you are a survivor, consider sharing your perspective on freedom with local service providers.

- **Recommendation 4: Imagine how you would measure freedom.** Is there value in measuring freedom for the local anti-trafficking community? If so, how might these findings help anti-trafficking professionals and survivors in Scotland measure freedom or gauge the success of programs?

## Research overview

This study took place at six sites—three in the US and three in the UK. There were a total of 73 participants. Of these, 30 were from UK sites and 43 were from US sites. At least 20 individuals from Glasgow and the surrounding area were invited to participate; 14 individuals agreed to do so. Of these 14, eight were direct victim service providers, two were law enforcement professionals, and four were survivors.

This study used Q methodology to understand how individual participants define freedom and how their definitions compare or contrast to one another across locations and between countries. The aim of the study is to learn what definitions of ‘freedom’ exist among individuals in the anti-trafficking field—not to define freedom legally or philosophically.

Participants were given a deck of 49 cards, each displaying a different possible answer to the question, ‘What is freedom from slavery?’<sup>2</sup> They sorted these into three piles according to their level of agreement with the cards: Agree, Neutral, and Disagree. Participants then sorted the cards onto a grid, requiring them to rank the statements in smaller sets and further specify their level of agreement with each card. This process is called *Q sorting*. Each participant was then interviewed.

The results were analysed using software called KADE. Key elements of the local research findings are described below. They

are based on KADE results and participant interviews.

### Freedom is having free will and shaping a future without reference to your past

This definition of freedom is shared by two service providers, one law enforcement professional and one survivor (28.6% of local participants).

For these participants, the most important aspect of freedom is ‘having free will, or the ability to do things without feeling controlled, coerced, pressured, or forced to do so’. This includes being free from the influence of threats for *not* acting in a certain way. Free will extends to a survivor being able to make any choice—even if a support worker would consider it a ‘poor’ choice.

The second most important aspect of freedom is the ability to build or shape a future without reference to a past experience of human trafficking. To accomplish this, survivors must be ‘healed from the damaging effects trafficking had ... and healed from the physical harm that trafficking did’, which involves both physical and mental healing. (Free will, as described above, is one result of mental healing.)

A survivor who is healed in this whole-person way will be able to move forward in their life never seeing themselves as a slave and never accepting slavery, refusing to let a trafficking experience in the past devastate or cripple their life, and will be able to live a day without reference to the physical and psychological experience of trafficking. In short, their future will not ‘reflect’ their past.

### The ability to act according to your own will rather than being compelled by your vulnerabilities

This definition of freedom is shared by one service provider and one survivor (14.3% of local participants).

These participants acknowledged that ‘vulnerabilities’ change over time and can look different in different people’s lives. However, freedom is the ability to act and

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<sup>2</sup> A PDF file containing this deck of cards (the ‘Q sample’) can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y4cg3otg>

make decisions without reference to those vulnerabilities. A person who is free from modern slavery will be able to 'live without fear' of their vulnerabilities being exploited in the future; be able to do what they want and go where they want without interference from others; be 'protected in the areas of life where [they] are vulnerable'; no longer have to make choices they don't like just to survive; and be able to defend themselves against people who try to limit their well-being, dominate them or traffic them.

Additionally, compared to all the other definitions of freedom to emerge from the Scotland-based research, this definition places a very high value on '[knowing] your heritage, culture, or origins and to be able to connect to other people who are like you'. This includes being able to understand and take personal ownership of religious beliefs.

Finally, in contrast to the definition under the previous heading, this definition places low importance on 'being healed from the damaging effects' of trafficking.

### **Leading a life you love with no fear**

This definition of freedom is shared by three service providers and one survivor (28.6% of local participants).

For these participants, freedom is not a 'process of adjusting to not being trafficked and being less impacted by [a] trafficking experience', nor is it the ability to act without interference from others. Rather, to be free is 'to enjoy being alive or to feel there is a reason to be alive' and 'to live without fear'. Human trafficking robs victims

of joy and causes fear to dominate their lives.

This definition of freedom also values 'being able to make decisions in your own right and on your own terms' but, to these participants, freedom is more than merely having choices—freedom is choosing to do 'what you love'. Similarly, this definition of freedom includes 'to be able to get the basic things you need to live a healthy and normal life', but enjoying life is a significantly higher priority than having a 'normal life'.

### **The ability to shape who you are and to be dignified by others**

This definition of freedom is shared by one service provider and one survivor (14.3% of local participants).

The single most important aspect of freedom is 'choosing your own lifestyle and shaping your own character'. This is an act of 'free will' and represents psychological freedom. Furthermore, embracing values or morals is 'core' to what it means to be human, so a person who can 'follow whatever values or moral authority [they] choose' is shaping a fundamental element of who they are. Importantly, though, a person must be constrained in determining their 'own way of life' inasmuch as it 'does not negatively affect others'.

'To have dignity [or] to have your humanity recognised by others' is also important to freedom. Dignity 'cannot be replaced by anything else' in society. Dignity itself is valuable but so are its implications. For instance, people who are shown dignity by others will not experience the threat or 'fear of negative consequences' for leaving a place, person, or a job.



## APPENDIX B

### CONCOURSE SOURCES<sup>269</sup>

Source type	Author/creator	Source title
Audio or musical recording/song lyrics	• David Guetta	Freedom
	• Nicki Minaj	Freedom
	• Pharrell Williams	Freedom
	• Richard and Robert Sherman, Roberta Flack	Freedom
	• Various	African-American spirituals (sometimes, "Negro spirituals")
	• Wynton Marsalis	From the Plantation to the Penitentiary
Book or book chapter	• Alan Coffee	Mary Wollstonecraft, Public Reason, and the Virtuous Republic
	• Beth Grant	N/A
	• D.A. Dunkley	Agency of the Enslaved: Jamaica and the Culture of

<sup>269</sup> NB: This list is non-exhaustive and contains some incomplete records.

	Freedom in the Atlantic World
• Edith Hurwitz	N/A
• Frederick Douglass	My Bondage and My Freedom
• Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel	Phenomenology of Spirit
• Ira Berlin	The Long Emancipation
• Jeffrey R. Kerr-Ritchie	Freedom's Seekers: Essays on Comparative Emancipation
• John Finnis	Natural Law and Natural Rights
• John Oldfield	N/A
• Julia O'Connell Davidson	Modern Slavery: The Margins of Freedom
• Kevin Bales	Disposable People
• Kevin Bales	Ending Slavery: How we free today's slaves
• Kevin Bales and Ron Soodalter	The Slave Next Door
• Kevin Bales and Zoe Trodd (eds.)	To Plead Our Own Cause
• Laura Brace	The Politics of Property

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laurence Heller and Aline LaPierre</li> </ul>	Healing Developmental Trauma: How Early Trauma Affects Self-Regulation, Self-Image, and the Capacity for Relationship
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mende Nazer and Damien Lewis</li> </ul>	Slave: The true story of a girl's lost childhood and her fight for survival
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Michael Jordan</li> </ul>	The Great Abolition Sham
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orlando Patterson</li> </ul>	Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peter Kolchin</li> </ul>	First Freedom: The Responses of Alabama's Blacks to Emancipation and Reconstruction
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Philip Pettit</li> </ul>	A Theory of Freedom and Government
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yuval Yaylor (ed.)</li> </ul>	I Was Born a Slave
Documents and reports (gray literature)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centre for Social Justice</li> <li>• European Court of Human Rights</li> <li>• Free the Slaves</li> <li>• Human Trafficking Foundation</li> </ul>	<p>It Happens Here: Equipping the United Kingdom to fight modern slavery</p> <p>European Convention on Human Rights</p> <p>Community Based Model for Fighting Slavery</p> <p>Survivor Care Standards (2015, 2018)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Love146</li> <li>• MSEMVS</li> <li>• The Salvation Army (UKI)</li> <li>• UN Office on Drugs and Crime</li> <li>• Various</li> </ul>	<p>Various reports</p> <p>Fieldwork Standards for Assistance to Individuals Rescued out of Slavery</p> <p>Various annual VCC reports</p> <p>Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons</p> <p>Antislavery NGO websites, incl. mission, vision, or “our work” statements</p>
Journal articles/ academic reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alan Coffee</li> <li>• Alison Gardner</li> <li>• Andrea Nicholson, Minh Dang, Zoe Trodd</li> <li>• Brandon Hogan</li> <li>• Julia O'Connell Davidson</li> <li>• Carmel Lambert</li> </ul>	<p>N/A</p> <p>Collaborating for Freedom</p> <p>A Full Freedom: Contemporary Survivors' Definitions of Slavery</p> <p>Frantz Fanon's Engagement with Hegel's Master-Slave Dialectic</p> <p>"Things" are not What they Seem: On Persons, Things, Slaves, and the New Abolitionist Movement</p> <p>“The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here”: Writing American Identity in Liberia, 1830–1850</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David Watkins</li> </ul>	Slavery and Freedom in Theory and Practice
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Des Gasper and Irene van Staveren</li> </ul>	Development As Freedom v - v and As what Else?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orlando Patterson</li> </ul>	Slavery: the Underside of Freedom
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paul Lovejoy</li> </ul>	Freedom Narratives' of Transatlantic Slavery
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rajan Barrett</li> </ul>	Negro Spirituals: Identity and Liberation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stanley Engerman</li> </ul>	Slavery, Freedom, and Sen
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various</li> </ul>	Taylor & Francis Online results for "freedom from slavery"
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various</li> </ul>	Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies (various issues, incl. "Unfree Labour in the Development of the Atlantic World" special issue)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walter Hawthorne</li> </ul>	Gorge: An African Seaman and his Flights from 'Freedom' back to 'Slavery' in the Early Nineteenth Century
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tomson</li> </ul>	N/A
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harriet Tubman</li> </ul>	N/A

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snowdrop Project</li> <li>• Suzuki</li> <li>• Berlin</li> <li>• Sharon Krause</li> <li>• Zoe Trodd (project lead)</li> </ul>	<p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>VOICES: Narratives by Survivors of Modern Slavery</p>
<b>News articles or other news media sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various</li> <li>• Various</li> </ul>	<p>CNN Freedom Project</p> <p>Google News alerts for "freedom from slavery"</p>
<b>Online forum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various respondents</li> </ul>	<p>Ending Slavery: Strategies for Contemporary Global Abolition (online course)</p>
<b>Online reference sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edward Zalta (ed.)</li> <li>• Various</li> <li>• Various</li> </ul>	<p>The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, various entries</p> <p>Google Scholar alerts for "freedom from slavery"</p> <p>Oxford Bibliographies (multiple searches)</p>
<b>Researcher's notes on previous readings/events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Juliana Semione</li> <li>• Juliana Semione</li> <li>• Juliana Semione</li> </ul>	<p>Notes from the Trust Women Conference 2016</p> <p>Notes on 2018 messages from the Pope</p> <p>Notes on lectures from the Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Juliana Semione</li> </ul>	Notes on messages delivered by Andrew Holness, prime minister of Jamaica
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Juliana Semione</li> </ul>	Notes on The Case Against Sweatshop Labor
Responses collected via Google Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Various respondents</li> </ul>	"What is freedom from slavery?" Concourse Contribution
Social media post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Various respondents</li> </ul>	"Freedom from slavery is _____"
Statements collected during antislavery event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Various respondents</li> </ul>	Hyson Green Cultural Festival
Visual art or video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Melody Miller (dir.)</li> <li>N/A</li> <li>N/A</li> <li>Free the Slaves</li> <li>Free the Slaves</li> <li>Free the Slaves</li> <li>Free the Slaves</li> <li>Free the Slaves</li> </ul>	<p>California's Forgotten Children</p> <p>End Slavery</p> <p>Fantasy of Freedom</p> <p>Becoming a Slavery-Free Business</p> <p>Building Bridges to Freedom</p> <p>Building Freedom Brick by Brick</p> <p>Free the Slaves Country Directors: Passionate about Freedom</p> <p>What Freedom Looks Like</p>

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| • Hannah Jeffrey      | Walls of Slavery, Walls of Freedom, various artists |
| • Peter Rodis (prod.) | Nina Simone: Historical Perspective                 |

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